

**NEW BRITAIN:
THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST AND
THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE**

*Proceedings of the 2nd International Tartu Conference
on British Studies held at the University of Tartu,
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Editor Pilvi Rajamäe

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The papers in the present collection were first presented at the 2nd International Tartu Conference on British Studies *New Britain: the Heritage of the Past and the Challenge of the Future* which took place at the University of Tartu on 24–25 August 1998. The organizers of the conference were the Estonian Centre for British and Overseas Studies at the Department of English at the University of Tartu and the British Council. On behalf of both hosts of the conference I would like to thank the speakers for their contribution and express a hope that the articles gathered here will be of help in teaching British Studies both at the secondary and tertiary level. The Estonian Centre for British and Overseas Studies and the Department of English at the University of Tartu would like to thank the British Council for their generous support given both to the Conference and the present Proceedings and the British Embassy in Tallinn and in particular His Excellency Mr Timothy J. Craddock, H M Ambassador to Estonia, for his opening address and financial support.

Pilvi Rajamäe

INTRODUCTION

Timothy J. Craddock

HM Ambassador to Estonia

Now there is arguably more reason to emphasize the importance of the teaching of British Studies in Estonia than at any previous time in Estonian history. Estonia is making rapid progress towards membership of the European Union where she is likely to be playing a full part in far fewer years that have gone by since independence was again achieved in 1991. European Union membership will tie Britain and Estonia into a closer partnership than they have ever had before: a partnership which will affect every area of Estonian life and every Estonian citizen. And, while people talk of the closeness of the British-Estonian relationship between the wars, the world of the future will see far more contact between the two countries and far more need to know each other better. We will share common foreign and trade policies, more British tourists are already coming to Estonia each year than in the entire period between 1918 and 1940, and we will again be great trading partners.

Britain is also one of the largest and most influential EU members and in many ways shares features of the Estonian approach to the Union. Both countries are concerned about over-regulation from Brussels, both share concerns about the need to preserve a real Union of individual nations, not an amorphous mass where cultures blur and cultural identity is lost. We are already talking together about how we wish to develop the European Union in the future.

Apart from sharing a common future, British studies are important because Britain is a rapidly changing society. It changes in a democratic, fluid way unlike many of the about-turns which have characterised some continental powers in the 20th century. But the

country in which I live is now almost unrecognisable when compared with that which emerged from the Second World War. It is now more open, more tolerant, more innovative, and more ethnically diverse. The Empire to which the British soldier or civil servant was sent as an adventurer or governor now come back to Britain so that most British cities are diverse and multi-cultural and new ideas and new vigour have been added to British life. Many questions are being asked about the great national institutions which were not asked before. Parliament is being reformed; only a few days before most hereditary peers were abolished.

Devolution has come to Scotland and Wales. The economy as a whole is more open to the world than almost any other. Britain is both the second biggest investor in other countries' economies, and also receives more foreign investment than any other country except the United States.

Not all has been a success story since the war. Many of the changes have led to self doubt in many people which has brought about in the past four years the biggest debate for decades on the country's image. Just as in Estonia, we too have a debate about what image should be projected. The familiar picture — the Royal Family, the pub, the country cottage, Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie, castles in Scotland — still attracts tourist by the million. But so does the new image — unconventional fashion, the most lively pop music scene in the world, the renaissance in architecture and design. In my years in Estonia, I have met many thousands of Estonians. For many, Britain is only a half-known country based on a surprising cross-section of those images — fog in the London of Charles Dickens, afternoon tea with Miss Marple, the great stores of London, green gardens on rainy days. Younger people might cite the latest London club music or fashion designers or films. Most Estonians do have an image of Britain and Britain, according to research carried out at Tartu, now enters the consciousness of Estonians far more than during the last years of the Soviet Union when we were cut off. But we deserve to be even better known — the traditional and familiar image along with the modern and unfamiliar. As we change, you need to keep up with those changes. As we grow closer again we need to know far more about you.

THE CHURCH OF ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS

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St Martin-in-the-Fields is one of London's most beautiful and best loved churches. It is within a stone's throw of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square between the National Gallery and Charing Cross Station.

The church is dedicated to *St Martin*, who is usually remembered for a superb gesture of instinctive generosity. Born about AD 316 in what is today a part of Hungary, he became a soldier in the Roman army. Posted with his legion to Amiens in France, the young man rode through the city gate one bitter winter's night and saw, huddled against the stonework, an almost naked beggar who said nothing but whose eyes entreated charity. Martin twisted his cloak round, cut it in two with his sword, and gave the length of warm cloth to the wretched man. That night in a dream, Christ himself appeared to Martin to thank him for his kindness, saying, "What you have done to the poor, you have done to me" (Pfleiderer 1989: 113), and the soldier realised that His face was that of the beggar.

Till then Martin had been of no particular faith, but now he entered the Christian church and left the army. In 372 he became Bishop of Tours in France.

After his death, the cult of St Martin began to spread quickly. He was particularly honoured in France, where 4000 churches are consecrated to him. In Estonia the church of Rannu is consecrated to St Martin (Pühakuteraamat 1995: 134).

His day, Martinmas, falls on 11 November (the day of his death); on that day, in the pre-Christian calendar, the Feast of Bacchus was celebrated and so St Martin became the patron saint of vintners. He is also the guardian of repentant drinkers and revellers and other repentant sinners, healer of those suffering from smallpox. But Martin had been a soldier before he became a saint. At present his day has acquired a special meaning for the armies and the peoples of Europe and the whole world — 11 November 1918 was the Armistice Day of World War I. Our “mardipäev” in Estonia was also originally celebrated on 11 November, but after the Reformation it shifted to 10 November which is the birthday of Martin Luther. We call the young people and children who go from house to house at Martinmas wearing masks and costumes “mardisandid”. It might be interesting to know that the Estonian word “sant” can be connected with the Latin “sanctus”, although in Estonian it has become a synonym of “beggar” (Eesti rahvakalender 1994: 17).

The iconographic emblem of St Martin is a ball of fire above his head, later also a goose (his day coincides with the time when geese depart. The custom of eating goose at Martinmas has reached Estonia as well). He is often depicted tearing his cloak in two, in order to share it with the beggar. This has become a symbol of charity.

The earlier churches. The Parish Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields took its name from its site in the fields which in those days lay between two separate cities — the City of London and the City of Westminster. There was probably a church there even before the 13th century. The earliest written record which indicates the existence of St Martin’s Church dates from 1222 when the Pope appointed a commission to give a ruling in a territorial dispute between the Bishop of London and the Abbot of Westminster.

This early church was at an almost equal distance from the Abbey and Palace at Westminster, and from the City of London with St Paul’s. Near the church there was a cluster of houses forming the Saxon village of Charing, which took its name from the bend in the Thames (Old English *cierring*, a bend or turning). The little

church was most probably built of humble materials, but, by the middle of the fourteenth century, it was established as a parish church and the list of its vicars is complete from John de Kerseye in 1352 until the present day. In 1535 the parish boundaries were adjusted on the order of Henry VIII. The little church could scarcely accommodate the enlarged congregation and so, in 1542–1543, St Martin's was virtually rebuilt.

There was another rebuilding in 1607. The medieval stone tower was retained, the walls were rebuilt in brick and stone, and the overall size was doubled. James I granted an extra acre of land in 1608 to extend the churchyard since part of it had been lost in the enlargement of the church. The parishioners included an increasing number of distinguished names, e.g. the poet John Milton, the mathematician and natural philosopher Sir Isaac Newton, the architect Sir Christopher Wren, who designed a combined parish library and school for the church in 1685.

The present church. Although the tower was re-cased with fresh stone in the 1690s, the day of the old church was passing. By the end of the 17th century the church was much decayed, and in 1708 it was described as "low and ordinary" (Little 1993c: 449). Surveyors were called in 1710 and warned that the decayed walls were 'spread out by the Weight of the Roof' and that the fabric had gone beyond repair (Saunders 13). In 1711 Parliament set up the Commission for Building Fifty New Churches and St Martin's was on the list of those requiring assistance. But nothing happened, so in 1717 the parishioners petitioned for an independent Act for rebuilding 'at the charge of the inhabitants of the parish' and permission was granted (Saunders 13). A special commission was set up which first met on 23 June 1720. Five architects handed in their designs, and one of those by James Gibbs was chosen.

Gibbs was an interesting choice as an architect. Although born in 1682 in Aberdeen in Scotland and dubbed a Scottish architect by such reference books as *International Dictionary of Architects and Architecture* and *Treasures of Britain*, he spent most of his life in England and nearly all the buildings designed by him are situated there.

His family were Roman Catholic, and as a young man he had gone to Italy to study for the priesthood. But there he turned to architecture instead, training in Rome under the leading architect of the Late Baroque Carlo Fontana. Gibbs' architecture was principally in the Baroque style although he used some Palladian (after the Italian Late Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, 1508–1580) sources as well.

In 1709 he returned to Scotland, but in 1710 he settled in London, being one of the first Scotsmen to make a career in one of the important professions in England. He changed his original name Gibb into Gibbs to sound less Scottish and conformed, at least outwardly, to the Anglican Church. He became a friend of Christopher Wren, who was about eighty at that time. Wren admired his drawing and respected his professional training, which was unusual among English architects of that time. In 1714 Gibbs was appointed as one of the surveyors (official inspectors) to the Commission for Building Fifty New Churches, a post which he held for a mere two years, though during that time he designed the church of St Mary-le-Strand. This graceful building was much admired. Here he applied the heritage of Wren and elements of John Vanburgh's and Nicholas Hawksmoor's elements mixed with the influence of the Italian Baroque. The peak of Gibbs' activity falls into the 1720s–1730s. The writer Horace Walpole (1717–1797) called him the most fashionable architect in England.

John Gibbs submitted several schemes for the reconstruction of the church. Gibbs' first suggestion was for a round, domed church entered through a portico. Such a shape would have been in his mind, for he was about to submit designs for the new Radcliffe Library in Oxford which draws its inspiration from the Pantheon in Rome. But the Commissioners hesitated, partly through fear of the cost, but even more because of the physical restrictions of the available site, which could not have held a building of the grandeur which Gibbs suggested. In the spring of 1721 Gibbs turned his mind to a smaller rectangular church, entered through an imposing portico. One of the designs included a four-column Ionic portico, but the portico actually approved used the Corinthian order and had six columns. On 23 May 1721, Gibbs produced the master plan

which received the approval of the Commissioners. It was for a rectangular church, approached by a broad flight of steps and entered through a portico of giant Corinthian columns supporting a pediment with the royal arms (work of Christopher Cass). Gibbs' name and completion date (1726) have also been carved on the pediment. The theme of those pillars was to be continued round the sides by flat attached pilasters, four of them in pairs at the east and west ends. St Martin's steeple, a true crowning glory, rises from the west end, and is clearly closely related to Wren's elaborate steeples in the City of London. The steeple which rises above the portico, is in Ionic pilaster form; above the clock Corinthian columns are capped by the actual spire. The combination of a western tower with a "Wrennish" steeple and a six-column Corinthian portico has been criticised. The steeple seems to sit heavily on the sloping roof, but in fact its lower structure rests securely on the ground.

The interior of St Martin's has galleries. Its columns are Corinthian. The nave has an elliptical rather than a semicircular ceiling, for acoustic reasons. The interior stuccowork was by Giuseppe Artari and Giovanni Bagutti.

