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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MODERNIST NOVEL

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Preface

This book is intended as an introduction to the modernist novel, primarily for the students and scholars of the English language and literature. Four major novelists – Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf – have been chosen to exemplify the stylistic features, aesthetic preoccupations and thematic concerns of the works of fiction written in English in the early decades of the twentieth century. The methodological principle used in this study is multilevel. First, these four authors are analysed by referring to their essays, philosophical treatises, prefaces to their novels and other non-fictional works where they define their poetics and their artistic goals in their own terms. After this, since form is such a major concern of the modernist novel, formal innovations and narrative strategies of each of these authors are discussed at some length. Finally, a single novel is chosen to represent each author, and it is analysed in detail. *Heart of Darkness*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Mrs Dalloway* are widely recognized within the oeuvre of these novelists as some of their greatest artistic achievements. Lawrence's novella *St Mawr* is a lesser-known work; however, I would argue that F. R. Leavis's praise of this short piece as "an astonishing work of genius" still stands. The same as with the other three novels, its inclusion in the study is justified by the valuable insights it provides about the characteristics of modernist fiction and modernist art in general.

In writing this book, I have had the unwavering support of my colleagues at the English Department of the University of Niš, to whom I am most grateful. I especially wish to thank professor Lena Petrović for her inspiring lectures on English modernism, which have provided me with some essential critical insights into this fascinating literary period.

Introduction

In a well-known essay titled "Modern Fiction" (1921), Virginia Woolf offers her definition of the task of the novelist: it is to convey to the reader the intricacies of human spirit, "this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible" (Woolf 1984: 160–161). This description, in a nutshell, comprises the most remarkable features of the Modernist novel: its intense focus on subjectivity, its refusal to define man's personal being in terms of social and historical circumstances – that which Woolf calls "the alien and external" – and a keen interest in the dynamic of the psyche, which may also include the writer's fascination with psychopathology and various forms of "aberrations".

Thus presented, the aesthetic goals of Modernists also require adequate tools, as Woolf calls them in another essay[1], with which to penetrate the inner life of an individual. Innovative writing techniques, employed by authors such as Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce or Virginia Woolf, are inseparable from their urge to explore the way one's mind perceives and comes to terms with the complexities of the modern era. The most famous stylistic innovation associated with the Modernist movement, stream-of-consciousness, abandons the authorial omniscience from the text altogether, so that the narrative is completely contained in the mind of a fictional character[2]. Other

[1] In "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown" (1923), Woolf uses the term "tools" to refer to novelistic conventions and modes of presentation. Those which were previously used by the Realists, as she argues, are outdated and cannot be applied by the new generation of writers, whose primary interest is in the individual psyche and the workings of the mind. As Woolf states, "the tools of one generation" have become "useless for the next" (Woolf 1924: 17).

[2] The writing technique Dorothy Richardson used in her novel *Pilgrimage* (1915) is usually considered the earliest example in English of the stream-of-consciousness style. It was, however, further developed and most famously used by James Joyce; the longest section written in this style appears in the final chapter of his novel *Ulysses* (1922).

stylistic features characteristic for the Modernist novel – such as Free Indirect Style, merging the voice of the author and the voice of the character, or various techniques related to the narrative time and subjective experience of temporality – essentially all serve the same purpose: always to look within, to understand the hidden motives and longings of an individual, to grasp and depict the concealed life of the spirit. This central interest clearly distinguishes the Modernists from their predecessors of the late Victorian period, who were primarily concerned with social issues and social interactions. Edmund Wilson sums up these radically different literary interests, which emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, by saying that the field of literature was shifted "from an objective to a subjective world, from an experience shared with society to an experience savoured in solitude" (Wilson 1959: 265–266).

The Modernist preoccupation with the life of the spirit needs to be understood in conjunction with all the turbulent changes experienced by the generation who lived in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, rapid industrialisation, social upheavals, a change in the scientific paradigm, the crisis of faith and significant shifts in major philosophical systems – as exemplified in the works and research of Charles Darwin, James Frazer, Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henry Bergson, William James and Karl Marx – all contributed to an altered cultural atmosphere, constituting the experience of modernity. Furthermore, the Modernist authors lived through the devastating experience of the First World War, having to come to terms with destruction and loss of life on a previously unimaginable scale, as well as with the emotional effects of the war, the grief and trauma which continued long after its conclusion. The shock and tragedy of the war years also largely contributed to the overall loss of religious and moral certainties in the early twentieth century.

This spiritual climate was reflected in the changes in literature, especially in the more complex and conflicted ways in which the modern authors conceived of the self. In his study *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality* (1991), Michael Levenson sums up these changes in the following manner:

> Ours may be the age of narcissism, but it is also the century in which ego suffered unprecedented attacks upon its great pretensions, to be self-transparent and self-authorized. It discovered enemies within and enemies without; walls within, mirrors without; it no longer perched securely on the throne of the self; it no longer sat confidently at the centre of the social world... [One may] follow the diverse fortunes of individuality in modern English fiction: its changing verbal aspect, its historical limits and symbolical resources, its political dispossession, cultural displacement and psychological self-estrangement, its uneasy accommodation of mind and body, its retreat from the world and its longing for community (Levenson 1991: xi).

Among the chief influences on Modernist fiction were the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud. Freud began to publish his research on the interpretation of dreams and the dynamics of the unconscious psyche in 1896; with the first translations which appeared in 1909, he quickly became influential throughout the English-speaking world (Stevenson 1992: 62). Some of his most notable studies were published in the first two decades of the twentieth century: *The Interpretation of Dreams* (*Die Traumdeutung*, 1900), *Totem and Taboo* (*Totem und Tabu*, 1913) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, 1920), which is why this period is also referred to as the Freudian age.

The major Modernist novelists react in different ways to Freud's concept of the self and his approach to the unconscious. In Conrad's work, for instance, there is no explicit mention of any Freudian terms. However, Ian Watt points out that the two authors, in fact, have much in common. In *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Conrad's protagonist and chief narrator, Marlow, faces the destructive potentials of the unconscious psyche embodied in the character of Kurtz, who has undergone terrible regression in the heart of the African continent. Ian Watt points out that, just like Freud, Conrad never engages in a joyous celebration of the wild instinctive energy and its release from the unconscious; instead, both authors advocate that it must be controlled, and the means of control they propose are also similar: honest dedication to one's work and duty, and a practice of internal moral restraint – even when the external ones, provided by the social structures, prove inadequate or no longer exist. As Watt concludes, both Conrad and

Freud reach a profound insight into the unconscious psyche, but warn against yielding to the urges that they discover there. In other words, "what they see is… just the opposite of what they want to see" (Watt 1981: 166–167).

On the other hand, the non-fictional works of D. H. Lawrence express strong criticism of Freud's views. In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921), for instance, Lawrence distinguishes between "Freudian" and "Non-Freudian" unconscious, arguing that Freud in fact explores only those cravings in the unconscious psyche which are originally caused or influenced by the conscious mind, and which therefore simply represent the "bastard spawn" or inverted reflection of our idealistic consciousness. As opposed to this, there exists non-Freudian, or "pristine" unconscious, which is the life instinct itself, ontologically preceding consciousness. It is, for Lawrence, the source of our vitality and creativity of which he holds an entirely positive view (Lawrence 1965: 591). In spite of these strong disagreements with Freud, however, it may be noticed that Lawrence still uses some methods of presentation of the unconscious in his novels which bear the imprint of Freud's teachings. Symbolical episodes, pregnant with psychological meaning – such as the one in *St Mawr* (1925), where the protagonist gets in touch with the deep layers of the self when she first sees the eponymous stallion – are clearly inspired by Freud's work on the interpretation of dreams (Stevenson 1992: 65).

Symbolical episodes suggestive of Freud's influence may likewise be found in the novels of Virginia Woolf: in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), for instance, where symbolical imagery is purposefully chosen to convey the deranged mental state of one of the characters, Septimus Warren Smith. Like Lawrence, however, Woolf expresses a dislike of the more controlling and repressive aspects of Freud's psychoanalysis, and proposes that the unconscious psyche should be explored in a manner more affirmative than Freud's. Her hostility to psychoanalysis is evident, for example, in the unsympathetic characterization of the psychiatrist Bradshaw in *Mrs Dalloway*. Bradshaw is depicted as a tyrant who threatens his patients and bullies them into submission, while his defining character trait is his desire for domination and power.

When it comes to Joyce, critics point out that he left a record of ironic and hostile comments on Freud; however, Joyce never really

argued that Freud's views on the mind were wrong, only that they had been expressed better by others, such as Giordano Bruno or Giambattista Vico (Ellmann 1959: 351). Additionally, it may be argued that Joyce, just like Woolf and Lawrence, benefited from Freud's methods of exploring the unconscious. Richard Ellmann, for instance, points out that the interior monologue in Joyce's novels was partly influenced by Freud's theories of verbal association (ibid., 368). It may also be possible to trace Freud's influence in Joycean "epiphanies" – the moments of revelation and self-insight in his novels and short fiction, which serve as an entry point into the unconscious (Brivic 1976: 307).

Regardless of the degree to which the leading Modernists embrace or reject Freud's theories, one cannot neglect Freud's overwhelming influence on the general cultural atmosphere in which the Modernist literature was created. As Kenneth Graham points out,

> The pronounced shift in the basis of characterization in fiction after about 1900, from the outward to the inner, from the mode of action to the mode of concealed motivation, dream, reverie, and atavistic drive, from the traditional area of chronological time and outward space to the radically new dimensions of psychological time and non-logical organization, suggests if not necessarily Freud's direct influence then at the very least a widely shared re-orienting of perception about the individual that deserves to bear his name as its most systematic and articulate theorizer (Graham 2004: 211–212).

Another articulate theorizer of the same era, whose ideas were just as influential as Freud's, was Friedrich Nietzsche. His widely publicized pronouncement that "God is dead"[3] may be viewed as the final stage of the gradual decline in religious faith which was initiated in the 1860s when Charles Darwin first published his theories on evolution. Nietzsche's renunciation of religion was also closely related to his overall insistence on epistemological uncertainty, which extended onto the field of ethics, social norms and even hard sciences. His general argument was that our understanding did not draw its laws from nature, but prescribed them to nature; the universe was, according to Nietzsche, essentially structureless and unknowable, and it was only our consciousness which tended to project structures, shapes and

[3] Nietzsche repeats this statement in several of his works, most notably in *The Gay Science* (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882).

categories upon it. Randall Stevenson argues that a parallel may be drawn between the Nietzschean uncertainty principle – especially the loss of faith in an omniscient deity – and the absence of an omniscient narrator from the leading fiction of the Modernist period. As early as in the novels of Henry James and Joseph Conrad, who are usually considered the precursors of Modernism, there appears a suggestion that the universe lacks absolutes and that stability, coherence and meaning may only be established at the subjective level, by focusing on one's personal understanding and vision of reality (Stevenson 1992: 68–69).

Lionel Trilling (2008: 392) points out that Nietzsche's early work, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, 1872) is likewise of extreme importance for understanding the background and context of Modernist art. Nietzsche discusses the Dionysian rites of the pre-Socratic Greece, stressing that the mental states they produced – of rapture, ecstasy, and temporary eclipse of the isolated ego-consciousness – represented a necessary opposite to the Apollonian principle of rationality and individuality, making it possible for an individual to merge with the world temporarily, for the "prodigal son" to reconcile with the estranged, maternal Nature (Nietzsche 2007: 18). Nietzsche's canonization of the primal energies epitomized in the Dionysian rites, and his insistence that the dialectic between the Dionysian and the Apollonian principle is of crucial importance for the emergence of Greek tragedy, are echoed in similar preoccupations of the Modernist writers. Like Nietzsche, they feel the need to explore the self beyond the confines of the rational ego in their quest for psychic wholeness. When it comes to the four novelists discussed in this book, the influence of Nietzsche's vitalism and his affirmative attitude towards the irrational portion of the psyche is perhaps most easily discerned in the writings of D. H. Lawrence[4].

[4] In his discussion on "Lawrence and Modernism", Michael Bell points out that Lawrence "absorbed Nietzsche", whose works he read extensively in 1908, and that, like this philosopher, "Lawrence understood the central problems of modernity as a complex of psychological, cultural and ultimately ontological questions – questions, that is, about the nature of being, which could be understood only by an imaginative recovery of the pre-Socratic world" (Bell 2001: 180). The same author also discusses the similarities between Nietzsche's and Lawrence's views in his text "The Metaphysics of Modernism" (Bell 2005).

Modernist literature may also be read as a reaction to industrialism and the concomitant process of reification. The term "reification", which refers to objectifying or depersonalizing an individual, was first used by Marx to denote the position of a worker in the process of capitalist production – the fact that he is degraded and virtually reduced to an appendage to a machine, while also being forced to turn himself into a usable commodity which can be exploited for wages (Stevenson 1992: 76). Marxist literary critic Fredric Jameson, however, points out that the notion of reification also has wider social and cultural implications. He defines it as a process whereby numerous traditional forms of human organisation are being deconstructed and then reorganized in such a way as to serve the utilitarian goals of late industrial capitalism:

> [It] is first and foremost to be described as the analytical dismantling of the various traditional or "natural"… unities (social groups, institutions, human relationships, forms of authority, activities of a cultural as well as of a productive nature) into their component parts with a view to their… reorganization into more efficient systems which function according to an instrumental, or binary, means/ends logic (Jameson 1982: 227).

This "objective" fragmentation of the outside world, according to Jameson, is matched and accompanied by an inward, psychic fragmentation of an individual. As he explains, in the process of capitalist instrumentalisation, the rational, "quantifying" functions of the modern man's mind become privileged, and so does the development of technological and scientific mentality. This, however, goes "hand in hand with the systematic underdevelopment of archaic mental powers" (ibid., 228). Imagination, intuition, one's sensual and instinctive life, as well as the affective domain of being, do not find their place and usability in the predominantly utilitarian and materialistic world.

This threat of reification and psychic fragmentation at the beginning of the twentieth century is one of the main reasons why Modernist writers become preoccupied with subjectivity and the life of the spirit. In his well-known text "The Ideology of Modernism" (1957), Georg Lukacs comes to the same conclusion about the Modernist project, but views it in a negative light. He observes that these writers

are deeply dissatisfied with the conditions of late capitalism, but that this awareness does not compel them to criticize the existing social order in their work, nor to explore some possibility of change. Instead, their disappointment only causes the Modernist authors to reject contemporary reality altogether and turn their attention inwards, towards exploring the potentials of the mind. In this process, they end up becoming fascinated by the extreme and deranged mental states (or "aberrations", as Woolf calls them in her essay), which Lukacs also refers to as "the escape into psychopathology". Thus, their protest becomes an empty gesture, incapable of providing the reader with any meaningful sense of direction (Lukacs 1969: 29–30).

Fredric Jameson takes a more positive view on the aesthetic goals and preoccupations of Modernism. He argues that Lukacs is wrong to see this literary movement as "some mere ideological distraction, a way of systematically displacing the reader's attention from history and society to pure form, metaphysics, and experiences of individual monad" (Jameson 1982: 266). Instead he proposes to define the Modernist narrative as a socially symbolic act, whose purpose is to create "Utopian compensation" for the dehumanizing practices of late capitalism. As Randall Stevenson explains:

> The modern industrial and financial world negates feeling in favour of instrumentality, reduces whole beings to the sum of their usable functions, or leaves people hollowed out... Such a world urgently requires some compensating enhancement and enlargement of the inner life to sustain for the individual a full humanity and an integral sense of the self (Stevenson 1992: 76).

Thus interpreted, the Modernists' interest in the subjective, interior life is not an escape from social reality but an act of revolt, a reaction to the devaluation of an individual in the modern society (Tučev 2019: 413). By exploring the phenomena of individual consciousness, along with the expressive potentials of language and sensual impressions, Modernist fiction opens up an alternative space. It is, as Jameson maintains, "the place of quality in an increasingly quantified world, the place of the archaic and of feeling amid the desacralization of the market system, the place of sheer colour and intensity within the greyness of measurable extension and geometrical abstraction" (Jameson 1982: 236–237). The following chapters will

explore how the four major Modernist novelists – Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce and Woolf – affirm the importance and value of the individual self in the modern world; what stylistic features and narrative strategies enable them to accomplish this task; and, perhaps most importantly, in the words of Lionel Trilling (1967: 98), how they conceive of what the self is, and what it might become.

Joseph Conrad

1. A Latent Feeling of Fellowship

The "Preface" Conrad wrote for his novel *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1897) is usually regarded as the most important expression of his artistic creed. Conrad's chief argument is that "all art… appeals primarily to the senses" and that the same rule must apply to the novelist (Conrad 2005: 280). Based on these thoughts, Conrad's narrative method is often defined by critics not just as modernist, but also as impressionist. As Ian Watt points out, there is an apparent similarity between Conrad's ideas and those of the impressionist painters who likewise believe that the creative process begins with the sense-impressions made by the external reality on the mind of the artist, which he then tries to convey to his audience (Watt 1981: 79). Conrad, however, believes that the use of evocative language does not simply appeal to the senses, but also enables the author to establish communication with the reader at a deeper emotional and psychological level: "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you see… If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation… and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask" (Conrad 2005: 281). In the quoted passage, Conrad also alludes to the figurative meaning of the phrase "to make you see" – "to make you understand" – concluding that his most important goal is to convey his truth, or his insight, to the reader.

Another important theme in the "Preface" is Conrad's belief that the artist should enable his readers to experience the feeling of solidarity "which binds together all humanity". The philosopher and the scientist, as he explains, speak to our intelligence, but it may also happen that they serve less than pure causes by speaking to our egotism, prejudice and ambitions, or by glorifying proclaimed cultural goals. The artist, on the other hand, addresses our vulnerable inner being, the soul, and

speaks, in Conrad's words, to our capacity for wonder, our sense of pity, to "the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation – and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts" (ibid., 280). The notion of solidarity may appear at odds with the general tendency of Modernist authors to represent loneliness as a prevalent human condition in the modern world, and modern man as a solitary being essentially incapable of meaningful exchange with his social environment[5]. However, both motifs are in fact present in Conrad's essay, as he talks about "the loneliness of innumerable hearts" and expresses hope that the artist may be able to awaken a sense of connectedness which exists only as a "latent" potential in an alienated world.

The same interplay between loneliness and fellowship also appears as a motif in Conrad's novels. His narrator Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, for instance, talks about a sense of kinship he has experienced with the African natives, but at the same time wonders whether he is capable at all of communicating his story to his listeners aboard an English yawl; he compares it to trying to convey the essence of a dream, which is impossible because "we live, as we dream – alone" (Conrad 1994: 39). Conrad is equally careful when he muses on whether it is possible for a literary work to awaken the feeling of solidarity in the reader: "if one be deserving and fortunate, one may perchance attain to such clearness of sincerity that at last the presented vision... shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders the feeling of solidarity" (Conrad 2005: 281). In spite of these reservations, however, Ian Watt argues that Conrad's novels always provide a key to transcending the state of existential loneliness. Watt sums up this dynamic as "the movement of the protagonist towards another person or group": "The movement is often incomplete... sometimes it comes too late... but the reader's attention is nonetheless focused on following the movement of an alienated character outwards from the self" (Watt 1981: 32).

Another psychological issue which Conrad's novels often deal with is the divided self. It is at the same time a recurrent motif in Modernist fiction, and in Jameson's opinion, one of the ways in which

[5] The notion of "ontological solitariness" of the individual as one of the defining features of Modernism is analysed in detail, for instance, in Lukacs' well-known essay "The Ideology of Modernism".