St Martin's became the most prominent work of Gibbs, and it set a pattern for many new churches in England. Its influence is also very apparent in colonial and early republican America.

Among the other buildings designed by Gibbs, one of the most famous is the Radcliffe Library in Oxford, which dates from the 1730s. The Radcliffe Library, also called the "Camera," was built in accordance with the will of the eminent physician Dr. John Radcliffe, who died in 1714 leaving £40,000 for the erection of a library in Oxford. Its round plan is unique in England. Gibbs' inspiration was derived from an earlier plan of a circular library at Trinity College, Cambridge, that was drawn up by Sir Christopher Wren but never built. Its ribbed dome recalls that of St Peter's in Rome, which was designed by Michelangelo. The "Camera" was raised over an open piazza, which could be closed off with iron gates "to preserve that place from being a lurking place for rogues in the night time" (Little 1993b: 498). Now the piazza is glazed in and used as library space.

The library was formally opened on 13 May 1749. Gibbs had been made an honorary master of arts at Oxford University the previous day.

Gibbs should also be honoured as a disseminator of architectural knowledge. His *Book of Architecture*, published in 1728, was the first of its kind. It was aimed at masons, joiners, makers of decorative items, such as urns, fireplaces and murals. It was particularly useful for provincial and colonial craftsmen. Gibbs himself explained that the book “would be of use to such gentlemen as might be concerned in Building, especially in the remote parts of the country, where little assistance for Designs could be procured” (Little 1993a: 309).

Gibbs died in London in 1754, leaving his large private library and many of his drawings to the Radcliffe Library in Oxford. His drawings are now in the Ashmolean Museum.

The dedication stone to St Martin-in-the-Fields had been laid, even before the final plan was agreed on, on 19 March 1722. The work proceeded smoothly and rapidly to completion; the building was consecrated by Dr Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, on 20 October 1726; the steeple was rung in on 14 March of the following year. George I was appointed churchwarden — the only time a King has held such a post — but his royal responsibilities kept him from parochial duties. So, to make up for his inability to fulfil them, he provided a new organ for the west gallery. In 1799 a larger one was installed instead of that. (The organ given to the church by George I is now at Wotton under Edge in Gloucestershire)

The new church became very fashionable. Anyone who was anybody — and a great many more who were no one in particular — passed through the parish.

If nowadays the church stands on the edge of the spacious Trafalgar Square, the surroundings were completely different in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Maps of those times show us how closely the site of the church was hemmed in. The Royal Mews still dominated the area; small shops pressed against Gibbs' portico on the western side and all but obscured it. But a great change was coming. Trafalgar Square as we know it was laid out with the National Gallery on its north side and Nelson's Column to the south.

These changes revealed the quality of Gibbs' design. No longer encroached upon by mews and mean buildings, the nobility of the church became apparent and the view of it, seen through the colonnade of the National Gallery, is one of the most intriguing in London.

St Martin's had always been very modern in its attitudes. In 1807, it was probably the first church in London to install gas lighting, and in 1888 it was certainly the first to replace gas with electricity; a few years later, an Electrophone was installed so that those unable to attend church could hear the service in their own homes.

The churchwarden most concerned with these repairs and improvements was John McMaster, a shoemaker. He was responsible for an act of charity most truly in St Martin's own tradition. In the August of 1887, he met and befriended a man of starved, destitute appearance, whom later generations would recognise and revere as the poet Francis Thompson (1859–1907). After an unsuccessful attempt to complete medical school, Thompson lived in London as a tramp, suffering not only from poverty but from an addiction to opium. McMaster provided him with food, lodgings and work about the shop as well as five shillings a week. The good shoemaker did more — he provided sympathy, a brusque kindness and, above all, books to read. In 1888 magazine editor Wilfred Meynell recognised his literary talents and encouraged him to publish his poems. Perhaps it was of St Martin's churchwarden's generosity that Thompson was thinking when he wrote in *The Kingdom of God*:

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
 Cry; — and upon thy so sore loss
 Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
 Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
 Cry, — clinging Heaven by the hems —
 And lo, Christ walking on the water
 Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!

(*The Norton Anthology of English Literature* 1979: 1736)

With the new century, the traditional charity of St Martin's was to gain a fresh impetus. In 1914 a new vicar was appointed to St Martin's whose whole approach to his ministry there, and to life and to religion in general, was based on man's care for man. That man was Dick Sheppard. He was an extraordinary man, with unusual ideas and the administrative ability to realise them. He was a tireless worker, a preacher both sincere and witty, a first-class journalist; he was not afraid to play the fool for God's sake.

Abolishing pew reservations, he threw the church open to all, by night as well as by day. It was a place where the troops, on leave or about to return to France from Charing Cross, could rest and shelter. He shortened the services, introduced special Sunday afternoon meetings for men and women in uniform, arranged musical afternoons and organised lectures on every kind of subject. When air raids began in 1916, he opened the crypt to all who wished to take shelter — and when the war was over, he kept it open for those in need. In 1921 he put on the St Martin's Pageant, with himself in the role of the Beggar. He transformed the parish magazine into the *St Martin's Review*; the list of contributors included Thomas Hardy, Bernard Shaw and John Galsworthy.

And in 1924, he preached to a larger congregation than perhaps even he had ever dreamed of, for on the evening of 6 January the first complete service ever to be broadcast went out from St Martin-in-the-Fields. Doubts were expressed — supposing that a wireless should be on in a public house, men might listen to the service with their hats on.

His successor, the Reverend Patrick McCormick, was the first clergyman ever to appear on television, making an appearance from Alexandra Palace.

The Reverend Austen Williams, who began his service in 1956, founded the Social Care Unit.

St Martin's today. There are five to eight services on Sundays, including one for the Chinese community at 2.45. This active and growing Chinese-speaking congregation began to develop in 1963.

In line with St Martin's pioneering tradition, the church decided that it ought to be earning some of its own income, and as a result

St Martin-in-the-Fields Enterprise Limited was set up as a company in 1987. This was made possible by the re-ordering of the crypt. Cleaned, and with James Gibbs' brickwork exposed for the first time within living memory, it now houses a self-service cafe-restaurant. There is a bookshop with a broad and well-chosen stock, an Art Gallery with frequently changing exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, photography and ceramics which appeal to a wide range of tastes. There is also a brass-rubbing centre where you can try your hand at making your own rubbing from a range of historic brasses. Above the ground, in the court-yard to the east of the church, a market has opened. Much of the work sold there is hand-made, ranging from jewellery, knitwear and ethnic crafts to hats and toys.

The Social Care Unit occupies half the crypt. There twelve full-time workers and some hundred volunteers serve as many as five hundred homeless people each week.

The Centre is concerned with young people under the age of 24 who are not catered for by the Social Care Unit. Although this is not strictly an operation for which St Martin's is financially responsible, it is nevertheless housed on the premises of which the Vicar and churchwardens are freeholders and they have a direct interest in the work.

The Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. St Martin's has a long musical tradition. Gibbs gave the church its elliptical ceiling because he felt that that shape did better justice to the human voice than the higher lift of a semicircular vault. George I, the royal churchwarden, presented the church with its first organ. Perhaps Händel played the royal instrument, and Mozart is also reputed to have given a concert there. In 1949 John Churchill, Organist and Master of Music, initiated twice-weekly lunchtime concerts by young professional musicians, for a while there was even a St Martin's Chamber Orchestra which played unpaid. However, such an arrangement could not be sustained permanently, and so the idea of a professional paid orchestra developed. The name of the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields was chosen, and five trial concerts were given in the winter of 1958/59, the first of them in

thick fog on 26 October 1958. The orchestra went on to achieve the fame and position which it holds today, and eventually more professional premises had to be sought, but the name and the link with the church have been maintained, and each July the Academy returns to its birthplace to rejoice the congregation and other listeners with a festival of baroque and modern music. Nowadays there are free lunchtime concerts four times a week and evening concerts three times a week.

The parish boundary between St Martin-in-the-Fields and St Peter's Eaton Square passes through the middle of Buckingham Palace because the parish boundaries existed before the palace was built. As the residential apartments come within the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields, it is the baptismal registers of the parish church which contain the entries for any children baptised in the palace, and the vicar is usually asked to be present, although the ceremony is conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We can only agree with what Ann Saunders says at the end of her history of St Martin-in-the-Fields: "Sometimes the going is hard — Martin's comrades may well have laughed at his ruined uniform, he may have been reprimanded for damaging government property. Today, it is difficult to make both ends meet, and attempts to solve financial problems are criticised as worldly or un-Christian — but the work is worthwhile. Were St Martin alive today, we hope he would not be ashamed of the church dedicated in his name." (Saunders 24).

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BRITISH OR AMERICAN ENGLISH: A STUDY OF ESTONIAN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO PRONUNCIATION

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Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to present the results of a study that investigated the pronunciation preferences of the first-year students specialising in English language and literature. The study was carried out in October 1997 at the University of Tartu and concentrated on the following three issues: (1) students' awareness of the differences between British and American English pronunciation; (2) students' reasons for choosing one or the other variety; (3) students' self-evaluation of their pronunciation of English.

There would have been much less point in carrying out a similar study ten or fifteen years ago when British English was the only standard variety of English taught in schools and at university in Estonia, and the contacts with American English and other native varieties were rather limited. However, recent decades have witnessed a flood of American influence on European culture (including Estonian), which has brought along the spread of AmE. We are also increasingly more open to other variants of English such as Australian, Canadian, etc. Even broadly defined there are hundreds of different accents of English in the world; tens of different British Englishes and tens of different American Englishes. Thus, it is not surprising that the question of preferring or choosing one variety rather than another is often raised and proves some-

times to be a problematic issue, particularly in the context of a language classroom. Which of the accents to choose as a model for teaching pronunciation? Is it necessary to make any choice at all?

Models for pronunciation teaching

Generally, it is agreed that it is advisable and important to have a model for teaching purposes. We need a standard for teaching a language — a codified and fixed model. According to Lehtonen, Sajavaara and May (1977: 29) there are five parameters for deciding which model should be adopted for teaching pronunciation (and other aspects of language). An overview of their list will be presented in this section.

Firstly, it is important to consider the tradition of following one or the other model. In Europe the teaching of English has generally aimed at the production of Received Pronunciation (RP) as the European variety, but probably the situation is changing with the increasing American influence in all spheres of life. A list of the reasons why RP has been adopted as the norm in Estonia can be found in Kostabi (1995: 63).

Secondly, what comes to play a role is the universality of the variety. The choice should be the variety which is regionally or socially not too restricted, thus generally a standard variety. This parameter will rule out the teaching of regional varieties such as Cockney, Scouse, or Brummie.

Thirdly, the aspect of usefulness should be considered. The model chosen should be communicatively the most useful type of English. It would consequently not be very practical to learn some smaller regional variety which has a localised vocabulary or non-standard grammatical forms.

Fourthly, the status of the variety in the area is of importance. What matters is not only contacts with native speakers of English but equally well contacts between non-native speakers of English. As also pointed out by Sinclair (1988: 4) learners of English today learn English first and foremost in order to communicate with each

other. For Estonians who communicate a lot with Scandinavians and other Europeans who have been taught BrE this variety would be the most natural choice, whereas there would not be much point in teaching BrE in Mexico or in the Philippines.

And, finally, a parameter that is of vital importance is teachers and teaching material. Most teaching materials used in Estonian schools still come from Britain or are based on British textbooks. But an increasing number are of American origin. Most of the teachers of English in Estonia have been trained in BrE rather than AmE and have probably had more contacts with Britain, but even here there is a change going on. Thus we clearly have the two trends here.

Lehtonen et al's consideration of these five parameters leads them to favour RP as a model in Finland, and the same conclusion would emerge for Estonia. On the other hand the above listed criteria are counterbalanced by the influence of AmE on European culture and language teaching models.

Material and method

My study concentrated on Estonian students' attitudes towards two major accents, British (RP) and American (GA), as being the best described varieties of English they are clearly the most important models for teaching English in our educational system.

A questionnaire was administered to 39 first-year students of English at the University of Tartu. The students were asked to answer the following questions:

Which variety of English do you *think* you speak?

Do you consciously try to stick to one variety of English?

What are the reasons for your preferring one or the other variety?

Which variety of English were you taught at school?

Which variety of English did your teachers speak?

Did your teachers talk about other varieties of English than the one used in the classroom?

In order to evaluate the students' spoken language and compare their performance with their self-evaluation, the students were asked to read out a passage of text and answer a few spontaneous questions. The interviews were tape-recorded.

Results and discussion

Which variety of English do you think you speak?

The largest number of students (16) think that they speak a mixture of different varieties of English. Thirteen say that their accent is British but 6 of them think it might be a mixture or influenced by other varieties. Ten students claim that they speak AmE, whereas 4 of them admit that although it is mainly AmE it is mixed with BrE. This means that the majority of the first-year students regard themselves as mixers, while only one third of the students questioned think that they speak one or the other variety without mixing (incl. 7 with the preference of BrE and 6 of AmE).

From listening to the recordings we can say that most of the students are mixing the phonologies of BrE and AmE including some of those who think that they are not mixers. There are several examples of learners who on the whole pronounce words such as e.g. *neither*, *tomato*, *vitamin* as an RP speaker would do but at the same time they also use features typical of GA such as voiced /t/ in intervocalic position and rhotification. Most of the learners have a strong Estonian accent and thus in the case of the majority we can only talk about an accent being predominantly British or American and not talk of a native-like RP or GA, which is quite what was expected. It would be unnatural to set as a goal of pronunciation teaching a native-like RP accent as there are very few who would be able to reach this goal. At least in school the most feasible goal seems to be a good non-native pronunciation based on either RP or GA as a model. But would the same do at the university level?

Including a discrimination task, e.g. a set of recordings where the students are asked to judge whether they hear a BrE or an AmE

sample, would have helped to increase the reliability of the answers of the questionnaire, as at the moment we do not know whether the students are actually able to tell the difference between the two varieties. Neither do we know which criteria they were basing their evaluation on when judging their own pronunciation. The following comments that were added give evidence of the need for teaching more about the pronunciation differences between the two accents: e.g. "I have not learned much about the differences between BrE and AmE", "I don't know all the differences between AmE and BrE".

Do you consciously try to stick to one variety of English?

Twenty-two students maintain that they are consciously trying to stick to one variety of English, the main reason being that it would be unprofessional to switch from one variety to another. Sixteen of them try to imitate BrE, whereas only 3 consciously follow the example of AmE, 3 do not specify which variety they are following but since they think that they speak BrE one might guess that they also wish to stick to this variety. However, one student who thinks that she speaks AmE writes that she "would really want to get hold of the British variety" her reason for this being that she can hear and speak the American variety everywhere anyway. Some of the students are worried because they "get carried away" to AmE or because they cannot avoid Americanisms as they watch so many American films.

The reasons for the rest of the learners (17) not to follow a particular variety are diverse. Some of them (5) simply see no reason for it as long as their listeners understand what they are saying, or they consider expressing ideas more important than the way of speaking. Others (3) answer that they are "not yet" following a particular model, whereas for the rest the reason is the fact that they do not know enough about the varieties. One student confesses that she does not know how to stick to one variety only.

What are the reasons for your preferring one or the other variety?

As to the reasons for preferring one variety to the other the students' responses, although rather subjective, inevitably reflect attitudes that students bring from school and the attitudes of their English teachers. Those who try to follow BrE claim it to be more beautiful and better-sounding, more prestigious, more original, more noble, more refined and more correct. At the same time the general opinion about AmE is that it is pronounced more carelessly, and does not have so many rules as BrE. AmE pronunciation is on the whole considered easier, and even other aspects of the variety are thought to be easier to acquire and use, or as one student puts it: "AmE seems to be more melodious and is not stuck in rules". The British variety on the other hand is generally considered to be more difficult to learn. According to the students questioned, it is more difficult to master RP than GA, RP being "quite uncomfortable to pronounce". However, as emerged from above, most of the students have chosen to follow this accent. It is true that some other variety of English (e.g. Scottish) would make a phonetically much less challenging model for teaching purposes than RP which has, among other features that are difficult for a foreign learner, a very complex set of diphthongs.

Students seem to be aware of the fact that AmE is (becoming) more widely used, particularly because of the mass media, and they often view this trend as something threatening or negative. Whereas Britain and everything British (including the accent) seems to be associated with old traditions and good taste, and thus described with largely positive adjectives as seen above. Where do such attitudes come from?

Which variety of English were you taught at school? Which variety of English did your teachers speak? Did your teachers talk about other varieties of English than the one used in the classroom?

All these questions concern the background of students and therefore I will discuss responses to them under one section. The answers show that 22 of the questioned were taught BrE, whereas 17 experienced a mixture or no particular model in their schooling.

It appears from the questionnaires that on the whole the attitude of the teachers was tolerant towards both varieties. According to the students' responses, mixtures, as a rule, were not allowed. In some cases teachers had expressed their own clear preferences in favour of the British variety ruling thus out the usage of AmE. For instance one student, who preferred AmE, but was taught BrE, commented that "whenever I tried to use the American variety in written language or speech I was corrected." Often, it seems, the explanation that was given to students about why it was better to speak RP did not have much to do with linguistic reasons, e.g. "BrE is more conservative and older".

Only 3 students said that their teacher talked about the varieties of English "often", one of them being a Finnish student, whereas most of the students said that their teachers spoke about varieties "seldom" or "sometimes", and according to 2 students "never".

Uppsala study

It is interesting to compare our results to those of a similar study that was carried out at the Department of English of the University of Uppsala in 1990. The study included 97 first-year students of English. Unlike in our study, the largest category (39) maintained with great certainty that they spoke BrE. The main reason for choosing this accent was that they had learnt it at school. (Ten claimed that they had made a conscious decision to speak in as British a way as possible because they liked the variant better.) The second largest category (31) was mixers who according to Westergren-Axelsson (1990) "claim to have lost the battle against the pervasive American influence mainly from TV and films but at the same time feel that they lack a genuine American or British accent". The American group consisted of 26 students. Most of them had studied in America and were still in touch with their American friends, and had thus a good reason for following this variety.

Final comments

It seems that the question about which accent to choose for a model is not any longer an irrelevant issue in today's classroom. Awareness of varieties is probably more important than we realise. It is, however, impossible to teach (or familiarise) a foreign learner to understand (or follow) all the varieties of English. Choosing one accent for model does not of course mean that this should be regarded superior to other accents of English and therefore, it is wrong to rule out other varieties from the classroom. As becomes evident from the students' answers most of the schools were quite liberal as to which variety to allow. At the same time a question which rises is whether the teachers actually are aware of the differences themselves as in most cases the differences between the accents are simply not treated. Would it be too much to ask a language teacher mastering no matter which variety to be well acquainted with the main features of both BrE and AmE? And finally, a word about mixing the two accents as many of the students questioned seemed to be worried about this matter. It is inevitable that different media have an influence on the way we speak and pronounce words. To keep one's accent "pure" is a requirement that is thought to be too difficult even for native speakers. Should we consider mixing such a serious problem in the classroom?

Given that several students expressed their expectations of the department, it would be interesting to interview the same students in three years time to see how their self-evaluation and attitudes have changed during their time of study at the department.

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TEACHING TOPICS ON POPULAR CULTURE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM THROUGH STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

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As a lecturer at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania teaching the course of British Civilization, I would like to share the experience and ideas which I have discovered through students' participation and which could be similar for all Baltic states.

I designed the course of British Civilization specially for those students who are interested in Great Britain, in its culture, heritage, people and their lifestyle, so that our collective aim would be to explore the face of British politics, geography, history and contemporary institutions, practices, activities and culture. During our course we try to encourage students to voice their own opinions rather than to supply definite answers. At the end of each lecture we have debates, the questions are arranged so that they stimulate students' thoughts, encourage them to go to libraries, and inspire them to test their suggestions by looking at the numerous cultural products that supply a way into an understanding of contemporary British life style. We discuss recent political, economic and cultural examples that give us an insight into the concerns, anxieties and tensions within British life. We use audio-visual programmes and on a selected topic students make oral presentations and write essays. As far as I am concerned, these activities are significant as they provide specific British representations relevant to the issues under discussion.

When teaching courses on British civilization, the topics that students enjoy most concern contemporary popular culture in Britain. At the end of the course the students are asked to evaluate it and their answers reveal that the topics they find most useful are: international relations, especially the membership of the EU and NATO, British political and educational institutions, public entertainment, new patterns in leisure, pop and rock music, technology and the future, popular culture and youth subculture. The answers to the question "Where your expectations in the course of British Civilization met?" were: "On the whole the course was interesting, especially those lectures on culture, music, entertainment, media, but I think there were too many lectures on history. We could have devoted more time to other topics like art and education"; "The most interesting lectures were about youth culture, popular culture and leisure". Some students criticized the course for being introductory, not analytical: "Sometimes I got what I expected, sometimes not, it depends on the theme. Sometimes facts are clear, the same as in Lithuania, but I lacked the analysis, I think there are lots of interesting points to be analysed". Students criticized the organization of lectures, the lack of modern video-audio materials, fresh newspapers, youth magazines and fanzines: "What the course lacked was lively information based not on books but the personal experience of those who have been to Britain". Moreover, students' suggestion of giving only a brief outline of British history, without a thorough coverage of English and Scottish kings and queens has to be taken into consideration, as they would prefer to look at British history not merely in terms of kings and queens and battles, but to trace the development of the nation from prehistoric times to the present day, emphasizing economic, social and intellectual forces and how these affected the everyday lives of people from different sections of society.

Below I would like to look at the cultural orientation of the Lithuanian youth today and their reactions to information about Britain.

The typical Lithuanian teenager today is viewed as the consumer, chasing pleasure and is seen by some older commentators as a 'fashion victim', but others see the teenager as a negotiator

both of contemporary style trends and of technology. Young people in Lithuania imitate the dress styles for decades familiar in Britain, for example the Lithuanian representatives of subculture groups like ravers wear bright, baggy, freaky clothes like their counterparts in the British Isles. Similarly, Skinheads wear military trousers and boots like Nazis, the local Goths paint their faces black and white, their hair is dyed black and they wear black clothes and upside-down crosses on their chests. The bikers' fashion is leather clothes and tattoos. From all subcultures the most noticeable in Lithuania is the punk style. Actually one of my students from the British Civilization course chose to write a diploma paper on "The Symbolic Language of Punk Subculture".