Modernist authors react to reification and psychic fragmentation in the period of late capitalism. As stated above[6], Jameson perceives a division between those mental powers and functions of the mind which are privileged, and those which remain underdeveloped in the process of capitalist instrumentalisation, impoverishing and reducing the individual to a sum of their usable parts (Jameson 1982: 228). The divided self is one of the ways in which Modernist writers articulate this problem, dramatising the troublesome split between the conscious and the unconscious self, the rational and the irrational, or between the "scientific mentality" and the "archaic mental powers" as Jameson calls them in his analysis.

In Conrad's oeuvre, this motif is perhaps most clearly expressed in "The Secret Sharer" (1910) – a short story in which a young sea captain, before embarking on his first voyage, encounters his dark double, Leggatt. As an officer on another ship, Leggatt performed a heroic feat during a storm and saved the lives of his entire crew; but later on, due to his wild, untameable, "strung-up" energy, got involved in a fight and killed a man. The captain decides to grant him sanctuary, hiding the fugitive in his cabin. The suggestive manner of storytelling leaves an impression that the entire experience took place in a dream, and that the narrative really records an encounter between one's conscious self and one's unconscious motives and potentials. This encounter may be viewed as one of the archetypes in Conrad's fiction. The same figure of a symbolic double, secret sharer, younger brother, a criminal or an outlaw towards whom the protagonist needs to assume a correct moral attitude also appears in a number of Conrad's novels. The function of such a character is to dramatise the inner schism and the experience of psychological crisis. Another way to interpret this psychodynamics is to view it as a conflict between two contrasted characters: one of them, symbolically representing reason and order, strives to understand the other, representing archaic and irrational urges, and discover what possible meaning or logic this figure may offer (Stevenson 1992: 120). The most famous of such pairings appears in *Heart of Darkness*: captain Charles Marlow, holding fast to his ethical norms and the sailor's code of conduct, is compelled to face the irrational actions of Kurtz as his lawless double.

[6] See p. 17 of this book.

2. Narratives of Understanding

While the style of Conrad's early novels, *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), is conventionally realist, his third novel, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, marks the beginning of his interest in innovative techniques, especially the use of subjective viewpoint. In subsequent novels[7], Conrad discards the convention of the omniscient narrator altogether, replacing it with a narrative which unfolds through multiple subjective perspectives, which is considered one of the most important formal inventions in his fiction. The narrators in Conrad's novels do not provide us with firm facts, but with their personal impressions and observations, so that the storyline is refracted through the prism of their consciousness and mental processes. This narrative technique is most thoroughly explored in *Lord Jim* (1900). While Conrad's narrator Marlow communicates most of Jim's story, a great portion of what he tells is pieced together from other views of Jim and the testimony of other characters who have interacted with him. Each of these perspectives is dependent on the personal motives and psychological makeup of the observer, so that the conclusions they reach about Jim are inevitably disparate and contradictory. As a consequence, no matter how many varying points of view are directed upon Jim, his nature never seems fully exposed, and ultimately remains impossible to define. As Randall Stevenson explains,

> The inclusion of so many narrators and points of view… fully exposes the impossibility of facts given the uncertainties of subjective, individual views of the world, and the discrepancies which appear between them. Conclusions about Jim constantly vary depending upon the viewpoint recorded at the time. His nature, even his stature, remain persistently difficult to define… [He] is not straightforwardly open to the senses, but conflictingly envisaged and ultimately impalpable (Stevenson 1992: 23–24).

[7] Conrad's stylistic experiments are most prominent in *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* (1900) and *Nostromo* (1904), the novels which, according to a widely accepted categorization, belong to his "major phase" (see, for instance, J. Berhoud: *Joseph Conrad: The Major Phase*, 1978). His later novels tend to be less complex in terms of style and closer to realist conventions.

Another important feature of Conrad's modernism is his interest in the subjective experience of temporality. It first becomes prominent in *Heart of Darkness*, where he develops a technique which Ian Watt refers to as *delayed decoding*. Namely, as Watt explains, Conrad depicts his protagonist's immediate sensations in a way which suggests that there exists a delay, or a gap between impression and understanding, reminding us of the "difficulties in translating perceptions into causal or conceptual terms" (Watt 1981: 178). This method is used, for instance, in a well-known scene where Marlow's boat is attacked just below Kurtz's station. At first, Marlow does not realize that there are natives on the shore shooting arrows; he only sees "sticks" flying towards the deck, and is puzzled by his fireman's strange posture before realizing that the man is dead. A similar technique is applied in the scene where Marlow's steamer is nearing Kurtz's Inner Station: what Marlow initially perceives as a fence made out of slim posts, with ornamented balls at the top, turns out to be stakes with severed human heads. As Susan Jones maintains, the temporal gap which Conrad establishes between the events in the novel and the narrator's reflection on them is meant to undermine the simplified realist notion of immediate subject-object relations. In a realist narrative, there is an illusion that comprehension immediately follows sensory perception, and that what the narrator perceives is "an image fixed in time and space" (Jones 1999: 179). As opposed to this, Conrad aims to present the transitory impressions of his narrator and to show how his subjective experience is not immediately translated into a "narrative of understanding" (ibid., 178).

In *Lord Jim*, Conrad takes experimentation with temporality even further, using Marlow's oral storytelling as an excuse to disregard the chronological sequence of events. Instead, it is Marlow's subjective experience that serves as an organizing principle, so that the events unfold in the novel in the order in which he recalls them (Guerard 1967: 157–158). In this way, Marlow's narration establishes associative connections between the episodes and experiences which would have otherwise been separated by the objective passage of time; this enables the reader to juxtapose them, and so reach deeper insights into the central moral and psychological issues in the novel (Tučev 2017: 452).

3. *Heart of Darkness*

3.1. Subjective Discovery of Darkness

Conrad's famous novella *Heart of Darkness* follows the journey of captain Marlow up the Congo river and culminates in his encounter with Kurtz, the most successful agent of a Belgian trading company. The title, however, does not refer to Marlow's destination – the heart of the "dark" African continent – but to his discovery of the darkest human potential, and his insight into the moral downfall and the dark heart of Kurtz himself.

Formerly a sea captain, Marlow decides to seek employment in the Congo out of love of adventure, thrilled by the prospect of fulfilling his childhood dream and exploring the uncharted African territories. This initial enthusiasm, however, disappears as soon as he comes to Brussels, the seat of a company trading in the Congolese ivory, whose agents' avarice is only thinly veiled by the hypocritical phrases about their civilizing mission in Africa. For the rest of his journey Marlow is filled with gloom, becoming increasingly aware of the injustice and suffering inflicted upon the African natives. In the Company's Central Station, he becomes intrigued by the stories he hears about Kurtz, who is the head of the Inner Station. The rumours suggest that Kurtz is not only the most successful agent when it comes to gathering ivory, but also a remarkable man whose talents, education and moral qualities set him apart from all the other Europeans in the Congo. Unlike the other company agents, it appears that Kurtz sincerely wishes to realize the publicly proclaimed philanthropic goals of colonialism and bring the benefits of progress to Africans.

The events that follow, however, reveal that Kurtz has undergone a terrifying regression in the African wilderness. Instead of trading, he has convinced a native tribe to follow him and carried out countless murderous raids on other tribes, robbing them of ivory. Kurtz has established himself not just as a tribal leader, but as a cruel deity; his station is encircled by severed human heads and "unspeakable" bestial rites are performed in his honour.

The ailing Kurtz is moved to Marlow's ship where he eventually dies; his final words – "The horror! The horror!" – are interpreted

by Marlow as a moral victory, an indication that at the very end of his life Kurtz became aware of his crimes and passed judgment on himself. However, when Marlow returns to Brussels, he is incapable of repeating these words to Kurtz's fiancée. Instead, he makes her believe that the last word Kurtz pronounced on his deathbed was her name.

Heart of Darkness also contains a frame narrative, taking place on the Thames and aboard the yawl *Nellie*, to whose crew Marlow tells the story of his journey to Africa. One of Marlow's listeners narrates the beginning and the end of the novel, making it possible to observe how Marlow's harrowing tale has affected him. İn the opening part, he thinks admiringly about the explorers who set out to sea bearing a spark from "the sacred fire" of civilisation; in the final paragraph of the novel, however, it seems to him that the Thames flows "into the heart of an immense darkness" (Conrad 1994: 111).

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Conrad's correspondence with William Blackwood – the publisher of *Blackwood's Magazine*, where *Heart of Darkness* would first appear as a three-part serial story – shows that his original intention was to write about the crimes and immorality of the colonizers he had met during his own journey to the Congo in 1890. İn his letter to Blackwood, Conrad announces that the theme of his novel will be "the criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilising work in Africa" (Conrad 1958: 36). The first installment of the novel fits this thematic framework, and may be read as a bitter condemnation of imperialist practices. However, in the subsequent installments, Conrad's attention shifts from these general historical and social issues to the fate of an individual. The same as his narrator, Marlow, Conrad becomes increasingly preoccupied with the character of Kurtz. Kurtz is different from the rest of the European agents in Africa described in the novel, and his regression and the monstrous passions to which he has succumbed stand out as a separate psychological problem.

Heart of Darkness is chronologically the first novel in which Conrad places the entire narrative inside the mind of a character, focusing on his individual perception and cognitive process. Ian

Watt compares Conrad's approach to the techniques of the French Impressionist painters, pointing out that Impressionism played a decisive role "in the process of art's long transition from trying to portray what all men know to trying to portray what the individual actually sees" (Watt 1981: 171). The same preoccupations, however, may also be regarded as Modernist: as Randall Stevenson argues, the narrative method in *Heart of Darkness* marks a break with Realist conventions, resulting in a text in which "objective certainties dissolve and the human scene in the novel is markedly suffused with the consciousness of the figure observing or narrating it" (Stevenson 1992: 24).

It may be argued that the very subject matter Conrad chose for his novel required introducing these new formal elements: in other words, Marlow's disturbing discoveries could not have been duly represented by referring to "objective certainties" and to that which "all men know". The imperialist crimes Marlow witnesses in Africa, his insight into Kurtz's moral downfall and into the unknown aspects of his own psyche could only be properly expressed from a subjective point of view. Thus, the key motifs in the novel and the portrayal of its characters need to be understood in conjunction with this subjective approach.

3.2. Marlow as a Perceptive Hero

Due to Conrad's interest in the workings of the mind, the cognitive process and its novelistic presentation, Marlow becomes more than a mere observer or a voice recounting the events in *Heart of Darkness*. His psychological states, observations and the self-knowledge he gains in the course of his journey are just as important for the author as the story Marlow narrates. Because of such Modernist preoccupations, as Wayne Booth explains, the narrator often turns into "the primary agent" in the story, and "the interest is in his action and its effects, nor primarily in those of the original hero" (1983: 344). Booth discusses in detail how this shift in focus occurs in the fiction of Henry James, whose writing style Conrad greatly admired and sought to emulate. The same shift is evident in *Heart of Darkness*: Marlow moves to the centre of Conrad's attention, so that he and Kurtz may both be regarded as the novel's protagonists. Booth argues that it is in

fact pointless to ask which of the two characters is more important for Conrad's artistic intention:

> Is "Heart of Darkness" the story of Kurtz or the story of Marlow's experience of Kurtz? Was Marlow invented as a rhetorical device for heightening the meaning of Kurtz's moral collapse, or was Kurtz invented in order to provide Marlow with the core of his experience of the Congo? [It is] a seamless web, and we tell ourselves that the old-fashioned question, "Who is the protagonist?" is a meaningless one. The convincing texture of the whole, the impression of life as experienced by an observer, is in itself surely what the true artist seeks (ibid., 346).

In this way, Conrad introduces a new type of fictional character, who seems to have no tangible goal in the novel other than to gain insight and knowledge. In his study *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (1957), Thomas Moser refers to such characters as Conrad's *perceptive heroes*. Namely, Moser argues that it is possible to discern three major types of characters in Conrad's novels: *the simple*, *vulnerable* and *perceptive hero*. This classification refers to what Moser considers the first phase of Conrad's output, from 1895–1912, the period in which his fiction focused on the issues of fidelity and betrayal. Moser argues that the central situation in these novels is a test. It is a test of moral responsibility, demanding that, in a moment of crisis, the protagonist should remain loyal to his proclaimed values and principles, or to what Conrad calls "that ideal conception of one's own personality every man sets up for himself" (Conrad 1995: 2)[8]. The outcome of the test for each character determines their position within Conrad's moral hierarchy. *The simple hero* in Conrad's novels is most often a sailor, unreflective, courageous and loyal. İn his case, the moment of crisis is usually some disaster at sea, which he manages to face without betraying his seaman's code. *The vulnerable hero* betrays his proclaimed goals in the moment of crisis and experiences moral failure. Conrad often places such characters in a situation of moral or physical isolation. They are his most complex characters – romantic, often egotistic, prone to day-dreaming or harbouring delusions of grandeur. *The perceptive hero* has something in common with the

[8] The quote is taken from Conrad's story "The Secret Sharer" and refers to the protagonist who is likewise faced with a critical situation testing his sense of the self.

first two types. He admires the simple hero and his ethical code, but he can also sympathize with the vulnerable hero since he shares his complexity, weaknesses and capacity for introspection. As opposed to the vulnerable hero, the perceptive hero succeeds in passing the crucial test; however, the true measure of his success "lies in his achievement of self-knowledge", in reaching moral and psychological insight (Moser 1966: 15–16). Marlow is the most important representative of this type of Conradian heroes; the unnamed captain in "The Secret Sharer" belongs to the same group.

A distinct feature of Marlow's character is his belief that knowledge and insight may be gained through work. "I don't like work," he explains, "no man does – but I like what is in the work – the chance to find yourself. Your own reality – for yourself, not for others – what no other man can ever know" (Conrad 1994: 41). The importance Marlow ascribes to work is evident, for instance, in the scene in which he finds a book in an abandoned hut on the Congo's shore. The book is titled *An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship*, and the author, whose name has become almost illegible on the worn-out cover, is a Towser or Towson, Master in his Majesty's Navy. Even though this is just a simple technical manual in which Towser deals with the breaking strain of ship's chains and other nautical matters, and Marlow himself admits that the subject is "not very enthralling", he treats the book with the utmost tenderness and respect. The text is precious to Marlow because it is not propagandist, nor delusional in any way, but simply demonstrates Towser's earnest dedication to work and his profession: "at the first glance you could see there a singleness of intention, an honest concern for the right way of going to work, which made these humble pages, thought out so many years ago, luminous with another than a professional light" (ibid., 54). As opposed to the pervasive nightmarish atmosphere of Marlow's Congo experience, the book represents for him something that is "unmistakably real" (ibid.)

Marlow's notion of work in the novel is also contrasted with one of the imperialist platitudes – the alleged "work" which the Europeans claim they are doing in the course of civilizing Africa. Just before Marlow's departure for the Congo, his aunt introduces him to some of the Brussels' elite as "one of the Workers, with a capital" (ibid., 18). Echoing the dominant propaganda and the official claims about the philanthropic

goals of colonialism, she talks about the Europeans going to Africa as "apostles" and "emissaries of light", whose task is to improve the lives of natives and "wean those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" (ibid.). When Marlow points out that the Company employees go to Africa to make profit, she readily justifies their financial gain by quoting the Gospels (Luke 10: 7): "The labourer is worthy of his hire". İn this ideological discourse, "work" is an empty signifier whose function is to conceal robbery and exploitation of the colonized subjects; as opposed to it, the kind of work Marlow believes in is not ideological but concrete and tangible – such as carrying out repairs on his steamer, or navigating it up the Congo and taking care of the safety of its passengers.

Focusing on work helps Marlow resist the demoralising influence of the devious company agents; it also helps him to preserve his psychic integrity when he is confronted with the African wilderness and the awakening of buried instincts. At one point he tells his listeners about the natives he watched dancing on the Congo's shore and admits that there was "an appeal to [him] in that fiendish row". When they ask him why he did not go ashore and join in the dance, he replies: "I had no time. I had to mess about with white-lead and strips of woollen blanket helping to put bandages on those leaky steam-pipes... I had to watch the steering… There was surface-truth enough in these things to save a wiser man" (Conrad 1994: 52).

Another important aspect of the same scene is that it leads to Marlow's recognition of the humanity of the Other and the experience of "distant kinship":

> The earth seemed unearthly... and the men were – No, they were not inhuman. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar... [If] you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of first ages – could comprehend… What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage – who can tell? – but truth – truth stripped of its cloak of time (ibid., 51–52).

Although Marlow is completely unfamiliar with the natives' culture, he realizes that the ritual on the shore expresses universal

human emotions he can identify with: joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage. At the beginning of the novel, Marlow reminds his listeners aboard the *Nellie* that Britain was also once "one of the dark places of the earth" (ibid., 7). The indigenous Africans dancing by the Congo are not very different from the indigenous Britons who likewise lived in tribal cultures at the time of Roman colonization; aware of this parallel, Marlow views the African tribesmen symbolically as his own ancestors (Tučev 2015: 272).

The motif of kinship may also be interpreted psychologically: in other words, it may be argued that Marlow's encounter with the African tribal cultures is simultaneously an encounter with his own unconscious. In his discussion of *Heart of Darkness*, Michael Levenson (1991: 9–10) observes that there is a recurrent spatial paradox in the novel, whereby that which is the centre may at the same time be the periphery. At the beginning of the novel, London is presented as the centre of a major imperial power, but it is later mentioned that it once used to be the distant frontier of the Roman empire. Marlow describes travelling up the Congo river as "the farthest point of navigation" (Conrad 1994: 11), but also as his crucial inward experience; the physician who examines him before departure to Africa says that changes occur "inside" when Europeans go "out there" (ibid., 17). These two spatial metaphors, which Levenson also calls "figures of penetration and extension", correspond, in his opinion, to a particular moment in the history of the European mind. It is the moment when colonial expansion inadvertently leads to anthropological discoveries. Searching for new commodities, Europeans also discover tribal cultures, which provide new insights about their own origin: "The anthropologist travels to the farthest point of navigation to discover home truths that the psyche had not recognized for itself. The psychoanalyst presses to the deepest reaches of the self only to find the stranger whom the anthropologist is seeking abroad… Self-encounter… culminates in confrontation with the Other" (Levenson 1991: 11). For the same reason, it may be argued that Marlow's experience of kinship with Africans is also an experience of self-insight.

The same motif is also discussed in a well-known essay "An Image of Africa" (1975) written by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. However, Achebe argues that Conrad's presentation of Africans in the

novel is essentially discriminatory and racist. He points out that Marlow finds the natives' ritual "ugly", whereas the thought of "distant kinship" with them makes him feel both fascinated and terrified. By using the term "kinship", as Achebe maintains, Conrad manages to sidestep the crucial question of whether he recognises equality between Europeans and Africans. Achebe also mentions the example of the Nobel-winning medical missionary Albert Schweitzer, who dedicated a large portion of his life to treating the natives in Central Africa, but was only ever capable of viewing the African as his "junior brother"; Conrad is, according to Achebe, even further from recognizing equality, as he cannot see anything more than distant kinship between himself and the Africans. Throughout *Heart of Darkness*, as Achebe argues, the Africans are dehumanized and degraded, reduced to grotesque, inarticulate figures who can only howl or grunt. Africa is a "backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor", "a metaphysical battlefield" which Conrad uses only to depict "the break-up of one petty European mind" (Achebe 2005: 343–344).

In his discussion of *Heart of Darkness*, Achebe deliberately neglects the difference between Conrad and his fictional narrator, Marlow. As he explains, it was well within Conrad's capabilities as a writer to hint, however subtly, at some alternative frame of reference by which we may judge Marlow's actions and opinions. Since the novel does not provide such an alternative moral perspective, Achebe concludes that Conrad shares Marlow's discriminatory views (ibid., 342).

As opposed to this, Cedric Watts (1996: 55–56) quotes some other Third World authors (Thiong'o, Harris, Sarvan) whose approach to Conrad's work is different from Achebe's. They concede that some of the descriptions of Africans in *Heart of Darkness* reveal the kind of racial prejudice which was typical for the Victorian era, and to which Conrad was apparently not immune, either. However, while they consider Conrad ambivalent on racial matters, they argue that *Heart of Darkness* is undoubtedly progressive and ahead of its time in its condemnation of imperialism. It is well known that Conrad befriended and supported Roger Casement, who ran a campaign for the reform of the Congo. The participants of the Congo Reform Association considered *Heart of Darkness* most helpful in their efforts, as it made

the European public aware of the suffering of the Congolese and the atrocities of Belgian administrators. One of the scenes in the novel which explicitly addresses these crimes takes place in the first company station, where Marlow comes across a chain gang of natives who have been forced to work on building a railway. The scene depicts a group of them who are dying in a nearby grove, made sick by ill-treatment and starvation. Albert Guerard mentions it as one of the best examples of Conrad's capacity for "compassionate rendering" (Guerard 1967: 34). Conrad's narrative method in this and other similar passages clearly shows that he sympathizes with the plight of the natives and sides with them, which makes Achebe's accusations appear ungrounded.

3.3. Marlow and Kurtz

In the Central Station, Marlow finds himself among the Company agents who strike him as utterly immoral and cynical. Conrad ironically implies their absence of any principles or higher goals by presenting their obsession with ivory as a form of worship. The staves they constantly carry around make them look as though they are preparing to set out on a pilgrimage: "They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it... I've never seen anything so unreal in my life" (Conrad 1994: 33). Turning his back on the unreal "pilgrims" and focusing instead on repairing his steamer, Marlow inwardly allies himself with Kurtz. The stories he has heard about Kurtz's idealism and moral qualities give him hope that he may be different from the rest of the Company agents. He even hopes that Kurtz may become the head of the Company and put an end to corruption: "I was curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all and how he would set about his work when there" (ibid., 44).

Even when Marlow discovers the truth about Kurtz, he does not change sides. Kurtz's insanity still seems to him less abhorrent than the cynicism and rationalized greed of other company agents. This is evident, for instance, in the scene where the manager of the Central Station comments on the damage that the trade will suffer because of

Kurtz. The manager seems unperturbed by Kurtz's crimes and his only concern is that they will cause the company to lose profit:

> ...there is no disguising the fact, Mr Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company. He did not see the time was not ripe for vigorous action. Cautiously, cautiously – that's my principle. We must be cautious yet. The district is closed to us for a time. Deplorable! Upon the whole, the trade will suffer. I don't deny there is a remarkable quantity of ivory... We must save it, at all events – but look how precarious the position is – and why? Because the method is unsound (ibid., 88–89).

"It seemed to me," Marlow comments, "I had never breathed an atmosphere so vile, and I turned mentally to Kurtz for relief" (ibid., 89).

It may be argued that Marlow's choice between the two kinds of evil – the one embodied in the manager, and the other one embodied in Kurtz – only becomes justifiable in retrospect. At the moment when Marlow tells his story aboard the *Nellie*, he can conclude that he was right to remain loyal to Kurtz ("to the nightmare of my choice") because in his final moment Kurtz experienced moral awakening and acknowledged his crimes. Kurtz's final exclamation is interpreted by Marlow as a moral victory. "It was an affirmation, a moral victory, paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory! That is why I have remained loyal to Kurtz to the last" (ibid., 101). This is also, as Ian Watt points out, the only instance in the novel when another person shares Marlow's moral vision (Watt 1981: 241).

The relationship between Marlow and Kurtz may also be interpreted as an encounter between the conscious self and its dark double in the unconscious psyche, which is one of the archetypal situations in Conrad's fiction. This interpretation is put forward by Albert Guerard, who claims that "in its central emphasis *Heart of Darkness* concerns Marlow... and his journey toward and through certain facets or potentialities of self" (Guerard 1967: 38). Guerard argues that there are numerous symbolical episodes in the novel which point to a psychological dimension of Marlow's journey and its meaning as an inward quest, and that Kurtz may be construed as a symbolical figure Marlow discovers in the unconscious. At the beginning of the novel, for instance, Marlow compares the Congo river to a snake whose jaws are

open towards the ocean, so that his journey through its belly alludes to a well-known mythical motif of a "night-sea journey". This term may denote the archetypal notion of the sun journeying through the earth's womb during the night, or a mythical hero, personifying the sun god, who is passing through the underworld, or has been devoured by a sea monster, and is forced to spend some time in its belly (Campbell 2004: 87). At the psychological level, such myths describe a journey into the unconscious. The suggestive names of the Company outposts – the Central and the Inner Station – likewise imply introspection. In the Inner Station, "the farthest point of navigation" (Conrad 1994: 11), Marlow meets Kurtz as a manifestation of the Jungian Shadow, a dark entity within his own psyche. In this context, Kurtz may be viewed as the embodiment of Marlow's own potential for regression, destructiveness and betrayal of one's moral values (Guerard 1967: 38). When the ailing Kurtz is brought on board Marlow's steamer, we are reminded of a similar scene in Conrad's story "The Secret Sharer" where the fugitive Leggatt climbs on board the protagonist's ship; both scenes symbolically represent the confrontation with the double. Kurtz's connection to the Jungian archetype of Shadow is perhaps most obvious in the scene where he leaves the ship and crawls towards the natives' fires – and Marlow feels, although he cannot explain it, that it is his personal responsibility to stop him: "I was anxious to deal with this shadow by myself alone – and to this day I don't know why I was so jealous of sharing with anyone the particular blackness of that experience" (Conrad 1994: 92–93).

3.4. The Sepulchral City and the White Lie

After Kurtz's death, Marlow returns to Europe, having become, like the groom in *The Ancient Mariner*, a sadder and a wiser man. After his experience in Africa, he is irritated by the citizens of Brussels, their complacency and ignorance:

> I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know

> the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend (ibid., 102).

If the key event in Conrad's novels is a test, as Moser maintains, then there also exists a "group of people who appear to be secure only because they have never been tested" (Moser 1966: 27). The inhabitants of Brussels belong to this category. Focused on their personal ambitions and superficial pleasures, they are unaware of the moral and psychological perils Marlow faced in Africa. The phrases "whited sepulchre"(Conrad 1994: 14) and "sepulchral city"(ibid., 102) which Marlow uses to refer to Brussels allude to a simile from the New Testament and Christ's condemnation of Pharisees: "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23: 27–28). Marlow likewise sees hypocrisy, inward emptiness and lack of moral strength beneath the facade of the bourgeois life in Brussels.

Kurtz's Intended is also among those who have never been tested. Unaware of the change Kurtz underwent in Africa, she has preserved an idealized memory of him as an epitome of virtue and nobility. Marlow comments on her "mature capacity for fidelity, for belief and suffering" and observes that she is "one of those creatures that are not the playthings of Time. For her he had died only yesterday" (Conrad 1994: 106–107). This is the essential paradox of the character of the Intended, whose feelings for Kurtz are noble, deep and pure, but are based on an illusion. By choosing to lie about Kurtz's last words, Marlow enables her to maintain this illusion. Without stating his motive, he only comments that telling her the truth "would have been too dark" (ibid., 111). As Levenson points out, "'too dark'... is something that a painter might observe of an unfinished canvas" (Levenson 1991: 57). Such presentation is in line with Conrad's impressionist method which "makes us see" the encounter between Marlow and the Intended as a dark canvas, and Marlow as a painter who decides to leave some light on it, but does not include any authorial commentary or explanation.

In a well-known essay "The Exclusion of the Intended from Secret Sharing in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*", Nina Pelican Strauss (1987: 124) argues that Marlow's "white lie" in this scene reveals discrimination and Conrad's intention to privilege men as the only audience capable of facing the truth. She observes that male and female realms in the novel are strictly divided, and that the purpose of Marlow's lie is to ensure the continuity of this division. In Strauss's interpretation, the narrative in *Heart of Darkness* is transmitted exclusively from one male character to another. The tale of Kurtz's downfall is discovered by Marlow, who conveys it to the first narrator, who then conveys it to the reading audience, whom Conrad also expected to be completely male.[9]

However, it may be argued that this motif in the novel does not point to some essentialist belief that women are incapable of facing the truth. Conrad's intention may have been, as Ian Watt maintains, to represent certain social circumstances and show that the upper-class women (such as Marlow's aunt, or the Intended) have no access to truth because they have no access to work: "Marlow… assumes the Victorian relegation of leisure-class women to a pedestal high above the economic and sexual facts of life" (Watt 1981: 244). Watt also explains it by referring to the thematic dualism of *work versus words* (ibid., 225). Throughout the novel, Marlow talks about work as a means of reaching self-knowledge and an authentic insight into reality[10]. Those who are engaged in some concrete work and are honestly dedicated to their profession (such as Marlow, or Towser), are less likely to be deceived than those whose sense of reality is based on words. When it comes to upper-class women, as Watt argues, the society itself denies them the right to truth by "allotting [them] a leisure role", a class position which is alienated from the domain of economy and production. These women have no profession, nor are they allowed to play any part in politics and decision-making, which leads to their uncritical acceptance of the dominant ideological discourse. "So it is by no choice or fault of hers", as Watt concludes, "that the Intended inhabits an unreal world" (ibid., 244).

[9] This argument is based on the fact that *Blackwood's Magazine*, where *Heart of Darkness* was first published, was distributed primarily in "male" circles, such as the navy, military and gentlemen's clubs (Watt 1981: 131).

[10] See p. 30 of this book.

3.5. Kurtz's Report

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad explores the themes of regression and moral failure through the character of Kurtz, a remarkable and gifted individual. Kurtz, as we are told, has a talent for poetry, art and music; he is an outstanding public speaker and a journalist; in Marlow's words, "a universal genius" (Conrad 1994: 103). Kurtz's views on civilizing Africa are also much more sophisticated than those of the other Company agents'. As Marlow finds out, Kurtz originally intended to bring missionaries and teachers to the company's outposts and organize their work with the natives; he thought that every station "should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing" (ibid., 47).

Kurtz is also a member of the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" which has entrusted him with writing a report during his stay in the Congo. His ideas on how the Africans may be persuaded to leave behind their "savage customs" are based on the postulates of Social Darwinism, which were widely accepted at the end of the nineteenth century and provided the chief ideological support for imperialism (Hawkins 2005: 368). The proponents of Social Darwinism maintained that Darwin's biological concepts of evolution and natural selection could be mechanically transferred to the realm of society and politics, and that it was therefore possible to talk about the particular evolutionary stage each human race had reached, with the white race being the most evolved. Kurtz bases his report on the same premise, arguing that due to their racial superiority, the Europeans will easily exert their power over Africans. As he explains, the allegedly superior white man should impose himself on the natives as a deity and then use this position to teach them moral values: "He began with the argument that we whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with the might as of a deity… By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded" (Conrad 1994: 71–72).

Kurtz's report reveals his arrogance and hubris, whereas his altruistic phrases sound utterly abstract and groundless. As Marlow comments: "The peroration was magnificent, though difficult to remember… It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an

august Benevolence… This was the unbounded power of eloquence – of words – of burning noble words. There were no practical hints to interrupt the magic current of phrases" (ibid., 72). The description of Kurtz's report clearly shows Conrad's negative attitude towards its underlying ideology. Even before dealing with Kurtz's betrayal of his ideals, Conrad questions the very validity of these ideals and unmasks the racial discrimination on which they are based. Kurtz's belief in white supremacy invalidates and discredits his "noble intentions" from the onset.

The greatest irony, however, lies in the contrast between Kurtz's idealistic rhetoric (his "moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment") and the *post scriptum* he added to the report much later: "Exterminate all the brutes!" (ibid.). In his madness, Kurtz no longer believes in enlightening the Africans, but succumbs to irrational hatred and the desire to annihilate them. However, both intentions are essentially based on the same racist ideology, so that the original text of Kurtz's pamphlet and its *post scriptum* are only seemingly opposed.

3.6. Inner Restraints

We are not explicitly told what happened to Kurtz, nor how his appeal to altruistic sentiments became an appeal for extermination. Marlow surmises that, while being alone in the African wilderness, Kurtz encountered some parts of his being of which he had hitherto been unaware. Kurtz's madness is presented as the madness of the soul, of his moral and affective being, while his intellect is left intact: "Believe me or not, his intelligence was perfectly clear – concentrated, it is true, upon himself with horrible intensity, yet clear... But his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and... it had gone mad" (ibid., 95).

It is important to point out that Conrad does not attribute Kurtz's moral downfall to the influence of the Congolese tribes. The natives are presented as morally superior to Kurtz: unlike him, they have integrity, inner strength and the ability to control their urges. Even the cannibal tribes are more principled than Kurtz, which is evident in the scene on Marlow's steamer. The cannibals, who are a part of Marlow's crew, are nearly dying of starvation. The only food they had was hippo meat, which the white passengers threw overboard when it became rotten. The

Company pays for their service in pieces of brass wire, which are useless, as the steamer does not stop by river-side villages where they could exchange this currency for food. In spite of this, the cannibals stick to their agreement and never consider attacking the white passengers. Marlow is fascinated by their integrity and capacity for restraint, though unable to explain where it comes from:

> And I saw that something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there... Don't you know the devilry of lingering starvation, its exasperating torment, its black thoughts, its sombre and brooding ferocity?... It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly... And these chaps, too, had no earthly reason for any kind of scruple. Restraint! (ibid., 60).

Kurtz lacks this kind of restraint – and so, by implication, does the Western civilization in general. The novel suggests that within our culture we are not instructed or encouraged to develop any mechanisms of internal control over our destructive urges. As Marlow explains to his listeners, the civilisation only provides external control: "You can't understand. How could you? – with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums..." (ibid., 70). The butcher, the policeman and the solid pavement imply that the civilized man is well-nourished and safe, and will therefore feel less tempted to act against the social norms; he is also constantly threatened by "scandal, gallows and lunatic asylums", i.e., always in danger of being publicly condemned or legally persecuted. Conrad implies that such mechanisms do not civilize us on the inside, but only restrain us externally. In the African wilderness, absent the policeman or a "kind neighbour", the European discovers that he has no internal moral compass on which to rely in his actions or his perception of good and evil.

It may be argued, therefore, that Conrad's novella is both a tragedy dealing with the demise of an exceptional individual, and a critical re-examination of the European culture as a whole. By exploring the causes of Kurtz's moral failure, Conrad implicitly invites the reader to examine the principles of civilization which has contributed to his making. This disappointment in the cultural values,

or “the disenchantment of our culture with culture itself”, as Lionel Trilling terms it, is to become one of the recognizable features of Modernist fiction; the trend which, as Trilling argues, started precisely with Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*: “This troubling work... contains in sum the whole of the radical critique of the European civilization that has been made by literature in the years since its publication” (Trilling 1972: 106).

D. H. Lawrence

1. The Whole Man Alive

In his essay "Why the Novel Matters" (1936)[11], D. H. Lawrence passionately argues for completeness of being and for accepting our human experience in its entirety, pointing out that wholeness is a much better goal than perfection. Viewed in this context, the novel is important for Lawrence because it can communicate this essential experience of wholeness to a much greater degree than any other form of discourse: and this is what makes the novelist, in Lawrence's words, superior to the saint, the scientist or the philosopher (Lawrence 1998: 206). While each of them is concerned only with one particular aspect of our being, the novelist "affects the whole man alive", setting "the whole tree trembling with a new access of life, and not just stimulating growth in one direction" (ibid., 207). At its best, as Lawrence argues, a novel may awaken in its readers a sense of vitality and purpose; however, it may also help them discern the opposite condition – of what it means to be inwardly inert or dead (ibid,. 209).

This inward inertia, or loss of vitality, is for Lawrence clearly related to "the mechanical principle" that he sees as predominant in the modern world. As Terry Eagleton explains, Lawrence's ethic is

> profoundly at odds with the capitalist or imperialist cult of the will, which [he] regarded as a moral obscenity. Man's dominion over Nature, his masterful bending of the world to his overbearing will, is the calamity of modern humanism. It is the moment of our Fall into modernity – the moment in which human consciousness abstracts itself from its sensuous links with its world, and sets itself over against it (Eagleton 2005: 181).

In another essay, titled "Pan in America" (1926), Lawrence portrays a Native American hunter who "suffered and hungered,

[11] The essay was published posthumously in a collection titled *Phoenix* (1936).

but at least lived in a ceaseless living relation with the universe", deeply alert to the presence of all living forms in his environment and their influence; he did not seek to control or overpower them, but to establish a kind of mutually beneficial exchange and communication which would enable him to survive and thrive among them (Lawrence 1926: 113). As opposed to this, Lawrence argues that in the industrial era "man insulates himself more and more into mechanism":

> The moment man learned to abstract, he began to make engines that would do the work of his body. So, instead of concentrating… upon the living things that made his universe, he concentrated upon engines or instruments which should intervene between him and the living universe, and give him mastery… Man has lived to conquer the phenomenal universe. To a great extent, he has succeeded… A conquered world is no good to man. He sits stupefied with boredom upon his conquest... We need the universe to live again, so that we can live with it (Ibid., 112–113).

The principle of domination, as Lawrence maintains, is harmful not only to the external natural world, but also to man's own psychological well-being, impairing his capacity for a spontaneous and creative response to life and effectively turning him into a kind of "god in the machine" (Ibid., 109). While the author does not advocate some idyllic return to the pre-industrial era, he still believes that the modern condition and state of reification may be overcome by abandoning the desire for mastery and dominance. Man needs to change his attitude, re-open the doors of receptivity and become aware once again of his vivid relatedness with the phenomenal world. In this essay, Lawrence presents it as the awareness of Pan, a Greek deity which for him symbolizes wholeness in all living things (Ibid., 115).

Lawrence also discusses the issue of domination in connection to our psychological structure. He maintains that our psyche should not be dominated by the demands of the rational ego-consciousness; on the contrary, the sense of inner guidance should come from the depths of one's unconscious being. In order to have an authentic and creative existence, it is necessary that we get in touch with the deep inner core of the self, wherein resides the urge for psychic growth and life-affirming motivation. In his non-fictional work *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921), Lawrence refers to this deep psychic layer as the

pristine unconscious, in order to emphasize the difference between his concept and Freud's. The Freudian unconscious, as Lawrence argues, is actually derivative, and consists of suppressed cravings which were originally caused or influenced by the conscious mind. It is a by-product of the ideal consciousness, or its inverted reflection; as Lawrence claims, "The Freudian unconscious is the cellar in which the mind keeps its own bastard spawn" (Lawrence 1965: 591). As opposed to this concept, Lawrence puts forward his notion of the "true" or "pristine" unconscious, a profound life instinct which is unique for each individual and which ontologically precedes consciousness: "We must discover, if we can, the true unconscious, where our life bubbles up in us, prior to any mentality. The first bubbling life in us, which is innocent of any mental alteration, this is the unconscious. It is pristine, not in any way ideal. It is the spontaneous origin from which it behoves us to live" (Ibid., 592).

Eagleton sums up Lawrence's psychological theories in the following way:

> At the centre of each individual self is a kind of unfathomable darkness or otherness... Lawrence calls [it] the Other, the Infinite or spontaneous-creative life… When we are most authentic and spontaneous, we express a principle at work within us whose roots lie incomparably deeper than personality or individual identity. In this sense, we are stewards of our own selves rather than proprietors of them… The self is not ours to create. It is a mysterious gift, which we should cherish and nurture… We simply have to stand by, so to speak, and watch this marvellous efflorescence known as our self flourish into life, without seeking to master and manipulate it… If we wait patiently, unknowingly, on the next flourishing of the self… we experience a kind of secular equivalent of religious faith. But there is also a secular equivalent of sin, which is to deny the life in us by seeking dominion over ourselves or others (Eagleton 2005: 180 – 181).