The punk style is directly offensive: their T-shirt are covered with swear words and the most unremarkable and inappropriate items: safety pins, plastic clothes pegs, TV-components, razor blades, tampons — anything within or without reason can be turned into punk fashion. The rule seems to be: if the cap does not fit, wear it. Objects borrowed from the most sordid contexts find their place in the punks' ensembles: chains draped gracefully across chests, safety pins worn as ornaments through the cheek, ear or lip. Cheap fabrics are the norm, plastic, lurex, vulgar design and nasty colours completely destroy conventional ideas of prettiness. Contrary to the advice of every women's magazine, make-up for boys and girls is worn to be seen, faces become abstract portraits. Hair is obviously dyed in hay yellow, jet black, bright orange or red with tufts of green or bleached in question marks. Their trousers tell the story of their own construction, with multiple zips and outside seams clearly displayed. The abnormal is extremely valued, in particular sexual fetishism like rapists' masks and rubber wear, fishnet stockings and high-heeled shoes — the whole paraphernalia from a pornographic film. Of course, punk does more than upset the wardrobe, punk is openly aggressive, regards others with contempt, protests against conventional attitudes and behaviour by spitting, vomiting and swearing in public. Punk dancing style is the pogo, pose or robot, the "couple" is generally of the same sex. One participant would strike a suitable cliché fashion pose while the other would fall into a classic crouch to snap an imaginary picture.

The pogo resembles 'anti-dancing': leaps into the air, hands clenched to the sides to head an imaginary ball, and this is repeated without variation in time to the strict mechanical rhythms of the music. Some zealous punks carry things one step further and choreograph the whole evening, turning themselves into living sculptures. The music is distinguished from the mainstream rock and pop as punks' position on harmony is "we're into chaos, not music". The popular groups "Gumball", "Sex Pistols", "The Ejected", "The Exploited", "Turbo Generation", "Guitar Gangsters", "Slaughter and the Dogs", and the titles of the songs: "Nobody Heroes", "That's When the Razor Cuts", "Maniac", "Living in a Rut", "She's as Beautiful as a Foot", "I Wanna Be Sick On You" are frontal attacks on the conservative notions of entertainment or the classical concept of art.

In order to counteract the hostile punks' ideology, there is an attempt to provide an alternative space within subculture. Lithuanian punks publish their fanzines "The Edge of Time" and "Calmant" which contain reviews, editorials and interviews in English and Lithuanian. The language is quite good, though deliberately peppered with swear words, typing errors, grammatical mistakes and misspellings. Lithuanian punks have their own bar, recently opened in Vilnius, where they can express themselves freely, dancing pogo, smoking marihuana and using other drugs.

Yet the most vibrant western youth movement affecting Lithuania today is the Ecstasy culture and the rave scene, a combination of dance, music and drugs. The reason for Ecstasy culture's tremendous popularity is its open-access formula, its relentless dynamism and perpetual self-reinvention. The fact that the Ecstasy experience itself is so intensely personal — the impact of sounds and chemicals on the body and brain, the joy of dancing, the intoxication of release enables people to define it on their own terms. Ecstasy culture's "mission" is to reappropriate consciousness, to invent briefly a kind of utopia, where fantasies and freedom of expression are made real. Ecstasy is the popular name of the stimulant MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine), a small pill which for 4–6 hours makes users experience feelings of euphoria. It was invented in 1912 by a pharmaceutical company in Darmstadt

but neglected and was resynthesised in the 1960s in California. It is one of the group of amphetamines which also includes LSD, cocaine, prescribed painkillers and tranquillizers. It is sometimes referred to as 'empathogen' as it seems to enable people to experience someone else's feelings as their own. It seems to help people to open up and really talk, it produces the impression that everything is all right with the world and seems to free up the spine and limbs. When combined with rhythmic music, it hooks the mind to the melody. The typical cycle of Ecstasy use can be mapped in stages. First there is the honeymoon stage — the beatific, loved-up, evangelical phase. Within a year or so the early excitement begins to fade and many experience diminishing returns. The third stage is the comedown: disillusionment, reduced use and attempts to readjust to the fact that the initial high is gone for ever. Finally comes the re-entry into the post-Ecstasy world, a time of reassessment and the regaining of equilibrium. During our classes, when we explore Ecstasy culture in Britain, we draw parallels with the situation in Lithuania and read articles from magazines like "Newsweek" or books like "Altered State" by Matthew Collin and "The Marking on the Train" by Irvin Welsh.

In conclusion I would like to stress the importance of making students draw parallels between what they read about Britain and their own lives when they make their presentations, as it will liven up the issues under discussion and make them aware that many issues in a foreign culture may have unexpected parallels in their own lives.

FILM AS TEXT AND TEXT AS AN IMAGE

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When we let the surrounding reality freely and unselectively interact with our consciousness (which is a definition of survival since we cannot exist as identities or *selves* without persistent confrontation with the “otherness” of the world, and the “otherness” of other individuals) it creates random, mostly unpredictable images in our mind because we are not consciously interpreting reality. If we want to formulate our reaction to the experienced events or things, we verbalize our sensations and form a message (written, oral, visual, aural) or create a *text*, but if we want to recreate and re-experience our sensations, feelings, frame of mind etc. and convey these experiences to the others, we turn the message into a *narrative text* which is an analogue or surrogate of the surrounding reality that consists of a more or less arbitrary set of signs — letters, visual images, musical sounds. In other words — to penetrate the meaning of the world (or endow it with meaning significant to our consciousness) it has to be reorganized into a systematic entity — into a text in its broadest sense of the word when text is not merely defined as printed pages of a book but also a piece of music, a film. One could agree with the idea expressed implicitly by Jacques Derrida that if reality equals truth, what need would there be for cinema? — the same can be said in regard to literature, painting, music etc.

At present we live in an epoch dominated by visual languages and visual arts — and of all the visual arts the most *polyphonic* and the most synthetic one is cinema. Although we say that we “look”

at the visual images of a film, photograph, painting, the process of perception of the visual signs by its technique is essentially very much the same as the process of reading. Which enables one to say even more: analysis and understanding of the texture of film is largely structured according to the same principles as the interpretation of a novel or story — and not because almost 80% of films are screen versions of literary works but because even when the film has not verbal text at all as part of its means of artistic expression, it has a script as its basis and presents a narrative, tells a story, e.g. the completely “non-verbal” films such as Ettore Scola’s feature *Le Bal* or Jos Stelling’s short film *The Waiting Room*. The study of a text in its broadest meaning is never a purely aesthetic endeavour but at least partly an interpretation of the reality which it depicts or in which it has been created. Thus, for example, Richard Loncraine’s 1995 film *Richard III* deals at least with three epochs — the Elizabethan (the original setting of Shakespeare’s play), the 1920s and 30s (the setting of Loncraine’s film) and the contemporary reality (the time when the film was made).

Thus the question in the present inquiry is twofold:

- * how and why can we view film as text (or a *form of writing* to use Derrida’s formulation);
- * how does a written text — when it is presented in the film visually as an image by itself — function in film and in what way (and if at all) the “filmed text” differs from the printed text in a book?

In a broader context we are interested in how the visual images combine with verbal images in film to form a language that is ultimately aimed at gaining a certain knowledge or truth about the reality whose mirror it is.

Written and spoken

According to Derrida the most important characteristic feature of writing is the ability to sustain a sense of distancing — in other words, writing as a process is an activity which runs parallel to that which is being written: to describe my experience even if I am

amidst of it, which I am still experiencing, I must be able to see myself outside it as if from a distance. When I write I see myself both as the subject of the described experience and also as a an impassioned narrator of my own sensations.

In Derrida's interpretation writing covers all forms of reproducible languages, including a voice on the tape, and he makes a seemingly paradoxical statement that "spoken is also written" since speaking can be recorded and reproduced and the meaning "of the spoken" can be transposed into an identical meaning "of the written". The same can be said about film — once it can be considered *a language* and can be reproduced, it can be viewed as a form of writing which means a descriptive response to reality, the formulation of the meaning of the world with a set of certain codified images.

This concept (although not arising only from the studies of Derrida) puts the film in the domain of the textual, and as any text, — be it literature or film — it creates the illusion of *wholeness*, the aspiration for which is one way of defining creativity, since the artist's ultimate aim is to overcome the sense of chaos and incomprehensibility of his immediate reality and question the meaning of existence by discovering the "whatness of things" (to recall Joyce's phrase). When we look at our immediate surroundings, we do not perceive it as a complete, organized system which would have a certain beginning and a certain end and a certain disposition towards revealing some kind of truth by itself. The reality, unlike film and literature, does not present *a narrative*.

What is a text?

For instance, according to Yu. Lotman text is a secondary language because "historically utterance was primary in the natural language, after which followed its transformation into ritualized formula encoded in some kind of secondary language, that is, text."

Different texts can be combined creating a single polyphonic text. Lotman exemplifies it with a verbal formula and gesture in the

rituals which are combined into a synthetic meaning, into the signified or the discourse of the ritual.

Film is a form of art which is intrinsically *textually polyphonic*, combining visual images with sound, gesture, colour and others creating a synthetic language, or as Ch. Metz has said, *language without langue*, because the film conveys a definite implicit meaning but does so by relying much more on the syntagmatic combinability of its separate signs or images than on the denotational meaning of those signs.

If we attempt to give a descriptive definition of text we might choose to opt for the following formulation:

TEXT is a structured system of codes aimed at communicating a certain message (Lotman called the meaning conveyed by the codes *cultural memory of the text*) but not all the texts are enacted in spatial and temporal dimensions. Painting, for instance, might convey only certain time in the sense of its affiliation to a specific epoch, therefore we will not refer to painting as a *narrative text*.

Another important feature of the narrative text is the actualization of the two meanings simultaneously: *implicit* and *explicit*. And even if the film "looks" so much like the reality, what it tells about its meaning is more than the actual visual shapes and sounds, when we watch a film and say "This is a street" we actually mean "This is a representation of the street".

Ch. Metz, for instance, speaks of the *Grand Syntagmatique* when he refers to the "language like" qualities of the film and proceeds in his approach from the following assumptions. Both language and film produce discourse through paradigmatic and syntagmatic operations. Language selects and combines phonemes and morphemes to form sentences; film selects and combines images and sounds to form syntagmas, that is units of narrative autonomy in which elements interact semantically.

Keith Cohen points out the major differences between filmic and fictional signs by saying that the image comes into film bearing the mark of the outside world just as the word comes into the novel bearing the mark of verbal language and etymological history. In other words, film employs images which before appearing in the film were mere objects of things but, combined in a film se-

quence within certain syntagmatic relations, may become indexial signs or iconic signs representing a certain segment of reality. For example, a shot of an empty ashtray followed by a shot of a full ashtray can denote the passage of a certain span of time. An off-screen bang of a door may convey the sense of someone's anger.

Unlike music and architecture, the novel and cinema are consistently referential, they are by "nature condemned to connotation, since denotation always comes before their artistic enterprise." (Ch. Metz)

Unlike the novel, where the text is only a system of signs (visual or graphic representations, codes), in film the text (written) can and does function like an image.