The notion of connectedness to one's deepest self, and of yielding to its guidance, is also discussed in Lawrence's essay "The Spirit of Place". The essay, which is in fact the introductory chapter to Lawrence's *Studies in Classical American Literature* (1923), discusses the European emigrants and their reasons for moving to America. Originally, as Lawrence explains, the settlers wanted to escape from

their "old masters" in Europe, from the old continent's conservatism and petrified political order. However, Lawrence maintains that the desire to be masterless is just the beginning of one's spiritual quest. It is a kind of negative freedom, or freedom "from", whereas what is required for a meaningful and truly liberated life is a positive freedom, or freedom "for" (Tučev 2016: 207). Those who run away from their old masters can only become "new men" if they allow themselves to be mastered by IT – their own deepest sense of complete being: "Men are free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within... Men are not free when they are doing just what they like... [They] are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes" (Lawrence 2011: 45 – 46).

2. On the Threshold of Consciousness

When it comes to formal innovations which mark Lawrence as a modernist author, it may be argued that they only became prominent in his mature phase. His first three novels – *The White Peacock* (1911), *The Trespassers* (1912) and *Sons and Lovers* (1913) – are still firmly embedded in the realist tradition. The famous early novel *Sons and Lovers*, however, which is generally regarded as Lawrence's first masterpiece, announces his future interest in the workings of the psyche, especially in the way it is influenced by sexual relations (Stevenson 1992: 29). Such psychological interests will compel Lawrence to use innovative narrative techniques in his consequent novels, with a view to exploring and presenting the inner life of his characters.

Significant changes in style appear in Lawrence's next novel, *The Rainbow* (1915). Terry Eagleton argues that here it becomes possible to discern two separate languages within the narrative: one which still abides by the conventions of realist description, and the other which engages in modernist experimentation in order to present the characters' psyche. This shift in discourse occurs simultaneously with the shift in Lawrence's interest – from social issues to the exploration of his characters' spiritual history. As Eagleton explains, the characters in *The Rainbow* react to the acquisitive, mechanistic

social world with disdain, feeling that it is "brittle and unreal compared with the depth and opulence of the inner life" (Eagleton 2005: 188). Lawrence's presentation, however, also suggests that these characters feel alienated from the existing social order, and that what they perceive "is an alienated vision of an alienated world" (Ibid.). While *The Rainbow* still manages to hold these two divergent discourses together, Lawrence's next novel, *Women in Love* (1920), abandons completely the conventions of the realist narrative such as causality and temporal sequence. With this work, according to Eagleton, Lawrence achieves a new kind of fictional form which is entirely subordinated to the author's need to convey his metaphysical insights; these insights concern the spiritual crisis of Western civilization in the aftermath of World War I and his characters' quest for salvation and love (Ibid., 189).

On the other hand, Drew Milne argues that the displacement of realism in Lawrence's novels is never complete. In his opinion, throughout his writing career Lawrence continues to resort to literary realism in order to represent social and historical conditions which give rise to the disaffection of his characters, whereas modernist innovations in style and language are used to express the characters' desire for some form of deliverance and personal transcendence (Milne 2001: 208).

Randall Stevenson points out that the most experimental modernist technique – stream of consciousness – did not suit Lawrence's artistic purpose. The reason for this is that his narrative often aims to convey psychological experiences which hardly reach the threshold of consciousness. Lawrence's characters, as Stevenson maintains, are rarely capable of explaining by themselves what they are going through; they can neither control rationally nor interpret their own overwhelming desires and urges. They cannot integrate them into their conscious attitude nor fully articulate or conceptualize them. For this reason, transcribing the inner voice of these characters would not represent them adequately, as in that way the reader would not gain access to the portion of their experience which remains beyond understanding and articulation (Stevenson 1992: 20).

According to Stevenson, Lawrence resolves this issue in his narratives in two different ways. The first is "not to attempt a report

of characters' feelings but to dramatise them in symbolic episodes", which are "at once relatively natural… yet simultaneously highly endowed with wider significance and suggestion about the deeper emotions of his characters and about the unconscious forces that structure their relationships" (Ibid., 31). In Lawrence's novella *St Mawr*, for instance, the moment when the protagonist, Lou Carrington, views the stallion St Mawr for the first time symbolically marks the moment of her spiritual awakening. We are told that at that moment the walls of her being "suddenly melted away" (Lawrence 1981: 22), making her aware of the suppressed and hitherto unknown portions of the self, the vitality which is sorely lacking in her marriage and her social interactions.

Another narrative strategy which Lawrence often uses is to report the revelatory experiences of his characters by means of free indirect style. This technique is frequently employed by other Modernist authors as well, although it may also be viewed as an inherent feature of the novelistic genre in general. As Gerard Genette argues in his study *Narrative Discourse* (1979), the three basic ways in which a character's speech may be presented in fiction (by means of narration, dramatisation, or indirect transposition) are often intertwined in the novelistic practice, leading to the emergence of a variant known as free indirect discourse, or free indirect style. It is characterized by subtle, imperceptible shifts from an impersonal third-person narration to a direct, personal expression of the words and thoughts of a character. Free indirect style leaves out quotation marks and introductory phrases which would have conventionally marked for the reader whose speech is being recorded. As Genette explains, in this kind of discourse "the narrator takes on the speech of the character, or, if one prefers, the character speaks through the voice of the narrator, and the two instances are then *merged*" (Genette 1980: 174). Unlike the stream of consciousness technique, where the narrative is completely contained within the mind of a character, and the voice of authorial omniscience completely abandoned, free indirect style is characterized by a kind of compromise between the objective and the subjective. By using it, the author conveys the presence of a more comprehensive consciousness, which not only exists alongside all the subjective viewpoints in the novel but also transcends them. Given the

content of Lawrence's novels, this is exactly the kind of compromise he needs, as his characters tend to deal with psychic experiences they cannot fully grasp with their conscious minds. In the aforementioned scene in *St Mawr*, Lawrence resorts to free indirect style to represent the impact that the stallion has on the protagonist:

> What was it? Almost like a god looking at her terribly out of the everlasting dark, she had felt the eyes of that horse; great, glowing, fearsome eyes, arched with a question, and containing a white blade of light like a threat. What was his non-human question, and his uncanny threat? She didn't know (Lawrence 1981: 22).

In such passages in Lawrence's prose, it sometimes becomes impossible to differentiate between the voice of the narrator and the voice of the character. The resulting statements, as Stevenson points out, appear to be "freely located", generated by fusing various voices, and one gets the impression that they have been produced by the visionary world of the novel itself. This style, which is often referred to as Lawrence's "prophetic style", is characteristically used by the author to convey his moral and spiritual vision (Stevenson 1992: 31).

3. *St Mawr*

3.1. Lawrence's Dramatic Poem

Written in 1925, Lawrence's novella *St Mawr* provides a good example of his mature use of narrative techniques, as well as of his implicit philosophical views. The plot focuses on the spiritual quest of Lou Carrington, a young American expatriate living in London. Following a marriage crisis, Lou leaves behind her life in the upper class English society, moves back to America and eventually settles on a secluded ranch in New Mexico.

At the beginning of the novel, Lou is married to Rico, an Australian aristocrat and a fashionable but talentless painter. Their marriage is described as passionless and platonic, a "nervous attachment, rather than a sexual love" (Lawrence 1981: 14). Lou's inner transformation begins when she encounters for the first time the magnificent stallion, St Mawr, whom she was planning to buy for her

husband. St Mawr's great vitality and energy, and a sense of mystery surrounding his entire bearing, have a profound impact on Lou, who suddenly becomes aware of the deeper, unconscious and hitherto unexplored layers of her being. In the aftermath of this encounter, Lou starts to feel increasingly estranged from Rico. Her interactions within the upper-class London society strike her as superficial and she is constantly haunted by a feeling of unreality. This psychological crisis deepens when the couple, along with Lou's mother, Mrs Witt, decide to spend some time in a rented house in Shropshire, on the Welsh border. A crucial event takes place during an outing to a natural site called the Devil's Chair. At one point, St Mawr spots a dead adder by a stream, shies and backs up; but the rider, Rico, foolishly attempts to impose his will and force the horse on. St Mawr rears and Rico, stubbornly clutching the reins, pulls the horse over and backwards on top of him.

Following Rico's injury, a group of his friends want to either kill or geld the stallion. However, Lou and her mother, believing that St Mawr is not to blame for the incident, decide to take him to their native Texas. Once there, Lou realizes that all of her previous dealings with men have been meaningless, futile and damaging to her psychic wholeness. She buys a ranch in the mountains of New Mexico and decides to live there in isolation for a while, in spite of the harsh conditions, hoping to establish rapport with the spirit of wild nature, and also heal her inner being in the process.

*

Although *St Mawr* belongs to a group of shorter and lesser known works within Lawrence's oeuvre, F. R. Leavis praises it in his study on Lawrence (*D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, 1955) as one his major achievements. Leavis calls it a "dramatic poem" and an "astonishing work of genius", arguing that the novella presents a case of creative and technical originality comparable to *The Waste Land*, both in its scope and intensity. As Leavis argues, this is not a random comparison of two major Modernist works but the one based on his belief that *St Mawr* also has a "waste land" for its subject matter – in other words, that both Lawrence and Eliot depict the Western civilization of the first decades of the twentieth century in a state of spiritual devastation

and in a desperate need of some kind of renewal (Leavis 1978: 271). Lawrence's protagonist, Lou Witt, gains an insight about this general state of hollowness and sterility, as well as about the meaninglessness of her own social interactions, as a consequence of her encounter with the vibrantly alive stallion St Mawr. St Mawr is thus the agent of transformation who sets in motion the entire storyline, initiates the heroine's quest and prompts the characters in the novel to examine what it means to live an authentic and spontaneous life. For this reason, it is necessary to explore the various symbolical implications of this central figure in Lawrence's narrative.

In addition, Lou's realization that her marriage is a failure opens up a number of questions about intimate human relationships within the context of the exhausted post-war European civilization. Lawrence explores these questions in the novel while tying them to the presentation of his central characters – Lou, Rico, Mrs Witt and the two grooms, Phoenix and Lewis. Their characterizations will also be discussed in the following sections of this chapter. Finally, the extended lyrical description of the mountain country in New Mexico where Lou decides to settle at the end of the novel also needs to be addressed in order to understand its significance within Lawrence's "dramatic poem".

3.2. Pan's Creature

When Lou first sees St Mawr, she has a feeling that she is in the presence of a demon, or some pagan deity:

> The wild, brilliant, alert head of St Mawr seemed to look at her out of another world. It was as if she had had a vision, as if the walls of her own world had suddenly melted away, leaving her in a great darkness, in the midst of which the large, brilliant eyes of that horse looked at her with demonish question, while his naked ears stood up like daggers from the naked lines of his inhuman head, and his great body glowed red with power... He was some splendid demon, and she must worship him (Lawrence 1981: 22).

Further on in the novel, it is revealed that the deity Lawrence is referring to in this passage is Pan. In Lou's conversation with the artist Cartwright, Pan is explained in the same way as in Lawrence's

essay "Pan in America". Cartwright describes him as "the god that is hidden in everything... the hidden mystery – the hidden cause... Pan wasn't *he* at all: not even a great God. He was Pan. All: what you see when you see in full" (ibid., 61–62). Asked whether Pan may be seen in modern man, Cartwright replies that in man one can only see Pan in his "fallen", satyr-like, goat-legged form – suggesting that there is no longer anything admirable, mysterious or divine in modern humanity. On the other hand, upon seeing St Mawr, Cartwright recognizes that Pan is still alive in the stallion.

In his writings, Lawrence links Pan not only to the ancient Greek myths, but also to the beliefs of Native Americans, which he describes as essentially pantheistic. He argues that "the Red Indian" is religious in the oldest and deepest sense of the word, which for Lawrence implies a kind of instinctive piety and natural reverence for all living things (Ehlert 2001: 114). "In the oldest religion," writes Lawrence, "everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive" (Lawrence 1961: 146). It may be argued that the sense of divine (or demonic) that Lou experiences in the presence of St Mawr is likewise an instance of this archaic, instinctive reverence for the living universe.

In the above passage from *St Mawr*, depicting Lou's first encounter with the stallion, her experience is also explained in terms of a vision: "It was as if she had had a vision, as if the walls of her own world had suddenly melted away" (Lawrence 1981: 22). The motif of vision may be related to Jung's theories on visionary knowledge, and his explanation that "that which appears in the vision is the collective unconscious" (Jung 2004: 235). Archetypal images which emerge from the deep unconscious layers of the psyche in the instances when one's conscious mind is for some reason eclipsed (in dreams, moments of artistic inspiration, narcotic states, or cases of insanity) have, according to Jung, a compensatory function. In other words, their purpose, and the reason they surface to the level of consciousness, is to "bring a one-sided, abnormal or dangerous state of consciousness into equilibrium" (Ibid.). Namely, Jung maintains that the psyche has a self-regulating mechanism, so that when our conscious attitude is unbalanced, biased or too narrow, an image appears from the collective unconscious which may help to restore our psychic balance, heal us or at least remind us

of the portion or reality we have suppressed. In this context, it may be argued that the stallion in Lawrence's novel is an archetypal image: it certainly has a compensatory effect in Lou's life, "melting" the wall which separates her conscious from her unconscious self, and making her aware of an aspect of her own being which she was previously alienated from.

Lou's profound reaction to St Mawr also stands in contrast to a very shallow way in which Rico reacts when he sees the stallion for the first time. We are told that Rico gazes at St Mawr "with an artist's eye", exclaiming that the horse has a fascinating colour and would be "marvellous in a composition" (Lawrence 1981: 24). The phrase "artist's eye" is utterly ironic, as Lawrence actually wants to point out that Rico is not a real artist and does not possess true artistic sensibility. Rico only looks at the horse superficially, noticing St Mawr's bright colour, but not his vitality or otherworldliness that would inspire him to reach deeper insights about himself and the world he lives in (Leavis 1978: 275).

After her encounter with St Mawr, Lou becomes overwhelmed by a sense of unreality. While attending upper-class dinners, cocktails and dances in London, she has an impression that she is surrounded by "young bare-faced unrealities", wraiths who are only ostensibly present and alive. She thinks of this glamorous world of wealthy people, endlessly seeking pleasure, as a "cardboard let's-be-happy world", lacking any depth or authenticity (Lawrence 1981: 35). As the narrative suggests, the reason these young people have such meaningless, two-dimensional lives is that they are completely divorced from their own instinctive being and the deeper layers of their psyche – those very layers that Lou became aware of in the presence of St Mawr. Rico and his peers are designated as "bodiless", which suggests that they only identify with their "head", i.e., with their conscious, rational self. This is the impression Lou gets while observing Rico:

> His face was long and well-defined, and with the hair taken straight back from the brow. It seemed as well-made as his clothing, and as perpetually presentable. You could not imagine his face dirty, or scrubby and unshaven, or bearded, or even moustached. It was perfectly prepared for social purposes. If his head had been cut off, like John the Baptist's, it would have been a thing complete in itself, would not have missed the body in the least (Ibid., 25–26).

That this shallow and myopic ego-consciousness, embodied in Rico, should try to master and dominate the powerful instinctive energy embodied in St Mawr is for Lawrence utterly wrong, and represents, as Terry Eagleton terms it, a secular equivalent of sin (Eagleton 2005: 181). Within these coordinates, the crucial scene in the novel, in which the stallion overthrows Rico, may be interpreted as a rebellion of natural energy, epitomized in St Mawr, against an unworthy master and a twisted hierarchy of being. It is important to point out that St Mawr is not presented by Lawrence as a dangerous, vicious animal which overthrows and crushes its rider out of malice: as F. R. Leavis maintains, St Mawr "represents deep impulsions of life that are thwarted in the modern world... he has been mishandled and outraged by his human master, so that his 'break' isn't mere viciousness, but a compelling protest of life" (Leavis 1978: 287). St Mawr rebels against Rico's mastery at the moment when he spots a poisonous adder on the path his rider forces him to take – suggesting, in symbolical terms established by the narrative, that our narrow-minded conscious self may be taking us in a wrong and possibly deadly direction. Leavis explains the scene in the following way:

> [St Mawr] stands for the sure intuition, the warning perception, of the vitally dangerous, the wrong path; he stands for the warning intuition of evil and disaster. He rightly balks at the adder; but his rider – assertively developed, insulated head and 'speaking face' – blindly and brutally ignores the living sentience beneath him... and tries to force St Mawr by sheer dominance of will against that which his whole being recoils from (Leavis 1978: 288–289).

The moment when Rico, lying on the ground, absurdly continues to clutch the reins, still trying to control the horse, is etched in Lou's mind as an image of pure evil.

If our urge to master and dominate the Other is, in Lawrentian terms, a sin, then another equally deadly sin presented in the novel is undermining. In the aftermath of the incident with Rico and St Mawr, Lou thinks about the tendency of young people in her social circles to constantly undermine one another: "Never, by any chance, injure your fellow men openly. But always injure him secretly. Make a fool of him, and undermine his nature... People performing outward acts of loyalty, piety, self-sacrifice. But inwardly bent on undermining, betraying.

Directing all their subtle evil will against any positive living thing" (Lawrence 1981: 77–78). Without fully realizing it, people seem to turn destructively against whatever is spontaneous and vital in another person's being – which is, for Lawrence, another way in which evil operates in the modern world and we betray our deepest nature. In the novel, Lou also thinks about it as an "evil principle", a force directed against life itself and seeking to reverse living energy into destruction. She recognizes this selfsame impulse in the intention of Rico's friends to geld St Mawr. It is at this point that she comes to perceive England as a deathland in which no full life is possible and from which she must flee (Kinkead-Weekes 2001: 78).

3.3. Mystery in Being a Man

The character most clearly contrasted to Rico is St Mawr's groom, Lewis. While Rico is defined by his cleverness, shallow witticisms and a secret desire for mastery, Lewis is characterized by intuition and a deep sense of connectedness to nature. He may be viewed as a kind of bridge, or a mediator, between the human and the natural world (Ehlert 2001: 120). Mrs Witt reflects on the way Lewis rides St Mawr: "He seems to sink himself in the horse. When I speak to him, I'm not sure whether I'm speaking to a man or to a horse" (Lawrence 1981: 31). On other occasions, while watching Lewis tend to an injured bird, or groom St Mawr, Mrs Witt becomes aware of "another world, silent, where each creature is alone in its own aura of silence, the mystery of power... another communion, silent, excluding her" (ibid., 106).

Even though she is aware of, and attracted by, Lewis's otherness, Mrs Witt is also one of the controllers in the novel. As her name suggests, she appreciates the powers of intellect and the attitude of rational mastery over the world and over one's own life. In this sense, her urge to cut Lewis's unkempt hair represents yet another instance of undermining, or of seeking to dominate the Other. We are told that Mrs Witt generally loves "trimming", which may be viewed as her way of imposing control over growing, living things: "...she loved trimming. She loved arranging unnatural and pretty salads... She liked pruning rose-trees, or beginning to cut a yew hedge into shape" (Ibid., 51–52). Unlike Lou, who appreciates Lewis's intuitive way of thinking and argues that she cannot call him "stupid" just because his concerns and

priorities are different from hers, Mrs Witt dismisses him as "a man with no mind, just the animal in man" (Ibid., 55).

While Mrs Witt admires mind and cleverness in men, Lou believes that an ideal partner for her would be a kind of mystical man, endowed with a different kind of wisdom which does not rely on the established thought patterns and conventional attitudes. The following passage in which Lou describes her mystical man, or "animal man", clearly demonstrates Lawrence's celebration of our instinctive being:

> It seems to me there's something else besides mind and cleverness... Perhaps it is the animal. Just think of St Mawr! I've thought so much about him. We call him an animal, but we never know what it means. He seems a far greater mystery to me than a clever man. He's a horse. Why can't one say in the same way, of a man: *He's a man*? There seems no mystery in being a man...
>
> A pure animal man would be as lovely as a deer or a leopard, burning like a flame fed straight from underneath. And he'd be part of the unseen, like a mouse is, even. And he'd never cease to wonder, he'd breathe silence and unseen wonder, as the partridges do, running in the stubble. He'd be all animals in turn, instead of one, fixed automatic thing, which he is now (Ibid., 56–58).

The phrase "fixed automatic thing" is reminiscent of Lawrence's theories about the mechanical principle which he sees as predominant in the era of late industrialism, turning the modern man into a kind of "god in the machine" and depriving him or creativity and spontaneity (Lawrence 1926: 109). Lawrence's critique of sexual relationships in this novel, as Drew Milne points out, is also closely related to his pacifism and his contention that "male degeneration" was caused not only by industrialism, but also by the traumatic consequences of the First World War (Milne 2001: 208–209).

3. 4. A Spirit that is Wild

Even though Mrs Witt has admired mind and cleverness in men throughout her life, at the age of fifty she finds herself disappointed by the men she encounters in her metropolitan circles. She observes that their thinking lacks originality – it is repetitious and "deadly dull", like "knitting the same pattern over and over again" (Ibid., 56). Lawrence seems to suggest that these men's lack of physical vitality

has also resulted in a lack of spontaneity and creativity in thinking, impairing their rational capacity and causing the mind to wither along with the body. Such realizations cause Mrs Witt to gradually change her perception in the course of the novel. Eventually, she discovers that identifying with her wit and cleverness, which have constituted her notion of the self throughout her life, has caused in her a sense of unreality. Her social identity as a wealthy Texan proprietor has likewise come to seem unreal to her. While watching a funeral in Shropshire, Mrs Witt has a feeling that she exists only as a social persona, reduced to the way she has acted and been perceived in high society. As she says to Lou,

> I begin to wonder if I've ever been anywhere. I seem to have been a daily sequence of newspaper remarks... I'm sure I never really conceived you and gave you birth. It all happened in newspaper notices. It's a newspaper fact that you are my child, and that's all there is to it... I never had any motherhood, except in newspaper fact. I never was a wife, except in newspaper notices. I never was a young girl, except in newspaper remarks. Bury everything I ever said or that was said about me, and you've buried *me* (Ibid., 93).

Reminded of a church hymn whose refrain goes "Oh Death, where is thy sting?", Mrs Witt deliberately alters its meaning. The original meaning of the hymn implies that a pious and virtuous life leads to heaven and that therefore the faithful do not need to fear dying – death has no "sting" for them. As opposed to this, however, Mrs Witt argues that death has no sting for those who were never fully alive. Since there was no passion or intensity in such people's lives, their dying will not be an intense experience either: "I want death to be real to me... I *want* it to hurt me... If it hurts me enough, I shall know I was alive" (Ibid.). While listening to her mother uttering these words, Lou is suddenly overwhelmed by fear, which Lawrence designates as "the terror of *too late*" (Ibid., 94). The new insights have come to Mrs Witt too late in her life and she does not feel capable of acting upon them or essentially changing the established patterns of her behaviour.

Their groom, Lewis, likewise seems to feel that it is too late for Mrs Witt to undergo any significant change. When she proposes to marry him, Lewis rejects her by saying that he could never give his body "to any woman who didn't respect it" (ibid., 114). Mrs Witt's

attempt to form a relationship with her servant, whose natural energy and intuitive wisdom she has come to recognise as superior to her own, may be viewed as a prefiguration of the relationship between Connie and Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). *St Mawr* is, however, more pessimistic than *Lady Chatterley* when it comes to the possibility of such reconciliations between the two worlds (Milne 2001: 209).

While it may be late for Mrs Witt, it is not too late for Lou – who leaves Europe not only to save St Mawr, but also to save herself from the destiny described by her mother: a hollow, fruitless life which would eventually reduce her to a "daily sequence of newspaper remarks" and gossip of the metropolitan elite. Upon arrival to America, Lou first spends some time on her childhood ranch in Texas. However, even though the people she encounters there are very different from the circles she moved in while she was in England, she still does not feel satisfied with the change. While the Texans do not play the games of "undermining" and domineering, and are not bent on subverting her inner being the way Rico and his peers did in England, Lou is disappointed in them because they seem to have no depth:

> Lou and her mother stayed a fortnight on the ranch. It was all so queer: so crude, so rough, so easy, and so meaningless. Lou couldn't get over the feeling that it all meant nothing. There were no roots of reality at all. No consciousness below the surface, no meaning in anything save the obvious, the blatantly obvious. It was like life enacted in a mirror. Visually, it was wildly vital. But there was nothing behind it. Or like a cinematograph: flat shapes, exactly like men, but without any substance of reality, rapidly rattling away with talk, emotions, activity, all in the flat, nothing behind it. No deeper consciousness at all… But at least, this Texan life, if it had no bowels, no vitals, at least it could not prey on one's own vitals. It was this much better than Europe (Lawrence 1981: 137).

Lou's thoughts about Texans are closely related to the theories Lawrence put forward in his essay "The Spirit of Place". In the essay, he observes that the first settlers to America reached only a kind of "negative freedom", liberating themselves from the rigid social hierarchies which they had left behind in Europe, but that this state of being masterless still cannot be regarded as the final goal

of one's spiritual journey[12]. Through Lou, Lawrence expresses the same opinion about the contemporary Americans: they remind Lou of cinematographic images, two-dimensional and "flat", because they are not in touch with their own deepest self, or IT, as Lawrence calls it in his essay. The same may be said of Phoenix, Mrs Witt's servant and half-Navajo by origin. Unlike the Native Americans whom Lawrence admires in "The Death of Pan" for their vitality and their intuitive sense of kinship with the natural surroundings, Phoenix appears to have been irrevocably corrupted by the impact of the Western culture. This is most obvious in his interaction with Lou. Although Phoenix does not feel attracted to her, he still makes advances because of the economic gain such a relationship might bring him:

> Nevertheless he was ready to trade his sex, which, in his opinion, every white woman was secretly pining for, for the white woman's money and social privileges. In the daytime, all the thrill and excitement of the white man's motor-cars and moving pictures and ice-cream sodas… In the night, the soft, watery-soft warmth of an Indian or half-Indian woman. This was Phoenix's idea of life for himself (ibid., 143).

This is why Lou's quest for wholeness has to take her further into the wild, to a mountainous country in New Mexico and a secluded ranch where she decides to settle.

The description of the ranch, Las Chivas, is to a great degree based on the biographical facts and coincides with the description of the Kiowa Ranch in New Mexico where Lawrence and his wife Frida lived for some time in 1923 and 1924 (Ehlert 2001: 115). The vivid, inspired passages in the novel glorifying the beauty of this wild landscape serve, at the same time, as a contrast to the meanness and pettiness of human affairs and the lives of wealthy English elite as presented in the previous sections of the novel (Leavis 1978: 294). They are, as Leavis puts it, a celebration of "the creative force of life" (Ibid., 295). The wild New Mexican landscape is a place where, in Lawrence's terms, Pan is still alive, or a place where Lou can get in touch with IT.

While the nature in this area is presented as magnificent and breathtakingly beautiful, it is simultaneously suggested that the spirit

[12] See p. 46 of this book.

of the wild is harsh, and at times even hostile to those who wish to settle in such a place. Lou is aware that living on Las Chivas is going to be a constant struggle for survival: "It is a spirit. And it's here, on this ranch. It's here, in this landscape… It's something wild, that will hurt me sometimes and will wear me down sometimes" (Lawrence 1981: 165). In spite of this, however, she welcomes it as a place of healing where she will be able to recover from the experience of the exhausted European civilisation, which she now considers damaging to her soul. Lou concludes that all of her previous dealings with men, including Rico and Phoenix, "have only broken my stillness and messed up my doorways" (Ibid., 146), and that instead of starting a new relationship she needs loneliness in order to cherish and explore her newly established connection with the "wild spirit", and with the vital flame in her own being. Lou compares her sense of mission to the religious experience of the Vestal Virgins, whose task was to keep the fire eternally burning in Apollo's temple: "Let me know myself and my role. I am one of the eternal Virgins, serving the eternal life… I ought to stay Virgin, and still, very, very still, and serve the most perfect service. I want my temple and my loneliness and my Apollo mystery of the inner fire" (Ibid., 146–147).

James Joyce

1. Epiphanies and Transfigurations

Between 1900 and 1903, Joyce wrote a number of prose poems which he collected in a notebook. He called them "epiphanies", a term he would later explain in his draft novel *Stephen Hero* (1904). Epiphany, for Joyce, is "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself"; and it is the task of an artist "to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (Joyce 1955: 211). The epiphanies collected in Joyce's notebook were fragments of conversations, brief encounters or events he had personally witnessed: as the definition implies, these occurrences triggered in him a spiritual insight, and thus gained artistic value (Bulson 2006: 58–59). Epiphany is originally a religious term, derived from the Greek word for revelation. In Christianity, epiphany refers to the manifestation of God, and in particular the manifestation of Christ's divinity to the Magi. Joyce, however, appropriated the word for the secular purpose of explaining his artistic experience; it was one of his first attempts to provide a theoretical background for his writings (ibid., 59).

As Richard Ellmann points out, there are in fact two kinds of epiphanies featuring in Joyce's work:

> Sometimes the epiphanies are "eucharistic", another term arrogantly borrowed by Joyce from Christianity and invested with secular meaning. These are moments of fullness or of passion. Sometimes the epiphanies are rewarding for another reason, that they convey precisely the flavour of unpalatable experiences... The unpalatable epiphanies often include things to be got rid of, examples of fatuity or imperceptiveness, caught deftly in a conversational exchange of two or three sentences (Ellmann 1959: 87).

The epiphanies which appear in Joyce's collection of short stories, *Dubliners* (1914), generally belong to the latter, "unpalatable" kind. Significantly, the last and the most famous story in the collection, "The Dead", takes place on the day of the Epiphany, a religious holiday celebrated on January 6, which in the story is also the day when the Morkan sisters traditionally organize a dinner party. However, the epiphany which the protagonist, Gabriel, will experience at the end of the story is not a religious revelation. Rather, it is a psychological insight concerning his incapacity for deep emotional involvement, and his acknowledgement of the inner inertia that would eventually cause him to "fade and wither dismally with age" (Joyce 1996: 255) instead of dying courageously, motivated by passion and love like his rival Michael Furey. The epiphanies reached by other characters in *Dubliners* are of the same ilk as Gabriel's, which is why Terry Eagleton calls them "anti-epiphanies": "there is a sense in which the stories in *Dubliners* turn rather on 'anti-epiphanies'. Most of them focus on some ambition not achieved, some vision or desire frustrated, some key moment which turns out to be sourly disenchanting... A typical situation is one of a man or woman trapped, catching a glimpse of a way out, and failing to take it" (Eagleton 2005: 204). Usually, the characters in *Dubliners* gain an insight into how they might free themselves from the drab, deadening routine of their unsatisfactory lives, but then fail to act upon it.

The epiphanies which Stephen Dedalus, Joyce's fictional alter-ego, experiences in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) are of the former kind, "moments of fullness and passion", moments when the young artist experiences a sense of triumph, spiritual elevation or an upsurge of vital energy. Each epiphany marks a significant stage in Stephen's emotional, intellectual and psychological development, and the entire novel is organized around such formative moments through which Stephen grasps his destiny and life's calling (Belanger 2001: xvi). Joyce's structuring and organizing the novel in this manner is in line with the general modernist tendency towards subjectivity: the events which objectively take place in Stephen's life are of lesser importance than the imprint they leave on his soul and the way they contribute to his inner growth.

Another term which Joyce has borrowed from religious vocabulary and used metaphorically to elucidate his art is *epicleti*.

As Ellmann explains, the correct Latin form of the word is actually *epicleses*, and it refers to an invocation found in the Eastern Church ritual, whereby the Holy Ghost is called on to transform wine and bread into the blood and body of Christ (Ellmann 1959: 169). In a conversation with his brother Stanislaus, Joyce explained the term by saying that he was trying "to give people some kind of intellectual pleasure or spiritual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own... for their mental, moral and spiritual uplift" (quoted in Ellmann 1959: 169). In another conversation with Stanislaus, Joyce further elaborates on this notion:

> Do you see that man who has just skipped out of the way of the tram? Consider, if he had been run over, how significant every act of his would become. I don't mean for the police inspector. I mean for anybody who knew him. And his thoughts, for anybody that could know them. It is my idea of the significance of trivial things that I want to give the two or three unfortunate wretches who may eventually read me (ibid.).

Joyce's interest in everyday, trivial occurrences in the life of ordinary people makes him almost unique among the modernist authors. As Eagleton points out, it also makes him the greatest democrat among them: "Joyce... is that rare creature, an avant-garde artist who is also a genuine democrat. Hardly any other modernist writer is at once so esoteric and down to earth. There is a carnivalesque quality to his writing, a gusto, humour and sense of ease with the body, which exists cheek-by-jowl with the high-modernist quality of his writing" (Eagleton 2005: 195). It is the same characteristic of Joyce's writing that Martha Nussbaum, in her study *Upheaval of Thought* (2001), calls "the transfiguration of everyday life". Nussbaum praises Joyce's work because of what she perceives as the author's willingness to embrace the human experience in its totality – including its bodily, disorderly and mundane aspects. The most important feature of Joyce's "democratic" vision, for Nussbaum, is his celebration of bodily love (Nussbaum 2001: 692).

Writing the kind of fiction which would lead modern man towards a greater acceptance of the body and sexuality has been a part of Joyce's artistic creed from the beginning. In an early satirical poem "The Holy Office" (1905), Joyce calls himself "Katharsis-

Purgative", arguing that it is his role as a poet to provide purgative relief to the reader by writing about everyday human reality, "tavern and brothel", which religious-minded or traditionalist writers do not allow themselves to explore. In Joyce's opinion, such writers are, for instance, Yeats and Synge, and other prominent members of the Celtic Revival literary movement whom he criticizes in the poem. Joyce also points out that the Catholic Church will regard his frankness and acceptance of sexuality as a "sewer", whereas it really has a cleansing function, healing the split between body and soul that has been caused by the dogmatic religious teachings. In her analysis of "The Holy Office", Nussbaum concludes: "The church will consider Joyce's frankly sexual art as a kind of sewage. His defiant conceit turns the metaphor around, saying that it is the religious refusal of the body that is sewage, and that his art... will drain it off, leaving the body – and the soul – in peace and health henceforth" (Nussbaum 2001: 684).

Conversely, as Nussbaum points out, our inability to embrace the totality of human experience may lead to self-hatred, a feeling which may even be prompted by certain works of art. These are the works which, according to Nussbaum, constitute the so-called "ascent" tradition. Namely, by analysing the writings of authors such as Plato, Augustine, Dante, Spinoza, Whitman or Proust, she comes to a conclusion that all of them project a kind of sublimated image of love and life, constructing in the reader's mind an idealized version of his or her own self. This self appears to be removed from the messiness of our ordinary existence:

> ...all of these ascents in a real sense repudiate us. Nobody has a menstrual period in Plato. Nobody excretes in Spinoza. Nobody masturbates in Proust... Augustine and Dante record such moments, but leave them behind in Hell... In Whitman, the body and erotic desire are rehabilitated, but also transfigured, made part of the great march of justice in the world, rather than just being by themselves... In none of these texts, then, does love wear a real-life body with its hungers and thirsts and fantasies (Ibid., 681–682).

As a result, Nussbaum argues, these works create a wide gap between the constructed reader and the real-life reader, which may cause us anger and self-disgust when we return from the experience of reading and discover that we are still ourselves. Joyce's work, on the other hand, closes the selfsame gap with the narrative method which

Nussbaum calls "the descent of love". By this she primarily means a descent into the chaos and disorder of erotic love, eventually leading the reader towards embracing all the aspects of his human experience (ibid., 692).

By encouraging such self-acceptance, Joyce's writings may also enable us to connect with the Other. Namely, as Nussbaum writes, self-hatred may easily lead to the hatred of others, as we tend to project the undesirable aspects of our own being onto the members of other ethnic, racial or religious groups, which is also an important motif in Joyce's work. Embracing one's sexuality and bodily urges may therefore have a double function, as it leads both towards healing the gap in one's own psyche and towards transcending various kinds of narrow-mindedness and bigotry. This is why Nussbaum argues that Leopold Bloom, the hero of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), primarily has in mind erotic love when he explains to the anti-Semites and nationalists in Barney Kiernan's pub what is "the opposite of hatred":

> But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.
> – What? says Alf.
> – Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred (Joyce 2010: 301).

2. From Paralysis to Parallax

In his study *Axel's Castle* (1931), Edmund Wilson praises Joyce for his ability to use Symbolist methods in dramatizing his characters' states of mind, but points out that Joyce was at the same time "a master of Naturalism as great as Flaubert" (Wilson 1959: 24–25). Joyce's masterful use of Naturalist techniques is especially evident in his collection of short stories, *Dubliners*. Even though the first three stories in the collection are written as first-person narratives, all of them are conventional in terms of style. The narrative method in these stories does not draw attention to itself nor mediate conspicuously between the subject matter and the reader, because Joyce's focus is primarily on social criticism. In this case, conventional naturalist and realist methods are suitable for his purpose – which is to portray the paralysis

of Dublin's dull, unimaginative middle class, their drab and static lives and myopic political views.

Stephen Hero, Joyce's draft novel which he began working on around 1904, was likewise written in the Realist tradition, from the point of view of an objective and detached narrator. A drastic change in narrative strategy took place between the manuscript of *Stephen Hero* and the final version of the novel which Joyce would eventually publish as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in 1916, and which may be regarded, in terms of technique, as his first fully modernist work. In *A Portrait*, Joyce focuses on dramatising subjective mental states and psychological experiences of his protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, placing the centre of action inside his consciousness (Stevenson 1992: 46). The style of the novel mimics Stephen's intellectual growth, beginning with the childlike simplicity of the first chapter and using idiom which becomes increasingly more sophisticated as the protagonist's mind is developing and nearing maturity. It may be defined as a variant of Free Indirect Style, but Joyce has a specific and recognizable approach to it, which he will also use to introduce some of the characters in his next novel, *Ulysses*. Stevenson explains it by pointing out that *A Portrait*, as well as some sections of *Ulysses*, "appear as if written by the characters who feature in them; as if the characters were somehow helping to tell their own story, shaping its style around their distinctive linguistic habits and expressive idioms" (ibid., 47). The overall impression is that for each of these characters Joyce has invented a cluster of idiomatic expressions which they would use if *they* were writing a novel (Tučev 2017: 67). This is, for instance, the case with Gerty McDowell, who appears to be the "author" of the first half of the thirteenth chapter of *Ulysses*: this part of the novel is purposefully written in a decorative, clichéd, cheaply romantic style parodying popular sentimental fiction and contemporary women's magazines, because these are the kinds of writings which to a great deal permeate Gerty's consciousness (ibid.). Upon seeing Leopold Bloom on the shore of Sandymount, Gerty spins a romantic fantasy, casting him in the role of a mysterious stranger, whose life is for some reason fraught with misfortune and doom. Simultaneously she casts herself in the role of a sacrificial heroine who will heal him with her love:

> There were wounds that wanted healing with heartbalm... She just yearned to know all, to forgive all if she could make him fall in love with her, make him forget the memory of the past. Then mayhap he would embrace her gently, like a real man, crushing her soft body to him, and love her, his ownest girlie, for herself alone (Joyce 2010: 324).