Thus in Hitchcock's film *The Lady Vanishes* the name of the vanished lady, "Forbes", written on the dusty window pane, is the only evidence for her friend of Mrs Forbes' existence and becomes a clue to the solution of the mystery, since all the passengers think the young woman is almost delirious in her claims that her travel companion has disappeared.

In Danny Boyle's cult movie *Trainspotting* (1995) the caption "The worst toilet in Scotland" appears superimposed on the toilet door when Mark Renton vanishes behind it, and serves as an equivalent of the author's emphatically ironic voice. The scene at the rave party in *Trainspotting* is done with subtitles although the Scottish accent of the speech is neither more or less conspicuous when compared to the other scenes in the film, thus the subtitles become indicative of the author's awareness of their own "linguistic otherness" and are another surrogate of the narrator's or author's voice.

Francis Ford Coppola's film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) in one of its opening sequences contains a shot in which the train going along the Carpathian mountain passage is superimposed upon the pages of Jonathan's diary, thus resulting in an almost surrealist scene of a train rolling along the upper edge of a book and implicitly we are reminded that we as spectators have embarked upon a fictional journey of the book, into the mind of the author, that most of the subsequent sequences in Coppola's film are what

Bruce Kawin calls "mindscreen" — representation of the consciousness of the protagonists and for that matter also of its author.

Peter Greenaway's rather free adaptation of Shakespeare's play "The Tempest" under the title of *Prospero's Books* (1991) starts with a multiple narration: the story is *written, enacted, filmed, created, related* since Gielgud's Prospero writes down the first word of Shakespeare's play simultaneously with its depiction, and "pretends" to tell us the story that is immediately illustrated by actors. Writing down of the events emphasises the narrative significance and meaningfulness of the events and creates a sense of co-participation in artistic creation. Greenaway's approach epitomizes the central theme of the whole play — the role and significance of the creative endeavour and its power (or lack of it). The image if the written text sustains an additional narrative dimension, materializes the word as an image since we know that it all started from the word.

In another film by Greenaway — *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989) — menus of particular days shown in close up with the persistent regularity is an equivalent of punctuation in the film, they form the "timeless" interludes of the film narrative and serve to remind us that we are watching only a film, although the strength and fierceness of our emotions are no more subdued for that matter: even if the film opens with the rising of a curtain and ends with the closing of the curtains.

In one of Peter Greenaway's more recent films *The Pillow Book* (1996) the text becomes an intrinsically central image, and writing on the body becomes a metaphor of the body as "a text", evoking associations with *Delsatre's* teaching of body language (that each emotional state has a particular bodily equivalent), and *Dalcroze's* school of *Eurhythmics* according to which each emotion can be expressed through a certain rhythmical pattern.

The body is iconic while the text is not — even if the written signs do not become iconic in the film, they become images in themselves, they convey a meaning apart from being only physical shapes and signs with an encoded meaning, they become *icons of themselves*.

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SHE'S GOT A GAP, I'VE GOT A GAP, TOGETHER WE FILL THE GAPS

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As is generally known, there are not many things that all language teachers would agree on, but I believe that motivation in class would please both the teacher and the student. When this is the case, students learn much more efficiently.

It is not a big secret that every language teacher is at one time bound to come across an important question "What is the ultimate aim of language teaching?" There are many ways of answering it but we mostly hope our students will be able to understand and produce the language that they want or need to. In other words, we can say that the ultimate aim of language teaching is to develop the student's autonomy in language use. This also means that we should be looking for ways to move the students from the category of "consumer" in the classroom to that of "producer". In doing this we are also likely to move away from language specific work and involve the students in broader educational processes.

Teaching the English language at my lessons, I firstly try to persuade my students about the benefits of using a common language for productive communication. To prove the fact that a common language is the shortest way to linking people, I cite a social law about the common language as an example: scientists affirm that when speaking a common language strangers are closer to each other than natural sisters who speak different languages. The deepest and the most complicated aspects of human relations can most easily be expressed via languages.

In our country, English is a foreign language. It is learned primarily in the classroom context. Unfortunately, it happens sometimes that our students are forced to discuss topics from their coursebooks which they are not really interested in. On the other hand, a child has his or her natural surroundings in which s/he organizes the various activities that make up his/her life. In my practice I have noticed that my teenage pupils become more motivated when they can use English as a tool for communication.

Having had all these thoughts, I decided to ask the Cambridge University Press (which courses we are using at our lessons) to arrange for some kind of exchange between my students and their peers from other countries. I was very delighted that the authors of the course *Cambridge English for Schools*, A. Littlejohn and D. Hicks, had had a similar idea. To help me in my project, they offered to link schools in different parts of the world with each other. After having registered my school for the Parcel of English project, I was informed about our twin classes in France, Greece, Slovenia and Russia. My delighted, enthusiastic students started making new contacts. It was a new creative stage in the process of mastering the English language.

The fact of the matter was that learners were using English as a medium of communication with other non-native speakers and certainly with people of different cultures. My students brought up a question hard for me to answer: what is less important and more easily tolerated in real communication — errors of grammar or lexical insufficiency or errors related to socio-cultural customs. The world, our countries, our communities will survive with faulty pronunciation and less than perfect grammar, but can we be sure they will continue to survive without real communication, without a spirit of community, indeed without real communication among people? In my situation, it was impossible to give learners enough specific information about a culture, because it is impossible to predict all the cultural circumstances in which they will use their newly acquired language competence. Students also needed to know more than just how to express ideas in correct grammatical patterns. It is a strong belief of mine that language cannot exist without people and people cannot create civilization without lan-

guage. There is no such thing as culture-free language. The question is how culture could be a component of a language course.

The work on a project was, in this case, like the light at the end of the tunnel. I focused on two important aspects: the country and the culture. I divided cultural goals into four categories:

- developing a greater awareness of and a broader knowledge about another culture;
- acquiring a command of the etiquette;
- understanding differences between cultures;
- understanding the values of the target culture.

There are many topics that have proven successful for the teaching of cultural awareness. Here, however, I'd like to give a brief sketch of those deemed most practical. The participants of the project fixed their attention on the following topics:

Folklore. What myths, stories, traditions, customs and beliefs are universally found among common people?

Discipline. What are the norms of discipline in the home, at school, in public places, and in ceremonies?

Pets. What animals are habitually received into the home as pets? What is their role in the household?

Personal possessions. What objects are often found decorating the bureau and walls of a young person's bedroom? What articles are likely to be discovered in a boy's pocket or a girl's handbag?

Radio and television programmes. How general is the use of radio and television and what types of programmes are offered, especially for young people?

Contrasts in town and country life. What are some of the notable differences in manners, clothing, shopping facilities, public utilities, when life in town is compared with life in the country?

Let me now outline the procedure I used when starting our project. Like a novel, which consists of chapters and episodes, a project is a large task composed of smaller steps. Each step is a task in its own right and as such can be expanded or reduced. As their first task, the students were asked to write about their first image of people from another country and to translate it into drawings. This starting point revealed that children had already acquired certain

stereotypes about countries and nations. It was interesting to note that our students' images about different nationalities had more to do with reality than their penfriends' stereotypes about Lithuania. I'd like to offer one task to you. Imagine yourselves as an onion (even if you don't like to eat them). Each layer corresponds to a different part of your identity. Others identify us, and we may not like the label they give us. Continuing the vegetable analogy, what happens if one onion calls another a tulip bulb?

I continued then in the same vein with some other tasks. I asked my students to listen to the following passage and interpret it later: "Mary heard the ice-cream van coming down the street. She remembered her birthday money and ran into the house." Almost all students interpreted this passage like this: Mary is a child, she would like an ice-cream, she runs into the house to get some money so that she can buy the ice-cream. After changing any of the nouns in the passage ("money" to "gun", for instance) we again received similar stories. The activity made the students sure about their similarities. There is only one race: the human race. The differences between cultures reflect the effort each society has had to make in order to survive within a particular reality.

As a slogan, the words from *The Razor's Edge* by W. S. Maugham reflected the main idea of the project: men and women are not only themselves, they are also the region in which they were born, the city apartment or the farm in which they learnt to walk, the games they played as children, the tales they overheard, the food they ate, the schools they attended, the sports they played, the poets they read and the God they believed in. From the very beginning the participants looked at the values and systems of behaviour in each country. This was complex stuff and trying to understand cultures, including one's own, meant examining many aspects of life. The partners made up a questionnaire with such questions:

- what is defined as "good" and "bad" ?
- which traditions are important?
- what rules govern the consumption of food and drink?
- how is information shared?
- what are the reactions to other cultures?

- what is funny?
- what a role does religion play?

The students collected, exchanged, discussed and selected information. As a result of their common activity, the imaginary "Living museum" was established with some rooms: the greenest room, the sports room, the art room, the culture room and Noah's Ark. The work in the greenest room involved the survey "A good life", the action "The greenest school". In the art room the students designed the advertisements of their favourite products and took part in the poetry contest. Visiting the culture room, they told about the most loved customs and festivals.

Very soon my students were persuaded by the fact that we all are different. Sometimes we feel proud of the difference and like to show it. At other times we prefer to hide it, either because we fear rejection or because we want to be like everyone else. However, we are all equal in that as human beings we share many qualities.

As a practical teacher, I am quite sure that the opportunity to have written communication with other learners at the same level is an exciting concept, for it brings the language to life as an international language and provides students with real pen friends. This is one of the ways of ensuring genuinely communicative uses of spoken and written English. The work on the project requires commitment and dedication from the students. It could well occupy any desired amount of time.

Some of my experiences might be useful to anyone who looks for effective, unique teaching methods. When deciding to assign a project activity to students, the teacher should take into consideration the following factors which influence the success or the failure of the activity:

- the teacher should define his/her goal by determining how the activity will promote the communicative and linguistic development of the students;
- the choice of the right topic is another parameter which will make the students feel motivated and stimulate learners to participate in the project;

— the teacher himself/herself should be enthusiastic about the project. He/she must be willing to become involved with the students.

The benefits of such an approach are obvious. As pointed out earlier, the participants increase their linguistic knowledge and confidence, their communicative competence and their understanding of the cultural environment.

The possibilities for using correspondence in the foreign language curriculum are endless. The power of real communication enhances the learner's command of the target language, it adds fun, offers a refreshing change of routine in the classroom. But do not take my word for it. Try it and see for yourself !

How to proceed

- 1) ask CUP for help with exchanges
- 2) register for "Parcel of English"
- 3) students make new contacts — good for language + culture
- 4) students begin the project:
 - a) write + draw their image of people from another country
 - b) interpret the passage

"Mary heard the ice-cream van coming down the street. She remembered her birthday money and ran into the house."
 - c) students look at values + systems of behaviour (eg. a questionnaire)
 - d) students collect, exchange, discuss and select information
 - e) the "Living museum" is established

Oral feedback

NAME: Tatyana Goloskokova

SUBJECT: Through Language to Understanding

DATE: 25 August 1998

Introduction

There are many ways to increase student's motivation in class. Correspondence between students from different countries could

turn into an important vehicle for ensuring genuinely communicative uses of spoken and written English.

Help from CUP with twin classes

The authors of the course *Cambridge English for Schools* launched a new “The Parcel of English” project. They offered to link schools in different parts of the world with each other. Our twin-classes came from France, Slovenia, Greece and Russia.