Joycean mimicry may also be explained in conjunction with Bakhtin's theories on "character zones". Namely, in analysing Turgenev's narrative techniques, Bakhtin focuses on the passages which (similar to Joyce's) appear to have been written by one of the characters and not by the author. In such passages, as Bakhtin explains, "the entire emotional structure belongs to [the character]... This is his inner speech, but transmitted in a way regulated by the author" (Bakhtin 1981: 319). Such hybridizations, as Bakhtin calls them, stem from the fact that the important characters in a novel always generate a zone of influence surrounding them and extending beyond the boundaries of the direct speech allotted to them in the text: "The area occupied by an important character's voice must in any event be broader than his direct and 'actual' words. This zone surrounding the important characters in the novel is stylistically profoundly idiosyncratic: the most varied hybrid constructions hold sway in it" (ibid., 320).

In portraying some characters in *Ulysses* – most notably, in some of the passages dealing with the three protagonists, Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and his wife Molly – Joyce also applies the most innovative modernist technique of the stream of consciousness, whereby the narrative is completely contained in a character's mind, and the voice of the authorial omniscience is completely abandoned. Joyce has been praised by numerous critics for the advances he made in the use of the stream-of-consciousness technique and his ability to "seize upon every thought or movement of characters' minds" (Stevenson 1992: 48). The longest section of an uninterrupted stream of consciousness in the novel appears in the final chapter, "Penelope"; it records the thoughts of Molly Bloom, who is close to falling asleep, so that her mind flows freely and associatively between various subjects and impressions. While Molly's inner monologue remains within the realm of consciousness, in his next novel, *Finnegan's Wake* (1939), Joyce will take experimentation even further:

> Joyce's concluding stream of consciousness [in *Ulysses*] moves… outwith organized discourse in its pursuit of the quivering of thoughts deep within the self, even leading towards what is formed beyond consciousness. Joyce goes on to investigate this area beyond the conscious mind in *Finnegan's Wake*… *Ulysses* itself, however, ends at the point where unconsciousness, the sleep that has hovered around Molly throughout "Penelope", finally overtakes her. Molly's soliloquy remains – just – within consciousness, a final consummation of the trends in the early twentieth-century narrative to place everything in the mind of characters and to suppress from view the stabilising, controlling presence of an omniscient author (ibid., 49–50).

Joyce's narrative strategies in *Ulysses* may also be related to the concept of *parallax*. Parallax is an astronomical term which Bloom, who is always fascinated by science, muses about in "Lestrygonians", the eighth chapter of *Ulysses*. According to Don Gifford's annotations for *Ulysses*, parallax is "the apparent displacement or the difference in apparent direction of an object as seen from two different points of view; in astronomy, the difference in direction of a celestial body as seen from some point on the Earth's surface and from some other conventional point" (Gifford 1989: 160). This scientific theory, the same as Joyce's novel, points to the fallibility of any single perspective; the same may be said of *Ulysses*, which constantly invites us to consider further perspectives on various individuals, issues and events, and to keep revising our judgment. Subjectivity, as one of the key features of Modernist literature in general, also determines to a great degree the method of presentation in *Ulysses*. We are introduced to the subjective perceptions of numerous characters in the novel – such as Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, Molly Bloom, Dignam Jr. or Gerty McDowell – who all at some point take on the role of the narrator. These characters often have different or even opposing thoughts and opinions on the same issue, so that the reader is constantly invited to reassess his or her understanding.

Stevenson argues, furthermore, that *Ulysses* employs *parallax* as a way of resisting *paralysis* in Dublin, which Joyce has criticized ever since the beginning of his writing career. While the life of Dublin's middle-class, as perceived by Joyce, is just as static and dull in *Ulysses* as it was in *Dubliners*, "its presentation is made lively by

Joyce's parallactic tactics, constantly shifting the narrative through a spectrum of techniques and points of view" (Stevenson 1992: 52).

Terry Eagleton likewise comments on the contrast between the inert, drab Dublin life which is the subject matter of *Ulysses*, and the dynamic and resourceful language which Joyce uses to depict it. According to Eagleton, this contrast also has temporal connotations: the content and the form correspond, respectively, to the present and the future of Ireland, so that Joyce's very language anticipates the changes he would like to see in his native country. This includes his desire for an Ireland free of nationalism, religious bigotry, sexism and rigid patriarchal norms:

> It is as though the content of the novel belongs to the world of the present, while the language which portrays it anticipates the future. It prefigures a world of freedom and plurality, sexual emancipation and shifting identities. If this is so, then the novel is a critique of Irish nationalism as much in its form as in its content. It marks out the limits of the Irish national revolution, which… gave birth to an independent nation which was (among other, more reputable things) philistine, puritanical, patriarchal and chauvinistic. If all this helped drive Joyce into exile, what he wrote in that exile sketches in its very style the kind of Ireland to which he might have felt able to return (Eagleton 2005: 203).

3. *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*

3. 1. The Gestation of a Soul

Joyce's renowned autobiographical novel has an episodic structure, marking the most important stages in the psychological development of his young protagonist Stephen Dedalus as he struggles to liberate himself from the constraints of his society, discover his life's calling and achieve artistic independence.

At a very young age, Stephen is sent to Clongowes, a Jesuit college, where he quickly becomes disillusioned about the moral qualities of the priests who teach him, noticing their suppressed anger and unjust treatment of students. The most important event in the first chapter is Stephen's confrontation with Father Dolan, who punishes the boy unjustly,

accusing him that he has deliberately broken his glasses so he could shirk schoolwork. Stephen, however, reacts to this injustice by complaining to the principal. The chapter thus ends with his first successful rebellion against authority and his first epiphany, providing him with an upsurge of inner strength and self-confidence. In the second chapter, Stephen is a rebellious adolescent who challenges his friends' conservative views when he argues that Byron is a better poet than Tennyson, for which he gets beaten. This is also the age when his sexual desires awaken: he experiences them as something monstrous, believing that he is different from everybody else. By the end of the chapter, Stephen can no longer suppress his urges and pays a visit to a prostitute. This sexual encounter, and the others which follow, provide him with a temporary sense of balance. At this point, however, Stephen's college organizes a three-day religious retreat which he and all the other students are obliged to attend, and during which he also has to listen to a lengthy sermon on hell. Horrified by the tales of punishment awaiting unrepentant sinners, he decides to confess and live a virtuous life from that point onwards.

In the fourth chapter, Stephen's newly discovered piety and the great effort he makes to devote himself completely to the service of God draw the attention of the director of studies, who offers him to join the Jesuit order. Stephen eventually refuses, realizing that becoming a priest would have required of him to renounce the wealth of experience pertaining to earthly life, and decides instead to become an artist, "a priest of eternal imagination" (Joyce 2001: 77). At the end of the chapter he experiences the most important epiphany in the novel, brought about by an encounter with a girl on the beach. He recognizes her as his muse and a symbol for the kind of art he will henceforth create. In chapter five, Stephen is a university student and an aspiring poet who tries to formulate his aesthetic theory and his attitude to religion, nationalism and society in a series of conversations with his fellow students. The chapter closes with a number of entries from Stephen's journal, suggesting that he has finally found his individual "voice" and is able to narrate in the first person the story of his life (Bulson 2006: 51)[13]. In the final entries, Stephen announces

[13] Richard Ellmann, however, argues that the novel ends with Stephen's journal because at that point he can no longer communicate with anyone in Ireland but himself (Ellmann 1959: 368).

his decision to leave Ireland, seeking artistic freedom through exile, although he also vows to remain focused on Ireland's spiritual well-being in his writings: "I go… to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (Joyce 2001: 196).

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Through a conversation between Stephen Dedalus and his friend Davin, Joyce suggests that the main theme of *A Portrait* is the gradual birth and liberation of Stephen's soul: "The soul... has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets" (Joyce 2001: 157). Stephen's self-realization takes place in the specific social circumstances of the late nineteenth-century Ireland, which the protagonist experiences as "nets" he has to fight against on his path to achieving personal freedom and artistic autonomy.

Richard Ellmann likewise describes Joyce's novel as "the gestation of a soul", pointing out that in this metaphor Joyce has discovered the organizing principle of his narrative:

> In the first chapter the foetal soul is... only slightly individualized, the organism responds only to the most primitive sensory impressions, then the heart forms and musters its affections, the being... gropes wordlessly towards sexual differentiation. In the third chapter... conscience develops... Then at the end of the fourth chapter the soul discovers the goal towards which it has been mysteriously proceeding – the goal of life... The final chapter shows the soul, already fully developed, fattening itself for its journey until at last it is ready to leave (Ellmann 1959: 307).

With this organizing principle in mind, the following sections of the analysis will focus on the journey of Stephen's soul and the chief obstacles it encounters. For a considerable part of this journey, as Eric Bulson points out, the novel explores Stephen's changing attitude towards his own body, presenting it as a contentious site (Bulson 2006: 50). This issue is also closely related to Stephen's changing attitude towards intimate relationships and towards women, which will likewise be touched upon in the analysis. Another important motif in the novel is the aesthetic theory

which Stephen Dedalus formulates after his soul has "discovered its goal" and he has decided to become an artist; this theory will also be summed up and discussed here, as it provides further clues to understanding Joyce's own artistic intention in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

3.2. Body as a Contentious Site

When Stephen's sexual urges first emerge in adolescence, he perceives them as monstrous and believes they set him apart from his family and the rest of humanity. He talks about the reveries which "sweep across and abase his intellect", making him feel restless, ashamed and "sickened of himself" (Joyce 2001: 68). It is only when his father takes him to Cork and invites him to see a lecture theatre where he once studied that Stephen makes a discovery which helps him to change his perception and experience a slight sense of relief. While his father is wandering among the rows of desks, eager to show his son where he once carved his initials, Stephen spots the word *Foetus*, likewise carved on one of the desks, "cut several times in the dark stained wood" (ibid.). As he vividly imagines a group of students gathered around the one doing the handiwork and laughing, he realizes that what he has hitherto considered a unique "sickness" of his own (his adolescent sexual fantasies) is in fact a general human condition: "the word and the vision capered before his eyes as he walked back across the quadrangle and towards the college gate. It shocked him to find in the outer world a trace of what he had deemed till then a brutish and individual malady of his own mind" (ibid.).

At the age of sixteen, Stephen is no longer able to contain his sexual urges and he pays his first visit to a prostitute. The very choice of words and imagery Joyce uses to dramatize this experience, however, suggests that for Stephen it is not merely physical:

> He had wandered into a maze of narrow and dirty streets... He walked onward, dismayed, wondering whether he had strayed into the quarter of the Jews. Women and girls dressed in long vivid gowns traversed the street from house to house. They were leisurely and perfumed. A trembling seized him and his eyes grew dim. The yellow gas-flames arose before his troubled vision against the vapoury sky, burning as if before an altar. Before the doors and in the lighted halls groups were gathered arrayed as for some rite. He was in another world: he had awakened from a slumber of centuries (ibid., 76).

"A maze" of narrow streets alludes to the motif of labyrinth, which features in a number of ancient myths dealing with a hero's journey towards self-discovery and self-realization (Campbell 2004: 21). Not certain exactly where he is, Stephen wonders whether he has "strayed into the quarter of the Jews". The same as the mythical labyrinth, the mention of the Jews implies that Stephen has found himself in a non-Christian realm. The women he sees in the street are dressed in vivid gowns, "arrayed as for some rite", and the gas-flames remind him of a fire burning before an altar. We are told that Stephen "was in another world: he had awakened from a slumber of centuries". The sentence anticipates the famous pronouncement that the same character will make in *Ulysses*: "History... is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (Joyce 2010: 32). In this scene in *A Portrait*, the rejection of the nightmare of history refers in particular to the rejection of Christianity. We are led to understand that Stephen has reached into the past and connected imaginatively with some ancient, pre-Christian tradition which did not have a hostile attitude towards one's bodily urges, and where one's first sexual experience was treated as an initiation rite into adulthood. Even though Stephen's actions are contrary to the tenets of his Catholic upbringing, they result in a positive epiphany: in the embrace of the young woman, he discovers that he feels "strong and fearless and sure of himself" (Joyce 2001: 77).

Stephen's visits to prostitutes, for a certain period, heal the split between his mind and body. He ponders how, in the aftermath of these encounters, "no part of the body or soul had been maimed but a dark peace had been established between them" (ibid., 79). The split is reopened, however, when the college boys are obliged to participate in a three-day religious retreat which also entails several lengthy sermons on Hell. Joyce's representation of these sermons clearly points to his view of Catholicism as a life-denying doctrine, instilling in its adherents a fear and loathing of sensual experiences (Belanger 2001: xii). As Joyce wrote in a letter to Lady Gregory: "I know that there is no heresy or no philosophy which is so abhorrent to my church as a human being" (quoted in Ellmann 1959: 111). In one of the sermons, for instance, the boys are told that "Sin... is a base consent to the promptings of our corrupt nature to the lower instincts,

to that which is gross and beast-like" (Joyce 2001: 97) and that sinners are those who delight in "unspeakable and filthy pleasures" (ibid., 98). Indoctrinated by these teachings, Stephen wishes that, instead of indulging in physical pleasures, he committed a murder – as he now believes that the latter sin would have been less foul in the eyes of God (ibid., 109).

3.3. The Loop of a Cord and the Call of Life

Throughout Chapter Four, Joyce also stresses the amount of control and power wielded by the Catholic church; thus, one of the lessons impressed upon the college boys during the sermons is that they can avoid the horrors of hell only if they "obey the word of [God's] church" (ibid., 91).

This need to control an individual is also related to the reason the priests do not allow Stephen to forget his past transgressions, even after he has repented and vowed to live virtuously. He continues to visit the confessional regularly, but in his new, saintly life, there is nothing of import to confess: "some momentary inattention at prayer, a moment of trivial anger... or a subtle wilfulness in speech or act" (ibid., 117). Each time, however, before his confessor absolves him of those trivial wrongs, he insists that Stephen must also name one of the transgressions from his sinful past:

> He named it with humility and shame and repented of it once more. It humiliated and shamed him to think that he would never be freed from it wholly, however holily he might live, or whatever virtues or perfections he might attain. A restless feeling of guilt would always be present with him: he would confess and repent and be absolved, confess and repent again and be absolved again, fruitlessly (ibid., 118).

The "restless feeling of guilt" which the priests try to instil in Stephen may be explained by referring to Freud's theories on the psychological mechanisms of guilt. Namely, Freud argues that there are two sources from which the feeling of guilt originates, one being fear of an external authority and the other fear of the super-ego. While, according to Freud, the formation of our super-ego, or our conscience, is initiated by the primary prohibition (the Father's prohibition against

incest), all other social prohibitions are consequently internalized and structured around this one, so that the super-ego becomes a replacement for the external authority, or a kind of internalized father figure (Eagleton 1989: 167). Pleasing an external authority is relatively easy, as all we have to do is repress socially unacceptable desires and stop acting upon them; however, pleasing the *internal* authority of the superego is impossible, as we still continue to harbour those selfsame desires, and cannot conceal them from this all-seeing inward eye. As Freud explains,

> We now see in what relationship the renunciation of instinct stands to the sense of guilt. Originally, renunciation of instinct was the result of fear of an external authority; one renounced one's satisfactions in order not to lose its love. If one has carried out this renunciation, one is, as it were, quits with the authority and no sense of guilt should remain. But with fear of the super-ego the case is different. Here, instinctual renunciation is not enough, for the wish persists and cannot be concealed from the super-ego. Thus, in spite of the renunciation that has been made, a sense of guilt comes about (Freud 1962: 74).

In a similar manner, the priests want Stephen to continue feeling guilty even after he has made his renunciations. By reminding him of his sensual past, they wish to convince him that his nature is essentially sinful and that the forbidden desires for instinctual gratification will crop up again. Through this motif Joyce suggests that the church exerts its influence over an individual by manipulating their sense of guilt.

The motif of priestly power is also explored by Joyce in the scene in which the director of studies at Belvedere College invites Stephen to join the Jesuit order. The director's deviousness is first suggested by an image: when Stephen enters the office, the director is standing in the embrasure of the window, "slowly dangling and looping the cord of the blind" (Joyce 2001: 118), symbolically tying a loop or a noose in which to imprison Stephen's soul. In order to make the offer attractive for Stephen, the director first appeals to his sense of pride, convincing the youth that he is exceptional: "In a college like this... there is one boy or perhaps two or three boys whom God calls to religious life. Such a boy is marked off from his companions by his piety... He is looked up to by them" (ibid., 121). But the main appeal of the priestly vocation, according to the director, is that it endows one with almost

unlimited power: "No king or emperor on this earth has the power of the priest of God. No angel or archangel in heaven, no saint, not even the Blessed Virgin herself, has the power of a priest of God; the power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose from sin... What an awful power, Stephen!" (ibid.). Power and pride, highlighted in the speech of the director of studies, stand in complete opposition to the original principles of Christianity such as humility and compassion.

However, in making his decision on whether to join the Jesuit order, Stephen will not rely on his religious upbringing, but on "some instinct... stronger than education or piety" which warns him against acquiescence (ibid., 123). The director's call "to the pale service of the altar" (ibid., 130) is almost immediately followed by its opposite, the call of life which Stephen hears while walking on the beach and thinking about his future. In the scene in which a group of Stephen's college friends cry out to him, poking fun at his name and surname, Joyce implicitly invites the reader to consider their symbolical meaning. Stephen is the name of the first Christian martyr, whereas Dedalus alludes to the mythical artificer Deadalus. By choosing this surname for his protagonist, Joyce adds a mythical dimension to the novel; this may be viewed as the first step towards devising what T. S. Eliot would eventually call (with reference to *Ulysses*) Joyce's "mythical method" – "using the myth… [and] manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" in order to make the modern world "possible for art" (Eliot 1923: 483). The epigraph of *A Portrait*, which is a quote from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (*Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes* – "And he applies his mind to unknown arts") likewise alludes to Deadalus. In Ovid's work, Daedalus is an artificer who manages to escape imprisonment on Crete by fabricating wings for himself and his son. Upon hearing the boys on the beach shouting his surname, Stephen starts thinking about Daedalus as the epitome of an artist, escaping from social and religious restraints on the wings of his imagination and creativity. His surname therefore strikes Stephen as a prophecy of his own destiny, revealing to him his future life calling: "a prophecy of the end he had been borne to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being" (Joyce 2001: 130). Stephen's

description of his future creative work is reminiscent of Joyce's notion of *epicleti* – transforming everyday, ordinary human experiences ("the sluggish matter of the earth"), by means of imagination, into objects of lasting artistic value.

Bird symbolism, alluding to freedom and transcendence, is a prominent feature both in Stephen's vision of his namesake Daedalus ("a winged, hawk-like man") and in his encounter with an unknown girl on the beach, which will initiate his most important epiphany:

> A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips, where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face.
>
> She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither (ibid., 132).

Standing in midstream, the girl resembles a sea-bird and so symbolically connects the elements of water and air. The sea alludes to amniotic fluid, the element in which Stephen's "foetal soul" floated before its birth; the air suggests a new element in which it will now take flight (Ellmann 1959: 307). The girl is also compared to a dark-plumaged dove, deliberately contrasted to the white dove, the symbol of Virgin Mary. Unlike Mary – whose role, according to the Catholic doctrine, is to be an intercessor between one's soul and God – this girl is Stephen's muse, interceding between his earthly experience and his art (Bulson 2006: 57). The imagery symbolizes both his acceptance of body, physical life and sensuality, and his intention to transmute these aspects of being into art. Stephen calls the girl "a wild angel of mortal

youth and beauty", suggesting that his art will likewise celebrate mortal human existence, or what Ibsen has called "the beautiful, miraculous earth-life" (Ibsen 2018: 71). Finally, the vision makes Stephen decide "to live, to err, to fall" (Joyce 2001: 132), meaning that from that point onwards he will no longer attempt to live a saintly life. "The fall" in this context means accepting one's bodily desires and integrating them into a more comprehensive notion of the self. As Ellmann explains, "the fall into sin, at first a terror [to Stephen], gradually becomes an essential part of the discovery of self and life" (1959: 308).

3.4. Stephen's Aesthetic Theory

In Chapter Five, in a series of conversations with his fellow students, Stephen endeavours to explain the aesthetic principles governing his art. He provides his own interpretation of Aquinas' statement on beauty: *Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur: integritas, consonantia, claritas* – "Three things are needed for beauty: wholeness, harmony, and radiance" (Joyce 2001: 163). Stephen's explanation of radiance is an equivalent of Joyce's explanation of epiphany: it refers to a moment when one comprehends "the *whatness* of a thing", "the instant wherein…the esthetic image is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony in the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure" (ibid., 164).

Another important concept in Stephen's aesthetic theory is that of a "static emotion" evoked by true art. In Stephen's opinion, improper art excites "kinetic" emotions, either urging us to move towards an object or to move away from it. From this point of view, didactic and pornographic texts are equally unsuccessful in providing valid aesthetic experience, or reaching true artistic value. The former may compel us, for instance, to loathe and abandon physical desire, whereas the latter may prompt us to pursue it. As opposed to this, for Stephen, the defining characteristic of true art is that it evokes a static emotion: in interaction with such art, "the mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing" (ibid., 158). It may be argued that Stephen himself was "kinetic" in the previous stages of his development: either his physical desire compelled him to look for gratification, or he loathed it and tried to suppress it altogether by mortifying his senses. In Chapter Five, we see that Stephen has finally established a balanced attitude to his instincts and urges. As

Ellmann writes, "In the last two chapters… Joyce minimizes Stephen's physical life to show the dominance of his mind, which has accepted but subordinated physical things" (1959: 309).

Finally, it is important to mention the supreme value which Stephen ascribes to the dramatic form, since he views it as the most impersonal. In the dramatic mode of narration, as Stephen maintains,

> The personality of the artist… finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and projected from human imagination. The mystery of esthetic… is accomplished. The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, pairing his fingernails (Joyce 2001: 166).

Through Stephen's musings, Joyce gives us a key to understanding his own narrative method in the novel. Although he has written about Stephen's life in the novelistic rather than dramatic form, he has still managed to achieve the kind of detachment and objectivity which he praises in a drama. In spite of using the autobiographical material, Joyce has managed to distance himself sufficiently from the memories of his youthful self in order to re-shape them into a general statement about a modern artist striving for individual freedom and authentic expression.

Virginia Woolf

1. A Change in Fiction

"On or about December 1910," Virginia Woolf famously wrote, "human character changed" (Woolf 1924: 4). Critics have made several guesses on why Woolf chose that particular date as a milestone. The essay in which the observation appears is "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1923) and in its early, unpublished version Woolf goes on to explain her belief that the views on human character have primarily changed under the influence of new psychological theories. She singles out Freud, arguing that his insights about human personality have to be taken into account by the modern novelists (Stevenson 1992: 62).[14] As Elaine Showalter explains, psychoanalysis revealed to Woolf's generation that "the human personality was not one given fixed monolithic entity, but a shifting conglomerate of impressions and emotions. Psychoanalysis was uncovering a multi-layered self, in which dreams, memories and fantasies were as important as actions and thoughts" (Showalter 1992: xviii). Critics have also speculated about other reasons that made Woolf cite December 1910 as the exact date of a radical change. It is often argued that the date refers to the exhibition of Post-Impressionist paintings organized in London by Woolf's friend Roger Fry. It is possible that Woolf experienced this art exhibition as a striking example of a new understanding of human character and the way in which modern humanity reflected on itself (Stevenson 1992: 61). All the critical explanations, however, seem to agree on the fact that, for Woolf, the new concept of human personality at the beginning of the twentieth century inevitably implied changes in novelistic characterization as well.

[14] In this context, it is also interesting to point out that Hogarth Press, the publishing house run by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, was among the first to start publishing Freud's works in the English language in 1921 (Showalter 1992: xviii). English translations of Freud's works, however, began to appear about a decade earlier (Stevenson 1992: 62).

Presentation of fictional characters is, in fact, the central concern of "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown". As Woolf argues, all novels deal with character, and this fact has been of essential importance in developing the novelistic genre: "I believe that all novels... deal with character, and that it is to express character – not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel... has been evolved" (Woolf 1924: 9–10). A novelist, in Woolf's words, strives to create characters who seem real, as it is the only way to ensure the survival of a given novel. However, she points out that when asked: "What makes a character real?", the two generations of English authors will come up with very different answers. In her opinion, the members of the older generation – Edwardians, or Realists (H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy) fail to create "real" characters because their primary concern is always something which lies outside the character. In his novel *Hilda Lessways* (1911), for instance, Bennett provides facts about "rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines" regarding the real estate of Hilda's family. As Woolf comments, Bennett seems to be trying to "hypnotise us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person living there" (ibid., 16). The depiction of Hilda's character remains external and we never hear her voice in the novel, only Bennett's own.

Woolf further develops her argument by proposing a hypothetical character of Mrs Brown, an old lady who happens to sit in the same train carriage as the three Edwardians, who all fail to represent the essence of her character. Instead of observing this particular individual, these three authors are looking "out of the window", preoccupied with larger social or historical issues beyond the subject matter of their novel. Alternatively, they may focus on inert material facts of the encounter, speculate on the price of Mrs Brown's brooch or the value of her estate, describe her physical appearance or the interior of the carriage – but these methods are all inadequate in capturing Mrs Brown's inner being:

> There she sits in the corner of the carriage... and not one of the Edwardian writers has so much as looked at her. They have looked very powerfully, searchingly and sympathetically out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at her, never at life, never at human nature (ibid.).

Next, Woolf imagines asking the Edwardians how to introduce Mrs Brown's character in her novel, and their advice is to begin by describing the shop her father kept and the illness her mother died of, supporting the details with historical research; however, Woolf realizes that if she heeds such advice she will lose her artistic vision. The conventions of the previous generation of writers are unsuitable for her purpose, which is to represent the inner, subjective life of a fictional character, as well as to impart her own "overmastering impression" to the reader (ibid., 18). The Realists' method of presentation, as Woolf concludes, can no longer be used as a proper means of communication between the writer and the reader; instead, it has become an obstacle. This is why the new generation of novelists – Modernists, whom Woolf calls "Georgians" in her essay (E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, Lytton Strachey, James Joyce and T. S. Eliot) – must discard "the tools of one generation" which have become "useless for the next" (ibid., 17).

Woolf's discussion in "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" may be interpreted not only as an expression of her Modernism, but also of her feminism. As Showalter (1992: xviii) points out, this essay does not simply deal with the inability of the Realist method to capture the essence of the human character, but also with the inability of male authors (Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy) to represent the feminine character of Mrs Brown. In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf argues that a new writing method is required to accomplish this, and the conclusion she arrives at is compatible with her Modernist creed: in order to bring a woman to life in fiction, Woolf writes, one must

> think poetically and prosaically at one and the same moment, thus keeping in touch with fact – that she is Mrs Martin, aged thirty-six, dressed in blue, wearing a black hat and brown shoes; but not losing sight of fiction either – that she is a vessel in which all sorts of spirits and forces are coursing and flashing perpetually (Woolf 2004: 49).

Another gender-related issue which preoccupies Woolf is that some of the novelistic conventions used by male authors are not suitable for a woman, as they reflect the system of patriarchal social values that she cannot identify with. As she points out in *A Room of One's Own*, the values of real life are inevitably transferred to fiction,

and in the society she lives in, "it is the masculine values that prevail" (ibid., 79). She likewise implies that the language, syntax and sentence structure traditionally used by the male writers may be inadequate for a female one, because these features have also been influenced by the predominant mindset and patterns of thought in the patriarchal society (ibid., 83). In other words, Woolf is concerned not only with the fact that Modernists have to discard the tools of Realists, but also with the fact that female writers have to discard some of the tools of their male predecessors.

Woolf also deals with the contrast between Realism and Modernism in her essay "Modern Fiction" (1921), likewise insisting on the subjective method and on a portrayal of a fictional character which would primarily be the portrayal of his or her consciousness. She criticizes the strict rules of constructing a Realist novel which stifle the authors' creativity with the demands "to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole". The traditional novelistic conventions resemble strictly tailored and buttoned-up vestments, but that which Woolf deems most important – "life or spirit, truth or reality" – refuses to be contained in them. Instead, Woolf insists on freedom of expression which alone would enable the artist to capture the complexity of the human spirit. In an often quoted passage from the essay, which is also regarded as a manifesto of the Modernist movement, she states:

> Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (Woolf 1984: 160–161).

Eagleton argues that Woolf's insistence on incoherence, disorder and lack of "symmetry" in human life has a political dimension. In his opinion, her fascination with our chaotic inner life, with its myriad impressions and unpredictable revelations, represents a way of opposing the patriarchal obsession with order, which in its most extreme form leads to fascism. As Eagleton writes, "Woolf's novels, in their very form, are political deconstructions of the masculine rage for order... [T]his is a form of politics present in their very texture and

syntax, in the mischievous sport they have with conventional narrative forms, their affection for the provisional and imperfect, the delicacy with which they focus upon stray feelings and loose ends" (Eagleton 2005: 214).

The above passage, however, does not display only Woolf's interest in the incoherence of the human mind, but also in its aberrations. In another part of the essay, she further elaborates on how, for the Modernist writers, "the point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology" (Woolf 1984: 162). This interest will prove significant in understanding her presentation of the character of Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*.

2. Poetic Prose

Discarding the "tools" of the previous generation of writers, the objective method of Realism, Woolf opts instead for the use of free indirect style in her novels. This narrative strategy enables her to enter the subjective mental states of her characters, shifting from one consciousness to another, or from past to present – presenting the momentary impressions, past memories and future expectations of each character. The sentence structure she uses seems to suggest that she views the inner life of the mind as infinitely richer and more worthy of presentation than the external reality. In her novels, she tends to place the references to the external world in sub-clauses, which function almost literally as brackets (Eagleton 2005: 223). In this way, as the following sentence from *Mrs Dalloway* demonstrates, she seems to tuck away the external world in order to attend to the internal one:

> It was her life, and bending her head over the hall table, she bowed beneath the influence, felt blessed and purified, saying to herself, as she took the pad with the telephone message on it, how moments like this are buds on the tree of life, flowers of darkness they are, she thought... (Woolf 1992: 31)

Another important feature of Woolf's writing style – which may also be observed in the above passage – is its considerable focus on authorial organization and control. As Randall Stevenson points out, the

presentation of thought in Woolf's novels is nothing like the "anarchic fluency" of Molly Bloom's final monologue in Joyce's *Ulysses*, or the syntactic fragmentation which characterizes the thinking process of Leopold Bloom. The thoughts and feelings of Woolf's characters may be varied, but they are presented in a uniform manner, in carefully shaped sentences, and expressed clearly and artistically, with the author finding sophisticated metaphors for each character's state of mind (Stevenson 1992: 54). Eagleton likewise observes that

> Woolf's writing... is not dramatic. Though she speaks of human differences, she finds it hard to "perform" them in her art – to flesh out characters by letting them speak and act out their idiosyncrasies for themselves. She is poor in capturing in speech or action the distinctive tone of a personality, as opposed to brilliantly describing it from a narrational view point (Eagleton 2005: 223).

While Woolf's writing may not be dramatic, it is certainly poetic, displaying the author's keen interest in incorporating some elements of poetry (such as rhythm, imagery, symbols or metaphors) into fiction. She refers to these features of her narrative method in her diary, as well as in her essay "Poetry, Fiction and the Future" (1927). In the essay, Woolf observes the tendency of the early twentieth century poets to cling to the outdated poetic conventions and the stock emotions, rhetoric and themes of the previous era, which makes them incapable of catching up with the demands of modernity.[15] Such poetry, as she concludes, cannot do the "dirty work" of prose, which is why prose has to integrate some of the poetic devices instead (Woolf 2008: 153). She envisions a new kind of prose that would be capable, as Jane Goldman explains, of reaching "the lyric heights of subjective emotional expression, while also touching down on the more prosaic fabric of things" – encompassing the experience of modernity with all its intricacies and contradictions (Goldman 2010: 52).

[15] In his study *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932), F. R. Leavis makes a similar argument, except that he is even more critical of this generation of poets, their insistence on Romantic preconceptions and their refusal to engage with the complexities of the "adult, sensitive mind" of modern man (Leavis 1961: 20). However, Leavis also singles out the example of T. S. Eliot as a poet who has invented new techniques, suitable for conveying the experience of modernity, and so "made a new start, and established new bearings" (ibid., 26).

3. *Mrs Dalloway*

3.1. Emotional Repression and the Tunnelling Process

The storyline of *Mrs Dalloway* unfolds during a single day in June 1923, but travels deep into the psyche and personal memories of its two protagonists, Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith. Clarissa, the wife of a conservative MP Richard Dalloway, is about to give one of her renowned parties where she brings together all the distinguished members of the London high-class society, including the Prime Minister. As she makes preparations, various small events and incidents trigger her memories of youth – the period when she had intense feelings for Peter Walsh, an unconventional, passionate young man with radical views on society and politics. Many years later, Clarissa still re-examines the crucial decision she made when she refused to marry Peter and chose instead the conventional, emotionally repressed Richard. She also remembers a single kiss she got from Sally Seton, her even more radical woman friend, and is haunted by a feeling that it represented a kind of treasure which, since then, she has somehow irrevocably lost. In the evening, both Sally and Peter will appear at her party.

A parallel narrative follows the inner struggle of Septimus Smith, a shell-shocked veteran of the First World War, whose wife is seeking help of psychiatrists because Septimus has threatened to kill himself. His troubled mental state originates from the most traumatic experience he had in war – the death of his best friend Evans, to which he initially reacted by supressing his feelings and forbidding himself to grieve. As a consequence, Septimus eventually lost his ability to feel altogether, and the horror of this realization drove him to madness. In a brief moment of lucidity, towards the end of the novel, he re-connects with his estranged wife Rezia and then commits suicide in defiance of the two oppressive psychiatrists, Holmes and Bradshaw, who were about to take him to a mental asylum.

In the midst of her party, Clarissa finds out about Septimus's case from Bradshaw's wife, which finally brings the two storylines together. Although Clarissa has never met Septimus, she intuitively grasps his reasons for committing suicide, and she is unsettled by this

insight. Soon enough, however, she manages to recover and return to her party, resuming her customary role of a high society lady and a successful hostess.

*

The most striking motif in *Mrs Dalloway* is emotional repression, or inability to love – which refers to both of its protagonists, although their social circumstances and existential situations are sharply contrasted. Clarissa deliberately chooses a life without passionate emotional involvement by marrying Richard, and leaving behind the romantic excitement and turbulent feelings which characterized her relationships with Peter and Sally. For Septimus, on the other hand, life without love is not a deliberate choice, but a consequence of a severe war trauma, and he finds such a life unbearable. At the same time, the state of alienation which these two characters share is presented by Woolf as a general problem of the post-war British society. In a diary entry she wrote while planning the novel, Woolf stated her intention "to criticize the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense" (Woolf 1978: 248). For the most part, this criticism is directed at the governing class, its worship of tradition and the settled order, its refusal to face the consequences of war, and its general tendency to numb and anesthetize personal feelings (Showalter 1992: xlii–xliii).

Like many other Modernist writers, Woolf does not simply observe and state the solitariness of the modern human condition, but also explores the ways in which it could be overcome. Implicitly, *Mrs Dalloway* conveys a view akin to the one Conrad expressed in his "Preface" – a belief in the "latent feeling of fellowship" (2005: 280) which may be re-awakened in an alienated world. In another entry of her diary, Woolf writes about her discovery: "how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters... The idea is that the caves shall connect" (Woolf 1978: 263). "Digging caves" – which Woolf also refers to as her "tunnelling process" (ibid., 272) – alludes to the author's intention to look behind the social masks of her characters and expose their buried humanity, the suffering and psychic damage caused by emotional repression. At some deep psychic level, there is a hope that "the caves shall connect", that the individuals may overcome their isolation and reach empathic understanding of the Other. In the

following sections, both the social criticism and the tunnelling process that Woolf undertakes in *Mrs Dalloway* will be considered.

3.2. Disrobing at Midday

The title *Mrs Dalloway* stands in contrast to Joyce's *Ulysses*, announcing that the novel will explore its characters and themes in strictly contemporary terms, without ascribing any mythical dimension to them. More importantly, however, it also draws our attention to the heroine's public persona, her role as the wife of Richard Dalloway, a conservative politician; and more generally, it makes us think about the way the women in the first decades of the twentieth century were socially defined by their marriage (Showalter 1992: xii). At the beginning of the novel, Clarissa considers her given name as a symbol of her private self, feeling that it has almost disappeared behind the social mask: "She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress... this being Mrs Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs Richard Dalloway" (Woolf 1992: 11).

Her self-examination and exploration of this almost vanished private sphere begins after a trivial incident. It turns out that Lady Bruton, a distinguished friend of the family, has invited Richard to come to lunch without Clarissa. This triggers Clarissa's insecurities and doubts and compels her to withdraw to the privacy of her bedroom. There we see her removing her rich apparel – symbolically, peeling off the social layers of her persona – and facing herself, at which point Woolf adds numerous details and facts to her portrayal. In the aftermath of her long illness, Clarissa has moved to an attic room, where she sleeps alone. Even though there is a practical explanation for this (Richard's parliament sessions sometimes last late into the night, so he insisted she should move to a separate room in order to sleep undisturbed), the reader observes the distancing of husband and wife who no longer share their marital bed. Alone in her new bedroom, Clarissa confronts the thoughts on old age and death, intimated by her impression that her bed is getting "narrower and narrower" (resembling a coffin), whereas the candle by which she reads, like her own life, is "half burnt" (ibid., 33–34). Suffering from insomnia, she reads much of the night, and

her choice of reading matter (Baron Marbot's *Memoires*) suggests her interest in personal memories, as well as her own inclination to dwell on the past.

Clarissa's memories in this scene focus on the days of her youth which she spent in her family house in Bourton, and her intense friendship with Sally Seton and Peter Walsh. Clarissa was drawn to Sally's unconventional nature from their very first encounter: her first memory of Sally is from some party where she was sitting on the floor "with her arms around her knees, smoking a cigarette" (ibid., 35). Apart from being a rebel against social norms, Sally also comes to epitomize for Clarissa the harshness of "real life", beyond the sheltered environment of her family estate – as she learns, with disbelief, that Sally's parents don't get on and that their quarrel has made her leave home and travel penniless. As their friendship deepens, Sally introduces Clarissa to progressive social ideas, lending her books by Shelley and William Morris, and the two girls daydream about founding a society "to abolish private property" (ibid., 36). She runs down the corridors of Bourton naked and arranges flowers in bowls in a "wicked" manner which shocks Clarissa's old aunt. Arranging flowers is, in fact, a pithy symbol of the change that Sally has introduced in Clarissa's life. We are told that prior to Sally's arrival "at Bourton they always had stiff little vases all the way down the table". Small, stiff vases, symmetrically arranged, suggest the stiffness of Clarissa's conservative upbringing. As opposed to this, Sally's arrangement of flowers suggests creativity and freedom of spirit: "Sally went out, picked hollyhocks, dahlias, all sorts of flowers that had never been seen together – cut their heads off, and made them swim on the top of water in bowls. The effect was extraordinary – coming in to dinner in the sunset" (ibid., 36–37).