Work in the cultural direction

To help my students to avoid cultural errors during communication with their peers of different cultures, the project was focused on 4 cultural goals:

- * developing greater awareness;
- * acquiring a command of the etiquette;
- * understanding differences between cultures;
- * understanding the values of the target culture

Project as it was

Step 1. Students were asked to write about their first image of people from another country and translate it into drawings. This activity is used to discover student’s images about different nationalities.

Step 2. The differences between cultures cannot be a serious hurdle in the process of real communication between people. Almost all students interpreted the passage: “Mary heard the ice-cream van coming down the street. She remembered her birthday money and ran into the house” like this: Mary is a child. She would like an ice-cream, she runs into the house to get some money so that she can buy the ice-cream.

Step 3. helped students to understand the values of behaviour in each country. The partners made up a questionnaire with the following questions:

- * what is defined as “good” and “bad”?
- * what traditions are important?

- * what rules govern the consumption of food and drink/
- * how is information shared? what are reactions to other cultures?
- * what is considered funny?
- * what a role does religion play?

Step 4. Consolidation.

The imaginary "Living museum" with special rooms was established. The survey "A good life", the design of the advertisements, stories about the most loved customs and national heroes belonged here.

Conclusion

There are plenty of pluses in project work. The participants extend their linguistic knowledge and their understanding of the cultural environment which are of great value to a future citizen of the European Community.

ENGLISH-ESTONIAN CONTRASTIVE PHONOLOGICAL OPPOSITIONS

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The results of the acoustic research into the English and Estonian monophthongs lead to the following phonological considerations:

1) The typical front vowels having a relatively high F2 and a relatively low F1 (with the exception of /æ/ — type vowels where F2 is decreasing and F1 is increasing) form four phonologically relevant vowel types in English /i:/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/ but three in Estonian: /i/, /e/, /ä/.

2) The back vowels, having a relatively high F1 and a relatively low F2, are divided into six phonologically relevant vowel-types in English (including /ʌ/), so they are /u:/, /ʊ/, /ɔ:/, /ɒ/, /ɑ:/, /ʌ/. In Estonian there are three phonologically significant vowel-types among back vowels: /a/, /o/, /u/.

3) The central vowels, near the s.-c. neutral region (having F1, F2, F3 about 500 Hz – 1500 Hz – 2500 Hz) include just one phonologically relevant vowel-type in English, /ɜ:/ (/ə/). In Estonian there are two central vowel-types: /õ/ and /ö/.

4) In English the open vowels include three phonologically relevant oppositions /æ/ – /ʌ/ – /ɑ:/, three oppositions with mid-close (-open) vowels /e/ – /ɜ:/ – /ə/ and close vowels /ɪ/ – /ʊ/ and /i:/ – /u/. In Estonian the oppositions are as follows: two open (/ä/ – /a/), four mid-close (-open) /e/ – /õ/ – /ö/ – /o/ and three close oppositions (/i/ – /ü/ – /u/).

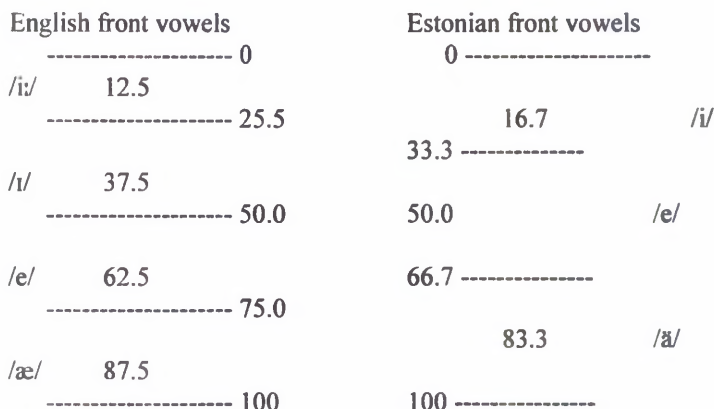
5) The distribution of the English and Estonian vowel-types is different also in that in English the only monophthongs in an unstressed syllable may be /ɪ/ and /ə/ (with a few exceptions of /ɒ/ in

an unstressed syllable). In literary Estonian as in a language of a spelling pronunciation all other monophthongs besides short /ä/, /õ/, /ü/ and /ö/ can occur word-finally and in unstressed syllables.

6) The Estonian vowel system is determined by a more noticeable lip-rounding (with a relatively low F3) than that of English.

For a more visual illustration of these differences and learning problems arising from those above it is reasonable to compare the oppositions given above graphically, following K. Wiik's method (1965: 146–149). The method consists in arranging different phonological vowel-types in two opposite scales as discussed in items 1–4. Such scales represent an economical way of depicting differences and pointing out variation areas in which learning problems may occur. They suggest, as will be seen, the basic types of interference proposed by U. Weinreich (1966: 18–19); (see also Lehiste 1988). These types of interference include under-differentiation (two sounds of the foreign language whose counterparts are not distinguished in the native language), overdifferentiation (involves the imposition of phonemic distinctions from the native language on the sounds of the foreign language where they are not required), reinterpretation of distinctions (occurs when phonemes of the foreign language are distinguished by features which in that system are merely concomitant or redundant) and actual phone substitution (applies to phonemes that are identically defined in two languages but whose normal pronunciation differs). It may be noted that of the four types of interference, the first three form a group different from the fourth one. The former concern features, relevant in one or both languages, the latter, called phone substitution, covers features which are redundant from the point of view of synchronic function but which are apt to become relevant if the phonemic system changes.

Now, the total variation area of F1 is symbolised with a line reaching from 0 (maximally low F1) to 100 (maximally high F1), the phoneme centres are placed at equal distances from each other and the phoneme boundaries are placed half-way between the phoneme centres.



The three Estonian vowels have the numerical values of $/i/ = 16.7$, $/e/ = 50$ and $/ä/ = 83.3$ and the Estonian boundaries of phonemes are situated at 33.3 and 66.7. In the English scale, the four vowels $/i/$, $/ɪ/$, $/e/$ and $/æ/$ have the positions 12.5, 37.5, 62.5 and 87.5 respectively and the phoneme boundaries at 25, 50, 75. When the two scales are compared, a relatively truthful description of the differences and learning problems can be presented. The “easiest” vowels are $/i/$ and $/æ/$ because the centres of these English phonemes, when projected to the Estonian scale, fall within the areas of $/i/$ and $/ä/$ respectively. The “difficult” English vowels are $/ɪ/$ and $/e/$ because the centres of both of them fall within the area of the Estonian $/e/$. Native speakers of Estonian have difficulties in distinguishing the difference between English *bit* and *bet* and when speaking English they should use for the English $/e/$ a vowel between the Estonian $/i/$ and $/e/$. It is a clear case of underdifferentiation for the Estonian learner.

English back vowels		Estonian back vowels	
----- 0		0 -----	
/u:/	8.3		
----- 16.7		16.7	/u/
/ʊ/	25.1		
----- 33.3		33.3-----	
/ɔ:/	41.6		
----- 50.0		50.0	/o/
/ɒ/	58.4		
----- 66.7		66.7 -----	
/ɑ:/	75.1		
----- 83.3		83.3	/a/
/ʌ/	91.7		
----- 100		100 -----	

The vowels of relatively low F1 (back vowels) have three degrees of F1 in Estonian but six degrees in English. The two scales presented show the English vowels /u:/ = 8.3 and /ʊ/ = 25.1 falling into the area of the single Estonian /u/ = 16.7, the phoneme boundaries in both languages have the same numerical value 33.3, the same takes place with the English /ɔ:/, /ɒ/ and /ɑ:/, /ʌ/ which fall into the areas of the Estonian /o/ and /a/ with their respective numerical values. The main identification problem is that Estonian listeners hear the English /u/ and /ʊ/ as their native /u/ as well as /ɑ:/, /ʌ/ as their native /a/. Again, underdifferentiation takes place and it is reflected in pronunciation.

English central vowels		Estonian central vowels	
----- 0		0 -----	
		25.0	/ö/
/ɜ:/, (/ə/)	50.0	50.0 -----	
		75.0	/õ/
----- 100		100 -----	

The vowel(s) of relatively medium F1 and F2 /ɜ:/ (/ə/) are numerically compared with the Estonian /õ/ and /ö/ which have a relatively low F1 and medium F2. While the English /ɜ:/ has the numerical position 50.0, the Estonian /õ/ = 25.0 and /ö/ = 75.0 positions refer to a clear case of overdifferentiation.

The vowels with the highest F1 form a very distinct line of oppositions /æ/ – /ʌ/ – /ɑ:/, relatively high or medium F1 forms /e/ – /ɜ:/ – /ɔ:/, the lowest F1 has it in /i:/ – /u:/ and slightly higher in /ɪ/ – /ʊ/. In the English scale the four groups have the positions 12.5, 37.5, 62.5 and 87.5 respectively, and the phoneme boundaries at 25, 50, 75. In the Estonian scale there are the following oppositions of high F1: /ä/ – /a/ (the position of 83.3 as the numerical values show), /e/ – /õ/ – /ö/ – /o/ of medium F1 (the numerical values 50.0) and /i:/ – /ü/ – /u/ of the lowest F1 and the numerical values 16.7. The phoneme boundaries have the positions 66.7 and 33.3 as their numerical values. In the scales it is as follows:

English vowels		Estonian vowels
	0	0
/i:/, /u/	12.5	
---	25.0	16.7 /i:/, /ü/, /u/
/ɪ/, /ʊ/	37.5	33.3
	50.0	50.0 /e/, /õ/, /ö/, /o/
/e/, /ɜ:/,	62.5	
/ɔ:/, /ɒ/		66.7
--	75.0	
		83.3 /ä/, /a/
/æ/, /ʌ/	87.5	
/ɑ:/	100	100

When the two scales are compared it is obvious that again the “easiest” vowels for the Estonian learner appear to be the English /i:/ and /u:/ because the centres of these English phonemes when projected to the Estonian scale within the areas of the Estonian /i:/, /ü/ and /u/. There may occur overdifferentiation by Estonian learn-

ers as there is no opposition of /u:/ – /ʊ/ in English. The following two English groups only partially fall within one area of the Estonian phonemes and it may bring about underdifferentiation. The same can be said about the last group where the area of the Estonian phonemes is larger than that of the English phonemes, it may cause reinterpretation of distinctions and underdifferentiation.

As is seen, objectively all these differences exist, though they need not necessarily realize in every learner's perception and production due to numerous individual variables. However, it is necessary to keep them in the focus when teaching (and learning) the pronunciation of English monophthongs, and provide the learner with well-founded instructions, recommendations and props.

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UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Introduction

People communicate and communication is a social activity. In order to communicate successfully, both linguistic and communicative competence are required. If we want to communicate, we should have a shared understanding of the world. In order to do that, the learners' awareness of the culture of the target language is of utmost importance. The ability to communicate in another language requires knowledge of the patterns of living, acting, reacting, seeing, and explaining the world of the target country as well (Galloway 1985, cited in Omaggio 1986: 359).

Cultural studies and language teaching

"Cultural studies has the rightful place as part of language teaching, not just as an adjunct to language learning, not as a means of creating better communication but as an integral component with appropriate aims and methods" (Byram 1989: 3). K. Chastain (1988: 298) also claims that "language and culture are inseparably bound, therefore, complete comprehension during any type of intercultural communication depends upon the participants' awareness of the social and cultural significance of the words and ex-

pressions employed". As Seelye (1984: 14) points out: "An understanding of the way of a foreign people is important to survival in a world of conflicting value systems, where the boundaries that formerly isolated and protected people from alien ideas have been eroded by advances in the technology of communication or struck down by the angry clamor of the down-trodden in their search for a better life."

Cultural studies' commitment to understanding the construction of everyday life has the admirable objective of doing so in order to change our lives for the better. (Turner 1996: 234)

In an ideal language class the teaching of culture should be an integral, organized component of the course content. Fundamental aspects of culture should be incorporated into the class activities and be included in the texts and other materials used in language teaching. In language classes the students should "learn people" as well as language (Chastain 1988: 298). Cultural competence in a way, merges into communicative competence. For the native speaker this knowledge is unconscious, but not for the learner — he/she has to use it consciously. The native English language speaker speaks not only with their own individual choices, but through them speak also the established knowledge of their native community and society, but the learners of English do not share the native speaking community's memory and knowledge. Even if they have mastered the forms of the new language, they might still have difficulty in meeting the social expectations of speakers from the new speech community. The students have to know how to greet, how to use "silent language", how to take turns during the conversation, how to use rules of politeness, etc. Misunderstandings are likely to occur between members of different cultures because learners cannot shake off their own culture and step into another. Here comparison is a means of helping learners to realise that their culture and cultural values are different.

Young learners acquire some information of the British and American culture through language classes (geography, places of interest, history of the country, etc) but they do not learn how to communicate successfully from the point of view of speech and its structure, the peculiarities of style and register, differences in so-

cial and regional dialects in actual communication. Cultural competence implies "mastery of norms of society, the unspoken rules of conduct, values, and orientations which make up cultural fabric of a society. It further implies the ability to recognize culturally significant facts, and knowledge of the parameters within which conduct is acceptable or unacceptable" (Stern 1992: 83)

Goals of teaching culture

The goals of teaching culture have been discussed by several scholars. According to Seelye (1993: xiii) the goal of cultural instruction is teaching *key skills* (e.g. developing the ability to evaluate generalizations about the target culture, and to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal observation) rather than facts. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993: 13) have adapted the key skills presented by Seelye and have added one more, namely the skill of helping students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language. Rebecca M. Valette (quoted from Valdes 1994: 181) divides cultural goals for the classroom teacher into four categories:

1. developing a greater awareness and a broader knowledge about the target culture
2. acquiring the command of the etiquette of the target culture
3. understanding differences in daily life between the target culture and the students' culture
4. understanding of values of the target culture

Hammerly (1982: 522) comes up with the list of ten goals in an approximate order of difficulty for foreign language learners — from the knowledge of the cultural connotations of words and phrases to academic research on target culture.

All of these scholars stress the knowledge about the target culture, awareness of the differences in comparison with their own culture.

Methods and approaches in teaching culture

1. *Comparative method*

Learners should have frequent opportunities to compare, contrast, and appreciate the similarities and differences between their own culture and that of the target language culture.

2. *Process approach*

The main objective of the language component is to develop competence in the communication strategies appropriate to the host culture (Gochenour 1993: 79). The emphasis is on the development of oral skills and interactional strategies. The teacher presents a core text supplementing it with exercises, visual aids, tape recordings, and handouts with additional techniques.

3. *Discourse-analytical method*

Close observation of natural patterns of everyday linguistic events helps the learner to explain, argue, tell anecdotes, agree and disagree, invite, apologize, request and thank in the way it is done in the target culture.

4. *Sociolinguistic exploration method*

The right things should be said in the right manner, in the right place to the right person. This requires the use of appropriate paralinguistic means (pitch, tone of voice) as well as extralinguistic aspects of the communicative system (gestures, appropriate use of space). For this reason, "students need to explore sociolinguistic dimensions appropriate to the host culture" (Gochenour 1993: 90).

5. *Task oriented approach*

This is characterized by cooperative learning tasks in which students work in pairs or small groups to gather precise segments of information, share and discuss what they have discovered (Gouchenour 1993: 90).

Textbooks have often been inefficient in their treatment of cultural themes and thus have provided little help in identifying appropriate sequences of cultural instruction in many cases (Omaggio 1986: 362).

Galloway (1985, cited from Omaggio 1986: 362) characterizes common approaches to teaching culture into four basic types:

1. *The Frankenstein Approach*: a taco from here, a flamenco dancer from there, a gaucho from here, a bullfight from there.
2. *The 4-F Approach*: Folk dances, festivals, fairs, and food.
3. *The Tour Guide Approach*: The identification of monuments, rivers, and cities.
4. *The "By-the-Way" Approach*: Sporadic lectures or bits of behavior selected indiscriminately to emphasize sharp contrasts.

Techniques and activities used in the classroom

- lectures
- slice-of-life technique (Chastain 1988: 309)
- a culture capsule (Chastain 1988: 310)

A brief description of one aspect of the target culture followed by a discussion and comparison of the students' culture of mother tongue.

- minidrama
- social-psychological contrasts

Culture teaching in Estonian schools

In order to establish the actual situation in the field of culture teaching in Estonian secondary schools two questionnaires were compiled by our graduate student Anneli Agasild, one meant for students and the other for the teachers of English. The aim of the latter was to explore what is the role attributed to culture by teach-

ers, what are the materials and resources generally used, and what are the main topics covered.

The aim of the questionnaire was to find out whether the students consider it necessary to learn about culture, what they think are the most useful and necessary ways of culture learning as well as what are the specific culture teaching techniques they have experienced in their target language lessons. The questionnaires were filled out in eight different schools in Estonia. Five teachers out of twenty-five were native speakers of English.

The results of the questionnaire were analysed by Anneli Agasild in her graduation paper (Agasild 1997: 49–55). To sum up, most teachers noted that the language teaching aspects cannot be viewed separately but have to be taught intertwined. Most teachers noted that the cultural content of the textbooks was poor. All the teachers answered that they have to find material from other sources (Internet, newspapers and magazines, other textbooks). The teachers found the following topics of most importance: customs and traditions of the target culture, holidays and sightseeing.

History, everyday life and state institutions were also considered to be important but have not been dealt with in class. It has been a tradition in Estonia to focus on British culture (52%), but in connection with the growing access to American culture, some teachers have also focused on American culture (32%), there are also cases when teachers cover both cultures (16%).

As for the time to start including culture teaching in language classes, most teachers found that the best time is in Form 6, only three teachers out of 25 considered it necessary to start already in Form 3, and five teachers think that it is reasonable to start teaching culture only at the secondary level.

In culture teaching the teachers use most often the following resources and techniques: pictures, comparison with Estonian culture, texts, newspapers and magazines. Lectures, presentations and videos are not very widely used, excursions and language camps are practically not used. In Estonia, still, some language camps have been arranged by native speakers.

As for the students' opinion, most students consider it important to study the foreign culture together with the foreign language.

Which are the sources to obtain cultural knowledge from? 31% of the cultural information was obtained from other subjects at school, 29% from the media, 22% from English classes, 15% from books and 3% from computer encyclopedias and the Internet. The next question for the students aimed at finding out which ways of learning culture were thought to be most useful and interesting, which useful but boring, and which boring and useless. The most preferable teaching techniques are connected with the usage of videos, picture material, magazines and language camps. But most commonly practised learning activities were: lectures (29%), presentations (28%), pictures (24%), research papers (19%) and videos (18%). Most commonly covered topics are: holidays, sightseeing, customs, traditions, education, theatre and cinema, the Royal Family, geography.

It is in the teacher's capacity to decide upon which methods or activities of teaching to use, but the process of foreign language instruction should always include the development of cultural awareness, and, with more advanced learners, that of cultural competence (Agasild 1998: 57).

Conclusion

Cultural teaching gives the students tools for functioning appropriately in the target language community.

The ideal of culture teaching is to develop language classes in which the basic cultural information is integrated systematically and completely into the course content.

In case we are aware of the cultural aspect of the language we understand better other cultures and societies and also our own. Culture has to be taught within the general framework of foreign language instruction. Until integrated cultural materials become available, language teachers will have to be responsible for incorporating as much culture as possible into their classes by finding suitable authentic texts.

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THE BRITISH ON HOLIDAY

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If we look at the tourist industry, it seems to prosper more and more, being promoted by governments, private entrepreneurs, individuals. The four biggest industries in the world are said to be telecommunications, tourism, drugs and weapons (no real manufacturing industry among them!). As tourism is the second largest business in the world, there must be people who promote it and people who take the bite and are hooked.

In every country there are traditional holiday habits and every year millions of tourists travel from place to place. The figure in 1995 was 533 million people who travelled from one country to another.

Let us look at the British on holiday. For an Englishman who takes tradition and habit very seriously, a holiday is half an annual pleasure, half a rite.

A holiday tradition in Britain goes back to the 18th century when it became customary for upper class young men to go on a Grand Tour of Europe. The main aim was to have licence to do things they were not allowed to do at home, also the warm sea was very tempting. The Tour took them to Italy, the South of France, Greece. These exhausted, they started to look elsewhere for novelty and the Englishmen are thus said to have "discovered" several places in and outside Europe which later became very popular holiday destinations, for instance the Canary Islands, Cyprus, Norway etc.

What does an average English family expect from a holiday? All good holidays have the aspect of a visit to Paradise. They have a beginning and an end (with a return to normal life), the place must be unknown and unfamiliar, comfortable and beautiful, free of work associations and safe (but risky enough to be exciting!), far from civilization but civilized and full of social life, and also improving the mind, and most important of all, it must be memorable.

There are ceremonies which are repeated through centuries, e.g. walking in the mountains or on the esplanade looking out at the sea. In autumn the first and foremost topic of conversation will be holidays, so it is almost a question of prestige to have been away on holiday. If in the 60s and 70s the most common destinations for a middle class family were the French Riviera, the Spanish coasts of Costa Brava, Costa Blanca and Costa del Sol, the Canary Islands, Greece and Egypt, then in the 80s people started to look for more exotic places and discovered Asia — Japan and Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. Nowadays TV has shown and recommended other faraway places like South America, Mexico, the West Indies, Hawaii. And with the development of tourist agencies and cheap package tours more and more families opt for distant locations. But the criteria for the holiday remain the same.

But there is another type of the British — mostly middle-aged people, or the young, who have no family duties and who are fond of walking. They go on long walking tours in the Lake District, up in the mountains in Scotland or almost anywhere in the British Isles. There are long-distance paths through some spectacular scenery which can be tackled in stages, with overnight stays en route, or shorter ones suitable for a single day's walking. The distances are from 50 to 400 kilometres and Great Britain is dotted with signposts showing public footpaths across common or private land. The walkers are armed with maps and the basic walking kit (the waterproofs, right boots). There is no danger of getting lost — a public phone is always within a few miles' reach. Bill Bryson in his book *Notes from a Small Island* writes how he, coming from America, where people as a rule travel, not walk, was coaxed into his first walking tour up some rough cloud-hidden hills, called the

Haystacks, in the Lake District. This is how he felt at the end of his walk:

I gasped and sputtered, and realized that I had never done anything remotely this unnatural and vowed never to attempt such a folly again. And then, just as I was about to lie down and call for a stretcher, we crested a final rise and found ourselves abruptly, magically, on top of the earth, on a platform in the sky, amid an ocean of swelling summits. I had never seen anything half so beautiful before, and realized I was hooked. Ever since then I had gone back whenever they would have me, and never complained. (Bryson 1995: 282)

Also there is the patriot type of an Englishman, who would be appalled at the thought of going abroad and putting himself at the mercy of some foreign hotel, with foreign food, foreign weather and strange company. He is only satisfied with the British setting somewhere in the Lake District or Cornwall or some less frequented coastal areas. Bill Bryson describes this kind of holiday maker as follows:

I trudged along the beach, passing in front of a long crescent of beach huts, all of identical design but painted in varying bright hues. Most were shut up for the winter, but about three quarters of the way along one stood open, with a little porch on which sat a man and a woman in garden chairs, huddled in arctic clothing with lap blankets, buffeted by the wind that seemed constantly to threaten to tip them over backwards. The man was trying to read a newspaper, but the wind kept wrapping it around his face.