In a section of *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf invites us to imagine a contemporary female author, Mary Carmichael, in whose novel she reads a sentence: "Chloe liked Olivia". She points out that it may be the first time in the history of Western literature that such a sentence is written. In the traditional literature, written by men, the relationships between fictional female characters tend to be simplified, and most often reduced to a feeling of jealousy or rivalry over some male character. Woolf observes that female characters are traditionally represented only in terms of their relation to men: "I tried to remember

any case in the course of my reading where two women are represented as friends... Almost without exception they are shown in their relation to men. It was strange to think that all the great women of fiction were, until Jane Austen's day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex" (Woolf 2004: 89). Woolf points out how reductive this is, inviting the reader to imagine what would have happened to the great works of literature if male characters had been reduced only to their role as the lovers of women. This is why, with the sentence "Chloe liked Olivia", the hypothetical twentieth-century woman novelist breaks fresh ground, introducing new areas of female experience into fiction:

> For if Chloe likes Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to express it she will light a torch in that vast chamber where nobody has yet been. It is all half lights and profound shadows like those serpentine caves where one goes with a candle peering up and down, not knowing where one is stepping... I wanted to see how Mary Carmichael set to work to catch those unrecorded gestures, those unsaid or half-said words, which form themselves, no more palpably than the shadows of moths on the ceiling, when women are alone, unlit by the capricious and coloured light of the other sex (ibid., 90–91).

Clarissa's relationship with Sally is important in Woolf's novel for the same reason, and the kiss which Sally gives Clarissa may be interpreted as one of those "unrecorded gestures" among women to which Woolf wanted to give more prominence in fiction.

Clarissa remembers the moment when Sally kissed her as "the most exquisite moment of her whole life" (Woolf 1992: 38), an instance of such profound contentment that she can only describe it properly by quoting the words Othello spoke upon reuniting with Desdemona on Cyprus: "If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy". Clarissa also likens it to a treasure: "And she felt that she had been given a present... a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked... she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!" (ibid., 38–39).

Clarissa does not manage to keep this treasure – a radiant vision, or an insight, on how one's life may become meaningful through love – because she fails to live up to it. She chooses to marry the dull, unimaginative, reticent Richard Dalloway and gets estranged

both from Sally and from Peter Walsh, in spite of their strong mutual affection. Years later, Clarissa still muses on her choice. She tries to convince herself that she needed to escape from Peter's insistence on authenticity and soul-baring:

> How he scolded her! How they argued! She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the making of a perfect hostess, he said... She had been right... not to marry him. For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him... But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable (ibid., 7–8).

Even though Richard's demands on Clarissa are infinitely smaller than Peter's, she fails Richard as well, being unable to provide even the minimal affection and passion that he would settle for. Alone in her attic bedroom, Clarissa recognizes this failure which happened through a contraction of her "cold spirit". She realizes that what she lacks is neither beauty nor intelligence, but warmth, "something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together" (ibid., 34). It is only sometimes, in interaction with female friends who tend to confide in her, that Clarissa's "cold spirit" melts and she experiences excitement and attraction; but even at such moments, her meagre capacity for passion is compared to a "match burning in a crocus" (ibid., 35). In this context, Clarissa's illness clearly has symbolical connotations. Although we are told that her heart has been weakened by influenza, it has figuratively been weakened by disuse (Carey 1969: 17).

Likewise, the parties that Clarissa organizes are just a substitute for meaningful human exchange and real affection. They do not "break up surfaces" nor "ripple the cold contact" between individuals; instead, they are snobbish and artificial, being pre-arranged situations where people are on their best behaviour and keep one another at a good-mannered social distance (ibid., 41). As such, they suit Clarissa, who has indeed fulfilled Peter's prophecy and become a "perfect hostess".

3.3. A Drowned Sailor

In her introduction to the Modern Library edition of the novel, Woolf reveals that there was an early draft of *Mrs Dalloway* in which Clarissa was supposed to commit suicide. In the final version, however, this extreme sensitivity leading to suicide was transferred to the character of Septimus, whose death functions as a condemnation of the alienated post-war British society. As Showalter observes, "Septimus is a scapegoat, whose visionary emotional turbulence and lack of psychic defences has to be seen in contrast to the fatuousness, insensitivity, impassivity, and self-protective caution of the dominant codes. Septimus feels so much because others feel so little" (Showalter 1992: xliii).

Although Septimus and Clarissa are both closely linked to the motif of alienation, Septimus cannot be simply reduced to the figure of Clarissa's double, or her counterpart. It is just as important to stress the social dimension of these two characters. Septimus's death interrupts Clarissa's posh party, but it is a party to which he never would have been invited while he was alive (Showalter 1992: xliv). He is self-educated and comes from the working-class background, whereas the Dalloways represent the governing class. Moreover, they stand for the institutions whose decisions and policies have sent Septimus to war; symbolically, therefore, Septimus is also a victim of the Dalloways and their likes (Hawthorn 2009: 115).

Before the war, Septimus was an aspiring poet. Because of his material situation he had to study from library books and attend evening classes after work. Falling in love with his teacher of literature, Miss Isabel Pole, and feeling inspired by her lectures on Shakespeare, he volunteers and goes to war to fight for an imaginary, romanticized notion of England which exists only in books. He also internalizes the wartime propaganda and ideology which promises the fulfilment of masculinity in the battlefield (Showalter 1992: xxxviii). During the war, as it is ironically stated, he develops "manliness", which in fact means that he learns to suppress his feelings. When his best friend Evans is killed, Septimus feels "very little and very reasonably" (Woolf 1992: 95) and congratulates himself on exercising restraint. By public standards he is a success, having survived the war, serving with great distinction and winning promotion. However, with the

coming of peace he suffers an outbreak of neurosis, realizing that he has completely lost his ability to feel. Terrified of this, he gets engaged to Lucrezia, a young Italian milliner; having encountered vitality and joy in her household, he desperately clings to the hope that he may be revived in contact with it: "scissors rapping, girls laughing, hats being made protected him; he was assured of safety; he had a refuge" (ibid.).

Septimus's emotional numbness, however, eventually leads to insanity. It may be interpreted as an extreme reaction to a society which is overall plagued by alienation and dehumanization. As Jeremy Hawthorn observes, "Septimus's madness... is an extreme *symbol* of that alienation from human contact that all of the characters suffer from to a greater or a lesser extent. On another level... Septimus's madness is seen as a result of particular pressures engendered by an alienating society" (Hawthorn 2009: 115).

In Woolf's novels, as Eagleton points out, there is an expression of anxiety of an isolated self, incapable of communicating meaningfully with others, which is perceived as the general human condition in the modern society; however, there is also an urge to transcend this condition, and an implicit belief in a deeper psychic level where it is possible to connect with the Other: "There is a strong impulse towards the communal and collective at work in her writing, one which occasionally presses towards a semi-mystical belief in universal love and an 'oceanic' merging of the self into some deeper dimension. It is... an extreme reaction to the extremity of egotism in this social order" (Eagleton 2005: 219). In his deranged mental state, Septimus Smith has such intimations of universal love. He also has recurrent hallucinations in which he sees himself as a drowned sailor who went under the sea and then returned from the dead, and which may be related to the Freudian notion of "oceanic oneness". It is as though, through his madness, Septimus tries to heal himself from the extreme egotism of his culture by "drowning" in some deep unconscious region, where the self dissolves and merges with the world.

Virginia Woolf represents Septimus's suicide as a desperate attempt to resist the social pressures exemplified by the two psychiatrists who treat him, Holmes and Bradshaw. Holmes is the less dangerous of the two, a charlatan who argues that there is "nothing whatever seriously wrong with [Septimus]", except that he is "a little out of

sorts" (Woolf 1992: 23). Septimus's anti-social impulses, as Holmes proposes, should be cured by making him comply with the rigid norms of the middle-class masculine conduct, practicing outdoors sports and taking interest only in things "outside himself" (ibid.). Bradshaw, on the other hand, recognizes the severity of Septimus's condition, but the treatment he proposes only threatens to increase the young man's sense of alienation and cause further damage to his emotional being. Cold, arrogant and domineering, Bradshaw argues that Septimus has to be sent to a mental asylum and separated from his wife Lucrezia, as "the people we care for most are not good for us when we are ill" (ibid., 106). There he would be subjected to the so-called "rest cure", which entails complete isolation, with prolonged periods of lying in bed, absence of all intellectual activities, and enforced weight gain. Rest cure was an actual form of therapy practiced in psychiatric institutions at the time when the novel was written; Woolf was herself subjected to it at one point, and deeply resented its brainwashing and infantilizing effects (Showalter 1992: xli). The same is conveyed by the description of the therapy in the novel: "rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest; until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve" (Woolf 1992: 108). The repetitive use of the word "rest" also invokes the phrase "rest in peace", suggesting a kind of spiritual death.

When Clarissa learns about Septimus's suicide, she intuits that he must have been a poet or a thinker, a sensitive individual upon whom Bradshaw tried to impose his will, thus making his life intolerable. The young man, as Clarissa surmises, "plunged holding his treasure" (Woolf 1992: 202) – that is, preserving his authenticity and selfhood rather than allowing the societal forces to mould it according to their demands. It is the same "treasure" of a soulful response to life that Clarissa irrevocably lost in her youth.

3.4. Worshipping Proportion

At one level, *Mrs Dalloway* is also a social satire, and some of Woolf's social criticism is expressed through her portrayal of Clarissa, her snobbishness and her rigid views on class divisions. Peter Walsh recalls an episode from their youth, concerning one of the squires in

the vicinity of Bourton who married his housemaid. Following the couple's visit to Bourton, Clarissa commented on how the maid had been overdressed and inappropriately talkative; but what shocked her the most was finding out that the woman had had a baby before they were married: "He could see Clarissa now, turning bright pink; somehow contracting; and saying, 'Oh, I shall never be able to speak to her again!' Whereupon the whole party sitting round the tea-table seemed to wobble. It was very uncomfortable" (Woolf 1992: 64–65). Summing up his memory, Peter thinks how moments such as this marked the death of Clarissa's soul, which she murdered through her "timid, hard, arrogant, prudish" behaviour (ibid., 65). Years later, Clarissa exhibits the same trait when she repeatedly refuses to visit Sally and her husband, ignoring their invitations, because Sally's husband comes from a working-class background. Such marriage, in Clarissa's opinion, is beneath Sally: "All these years the Dalloways had never been once. Time after time they had asked them. Clarissa... would not come. For, said Sally, Clarissa was at heart a snob – one had to admit it, a snob" (ibid., 208). Perhaps more explicitly than any other scene, this demonstrates what has become of the precious gift of affection which Sally gave Clarissa in her youth and which she then vowed to treasure throughout her life.

For the greatest part, however, the novel's satire is contained in the portrayal of the psychiatrist Sir William Bradshaw. Being a social climber who was eventually knighted for his achievements in psychiatric practice, he is the epitome of the kind of success that society appreciates. However, Woolf demonstrates through Bradshaw's actions and attitudes that his success has turned him into an insensitive, inhumane and authoritarian figure who thrives on exerting power and bullying his patients (Eagleton 2005: 220). As a social success, he is also the opposite of Peter Walsh, whom everybody in Clarissa's circles considers a failure. Peter has never gained wealth nor reached any important social position and has repeatedly, hopelessly, fallen in love, as Clarissa states, with "vulgar and commonplace women" (Woolf 1992: 139). However, Peter's refusal to attain success by the standards of an unjust society may actually be regarded as a proof of his integrity. Jeremy Hawthorn also discusses this issue, pointing out that "to fail in a system that is inhuman may be testimony to one's

humanity, and it is to the credit of characters such as... Peter Walsh (who is referred to as a failure on a number of occasions) that they do fail to measure up to the public standards of their society" (Hawthorn 2009: 126).

Woolf metaphorically represents the dominant ideology in the post-war Britain as the two Goddesses that William Bradshaw worships, Proportion and Conversion. Bradshaw refuses to qualify Septimus's case as "madness", claiming instead that Septimus has simply lost his "sense of proportion" (Woolf 1992: 106). Bradshaw's professed belief in Proportion is not very different from the ideology of manliness which was imposed on Septimus during wartime. Again, it suggests that one should feel very little and very reasonably – that is, react "proportionally" to the horrific traumas and memories of war. Bradshaw's "proportion", therefore, stands for observing the dominant codes of conduct; it also stands for accepting the social status quo instead of complaining or rebelling against any form of injustice. If his patients argue that they are poor and desperate, and that their lives are not worth living, Bradshaw invokes platitudes about proclaimed social values:

> Why live? they demanded. Sir William replied that life was good. Certainly Lady Bradshaw in ostrich feathers hung over the mantelpiece, and as for his income it was quite twelve thousand a year. But to us, they protested, life has given no such bounty. He acquiesced. They lacked a sense of proportion... There were, moreover, family affection; honour; courage; and a brilliant career. All of these had in Sir William a resolute champion (Woolf 1992: 111).

When the patients defy him, Bradshaw resorts to his other principle, which is personified as the Goddess of Conversion, incarcerating them in mental asylums until they submit to his will: "And then stole out from her hiding-place and mounted her throne that Goddess whose lust is to override opposition, to stamp indelibly in the sanctuaries of others the image of herself. Naked, defenceless, the exhausted, the friendless received the impress of Sir William's will. He swooped; he devoured" (ibid., 112). Woolf connects this authoritarian trait in Bradshaw's character to larger social issues, suggesting that the repressive state apparatus deals in the same manner with the uprisings in colonies, or when quelling the workers' protests.

The Goddess of Conversion is engaged, as she puts it, “in the heat and sands of India, the mud and swamp of Africa, the purlieus of London, wherever in short the climate or the devil tempts men to fall from the true belief which is her own” (ibid., 109). Thus, through Bradshaw, Woolf criticizes the capitalist and imperialist principle of domination, drawing parallels with the inhumane treatment of the mentally ill. This interesting political parallel, however, is only briefly mentioned in the novel, which remains primarily focused on the criticism of emotional repression in the post-war British society.

Conclusion

T. S. Eliot saw the Western culture in the early decades of the twentieth century as "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy" but argued that, nevertheless, the modern writer has to grapple with this raw matter, give it a shape and come up with a method that would make such a world "possible for art" (Eliot 1923: 483). For the generation of the early twentieth century writers, making the modern world possible for art entailed not just finding an appropriate narrative strategy to depict it, but also adopting a world view that would enable them to come to terms with "futility and anarchy" and propose, at least at the level of imagination, some way of transcending it. This is why, as numerous critics have observed, the formal innovations of Modernists are inseparable from the ideology underlying their work, and the two need to be understood in conjunction. Such a view on Modernist writings has been especially prominent in the works of cultural materialists and Neo-Marxist critics, starting with Lukacs and his thorough exploration of the novelistic form, and the similar observations made by Raymond Williams in the area of theatrical conventions. As Lukacs explains in "The Ideology of Modernism", "it is the writer's attempt to reproduce [his] view of the world which... is the formative principle underlying the style of a given piece of writing" (Lukacs 1969: 19). Even though Lukacs proceeds to criticize the Modernists' world view in his essay, his observation that the formal innovations tell us something essential about the outlook of these writers is still valid. For the same reason, Raymond Williams introduces the term "structure of feeling", which he explains as "a primarily internal criterion" connecting the experience in literary work to a certain mode of communication (Williams 1981: 12). The structure of feeling corresponds, in turn, to certain literary conventions; when the structure is changed, artists must inevitably search for new modes of representation to express their experience (ibid., 13). In a more recent discussion, Terry Eagleton likewise argues that "significant

developments in literary form... result from significant changes in ideology" (Eagleton 2003: 23). The Modernist novel, with the striking changes it introduces in comparison with the novels written in the late nineteenth century, is one of the most obvious examples of this correspondence between a new form and a new way of perceiving reality.

This is one of the reasons why Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in spite of being published in 1899, is usually hailed as the first twentieth century novel. Within Conrad's oeuvre, it is chronologically the first novel in which the narrative is wholly conveyed from a subjective point of view. Marlow's harrowing story, told to a handful of crewmen of the yawl *Nellie*, represents his own subjective discovery of darkness; the term refers both to the inhumanity and crimes of the colonial project in the Congo, and to the dark, suppressed impulses in the psyche of the Western man, dramatized in the tale of Kurtz's moral downfall. It is a kind of story which could not have been told from an objective, detached point of view of an omniscient narrator, but required the subjective approach and the exploration of consciousness of a storyteller who was deeply implicated in the events he described, emerging at their end as a sadder and a wiser man.

Lawrence's "prophetic style" – his propensity to use freely located statements which do not completely belong to any of the characters, nor to the narrator in the novel – is introduced by the author as a means of expressing insights about the human psyche and the possibilities of personal growth. Such statements, which appear to have been generated by the narrative itself, are nevertheless congruent with Lawrence's ideas expressed in his non-fictional writings, such as his notion of "IT" or the "pristine unconscious". They denote the deep, instinctive realm of the psyche that the modern man desperately needs to reconnect with in order to overcome the state of spiritual numbness, inertia and superficiality of his conventional life. Symbolical episodes, of which Lawrence's novel *St Mawr* provides some striking examples, serve to dramatize the characters' experience on the very verge of consciousness, the situations when the wall separating the conscious and the unconscious psyche melts away and one encounters one's hitherto unknown potentials. Both the fierce, vigorous stallion St Mawr at the beginning of the novel, and the dangerous, wild and

breathtakingly beautiful landscape of New Mexico at its end have a pronounced symbolical dimension and convey to the reader the psychodynamics of the protagonist who encounters them.

Joyce's use of free indirect style is sometimes referred to as "mimicry" because of the author's habit to create a range of idioms and idiosyncratic expressions that each of his characters would use if he or she were writing the novel. This dramatization of the narrative style makes Joyce's depictions of Dublin's life, especially in *Ulysses*, versatile and compelling – while at the same time, paradoxically, being used to criticize its middle class with their drab, uneventful routine and their myopic political views. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joycean mimicry obtains another, temporal dimension, as the language of the novel "grows" along with its young protagonist, becoming increasingly more complex and intricate in order to convey his formative experiences to the reader. This gradual development of style accompanies "the gestation of the soul" of Stephen Dedalus – his development as an artist and his epiphanies which enable him, through increase in psychological strength and independence of spirit, to eventually cast off the nets which prevented his soul from flight.

Virginia Woolf's writing is not dramatic like Joyce's, but it is certainly poetic. Careful authorial control is exercised in crafting each individual sentence, whose very structure conveys to the reader how deeply the author appreciates "the world within", the wealth of our mind and spiritual being. In the modern world, as Woolf maintains, this inner space may be the last resort where "good triumphs, happiness prevails, order rules" (Stevenson 1992: 80).[16] It is the kind of style which separates the writers of the "Georgian" era, as Woolf calls them in her essay, from their "Edwardian" predecessors (Woolf 1924: 17). In her own novels, she uses it as a tool which enables her to reach beyond the social masks of the alienated characters in the post-war British society, look deep into their psychic life and expose their buried humanity. In *Mrs Dalloway*, this "tunnelling process" is conducted in the hope that eventually the tunnels will connect and the characters experience, at least briefly, the possibility of connectedness, sympathy and identification which is denied them in a stratified

[16] Randall Stevenson quotes these lines from Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf 2002: 98).

society, generally plagued by emotional repression and obsessed with conventions and propriety.

The Modernist project inevitably had its limitations and bias; and even in the 1920s, when these novelists produced some of their most renowned masterpieces, there were already voices criticizing the movement, arguing that the Modernists' keen interest in the fate of individuality tends to leave a great portion of social reality underrepresented. In the 1930s, these objections grew louder. With the rise of totalitarian regimes, the increase in political tension and the threat of new war looming over Europe, it was felt that the artistic trends of the previous two decades were becoming inadequate. Modernists' preoccupations with the phenomena of individual consciousness, or with the subjective experience of temporality, appeared incongruent with the urgency of the political situation that literature needed to address (Matz 2006: 217). Such criticism of Modernist art, however, was itself historically conditioned. Looking back on the Modernist output from our present-day perspective, one cannot fail to appreciate the sense of responsibility and seriousness with which these novelists undertook their task, the scope and wealth of their aesthetic preoccupations and their outstanding achievements in developing the novelistic genre.

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