They both looked very happy — or if not happy exactly, at least highly contented, as if this were the Seychelles and they were drinking gin fizzes under nodding palms rather than sitting half-perished in a stiff English gale. They were contented because they owned a little piece of prized beach-front property for which there was no doubt a long waiting-list and — here was the true secret of their happiness — any time they wanted

they could retire to the hut and be fractionally less cold. They could make a cup of tea and, if they were feeling particularly rakish, have a chocolate digestive biscuit. Afterwards, they could spend a happy half-hour packing their things away and closing up hatches. And this was all they required in the world to bring themselves to a state of near rapture. (Bryson 1995: 97)

To conclude: Despite the changing times there are still English families who have their holidays in one and the same place every year, and others, who try to discover more and more exciting and adventurous locations and activities while on holiday. Anyway, a holiday is definitely a part of the British cultural habits.

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AWARENESS IN LANGUAGE: BRITISH HERITAGE, PRESENT IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

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This paper attempts to explore how changes in identity and attitudes determined by the past heritage influence the English language, causing semantic changes in the existing linguistic items, the disappearance of lexical units and the appearance of new formations. Language reflects changes in attitudes to political, social and cultural heritage, and hence changes in identity, which are revealed by language establishing the need to examine language change as part of British Studies.

Language has emerged as an expression of the most fundamental questions of the age. Language is alive which is the essence of its social function. Teaching language as part of identity does not mean merely teaching grammar and lexical units, it implies semantic and stylistic changes which reflect the development of a nation in all its aspects. The aim is to encourage and raise general awareness of language (see McCarthy, 1995: Ch. 4) and language change which goes hand in hand with cultural awareness and identity. Hence language studies need to become part of British Studies.

By identity I understand all the qualities, beliefs and ideas which make people feel they belong to a particular group. Identity also includes values and attitudes which are all reflected in language.

As a cultural identity, Englishness has always been complex, changeable, self-contradictory. Exactly the same applies to Scottishness, Welshness and Irishness. All the different cultures in these countries certainly do not turn into "a bland and homogeneous Britishness" (Colley, 1995: A1), there is an entity which can be qualified as British alongside with the identities of the four countries.

The cultural awareness of language is not something that can be taught or practised at short notice, it needs to be taught at school starting with the beginner's level up to the advanced. It is already at an early stage of language acquisition when teachers bring out the insular character and psychology of the British *clinging to their tight little, right little island* as an early 19th century song goes. Britain is seen to be a world in itself as opposed to the Continent, as it is demonstrated by a curious headline in a London paper, "Fog over the English Channel. The Continent is isolated." The distinction *Britain vs the Continent* allows to show the various meanings of *the Continent* and *continental* and the British/English attitudes and beliefs. This is very well seen in the two types of breakfasts. A *continental breakfast* is usually worse in quality, while *English breakfast* is normally cooked and offers more variety. Swearing using zoological names is regarded by some to be a continental habit. In English the same negative feelings are infrequently expressed by intonation, understatement, euphemism, or some other stylistic means.

Another significant opposition is *Britain vs Europe*. Traditionally *Europe* is seen to be a territory across the English Channel, very often it is France. For instance, a book on *European literature* does not include any British writers. Britain's accession to the EEC in 1973 introduced major political and economic changes. It has also been bringing about changes in thinking and attitudes with every single development. The Channel Tunnel, for example, created a lot of debate. Would it bring Britain closer to the Continent? Or would it bring the Continent closer to Britain? What would the adverse effects be? Anyway it is clear that the Channel Tunnel is going to have a profound psychological impact on how the next generation feel about Britain in relation to the European landmass:

it will no longer be possible for storms in the Channel to isolate the continent. Lady Thatcher was surely right in believing that the Tunnel would do more to establish Britain's place in Europe and public acceptance of it than all the EC laws and regulations (see Powell, 1994: 9). The word *Europe* has acquired many meanings: 1) the geographical term for one of the continents, 2) all the continent except Britain and 3) the European Union, each of them revealing a specific stance of the user. Many neologisms have appeared conveying various British attitudes to the prospects of EU membership, for example, a *Europessimist* vs a *Eurooptimist*, a *Euroseptic* vs a *Eurofan* or a *Euronut* (sl.), a *Europhobic* vs a *Euroenthusiast*. Whatever position is taken, British identity has obviously acquired a European element.

Each aspect of life in Britain has its own history leaving its footprints in identity and language. It is interesting to trace developments in the English language as a voice of imperial rule. The British Empire became the biggest in the world's history. In 1914 it comprised a quarter of the world's population living on a fifth of its land surface. It expanded most dramatically in Queen Victoria's later years, while the United Kingdom enjoyed a period of so-called *Splendid Isolation from European affairs*. Trade and overseas assets were increasingly concentrated in this vast Empire which, by 1931, had evolved into the more informal, voluntary confederation of the British Commonwealth. The term *the British Empire* was officially dropped in 1931 by force of legislation. The loss of the Empire meant the loss of the official Empire language and the acquisition of new political euphemisms. For example, in 1977 *The Sunday Times Magazine* wrote an article "The Setting Sun" alluding to the loss of the Empire where the sun never set and claiming that since 1952 Britain had *discarded* almost all her colonies with a grace unique in history. Actually a *colony* is an undemocratic word today and it is revealing to investigate when and how it was replaced by a *dependant territory* and later by an *overseas territory*. *The British Commonwealth* was replaced by the term *the Commonwealth* to avoid the idea of British domination. And indeed there have been instances when the rest of the Commonwealth countries have disagreed with Britain, as was the case

with the Commonwealth conference in 1989 when all the Commonwealth countries voted for sanctions against South Africa, except Britain, which created a crisis. The message was that if 48 countries voted against one, then it was Britain who had to leave. Britain did not withdraw as it would have created difficulties for the Queen in domestic affairs in Britain.

The English language has not come to terms with Britain's colonial legacy as yet. Some empire thinking still lingers on. Although metric measures were introduced in 1971, *imperial measures* are still applied (yards, miles etc.). There used to be quite a number of companies with the word "imperial" in their names. Some have retained it today, like *the Imperial Chemical Industries*. It is interesting that the Queen is still awarding imperial orders, e.g. OBE — the Order of the British Empire, KBE — the Knight of the British Empire or the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. These awards are mainly given to men and women for services to Britain, not to the British Empire.

An awareness of class forms a major part of most people's sense of identity, as language is an important aspect of class and is sociolinguistically marked, suffice to mention the famous phrase uttered by Prince Charles, "*One* must do *one's* duty". Sharon Goodman has made a special study of the use of "one" in royalese. British newspapers, especially tabloids, represent "the Queen's English" in their stories about the Royal Family, using the pronoun "one" and punning on it to create a clash of register (Goodman, 1997). The Guardian wrote after the presentation of the Queen's Speech in Parliament that "*one's* Government seemed to have run out of ideas" (17 November 1994). When the Queen dismissed 35 employees at Buckingham Palace (after the fire at Windsor Palace), *The Sun* wrote an article with the headline "*One* has sacked 35", communicating that her Majesty was axing jobs to save money. When talking about 1992, the Queen called it one of her worst years and labelled it "an annus horribilis" (Latin for "a horrible year"). This Latin phrase became notorious and was much quoted in 1992. *The Sun* published another article "*One's* Bum Year" which lends itself to punning very well due to the polysemy of the word "bum". The incompatibility of

styles is created by the use of the formal pronoun. The change in register is significant, as style is part of language and hence part of identity.

A clash of style of this sort is even more effective against the background of the general trend to use more democratic language. As similar process of “democratisation” is seen in the style of dressing, it is fashionable to dress down, not to dress up. The same tendency is demonstrated by a change in attitudes to regional English which has been going on for the past decades. The trend for language to grow more democratic is also seen in the image of many public figures. The style of Tony Blair, for instance, is certainly less formal than that of his predecessors which is in line with the so-called *new labour* and a more democratic party image. It is exciting to compare different editions of the same official publication with an eye to style and language when the same facts and events are described. Note the change in the choice of words in the Official Handbook of Britain in the following examples. Interestingly, the name of the publishing house of the Official Government Handbook has changed from HMSO to the Stationery Office.

“In 1801 the Act of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, which *joined* the Irish Parliament to the Parliament of Great Britain established the United Kingdom” (Britain, 1995: 22).

“During the tenth century Ireland was dominated by the Vikings. In 1169 Henry II of England launched *an invasion* of Ireland...”

“... under the 1801 Act of Union the Irish Parliament was *abolished*...” (Britain, 1998: 12–13).

The attitude of British people to the dominance of England is part of their identity, as the political unification of Britain was not achieved by mutual agreement. Today English domination can be detected in the way in which various aspects of British public life are described, as well as in the names of a number of public institutions and practises, e.g. the central bank of the UK is the Bank of

England, and there is no such thing as a “Bank of Britain” (see O’Driscoll, 1996: Ch. I). The dominance of England is reflected in the organisation of the British Government. There are Ministers for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but there is no Minister for England. The distinction of *England/English* vs *Britain’s/British* is both politically and culturally important. The failure to distinguish these terms has caused many blunders and created sensitive situations. This attitude is sometimes called domination by omission by analogy of the sin of omission when the other three parts of the UK are just not mentioned, although the whole of Britain is meant. An interesting development is the use of the word *country* for each of the nations of the UK. This trend has increased in the nineties. Thus Britain is not England alone, there are three other countries: the country of Wales, the country of Scotland and the country of Northern Ireland.

There are many areas of British Studies which give an insight into British values and attitudes that can be easily taught through language, such as Anglo-American relations (note the use of *Anglo*), including the borrowing of Americanisms in the English language, the history and the twentieth century developments of relations between Britain and France, issues of gender identity and many others.

In conclusion, changes in the English language reflect changes in Britain and British identity. Many aspects of British Studies can be acquired through language at regular classes as language is an important feature of identity.

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THE SHIFTING SANDS OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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1. The past is another language

1.1. In this paper I intend to give an overview of how English pronunciation has changed, and how it continues to change 'even as we speak'. When I was preparing this paper, I decided that a good starting point would be Chaucer. I went to a bookshop to buy an edition of Chaucer, and searched in vain under 'English Literature, A-Z'. Chaucer in fact lurks in 'Medieval Studies' and is apparently not part of English Literature, a bookseller's decision which perhaps reflects the fact that for speakers of modern English, Chaucer cannot be read without considerable assistance. Several changes in grammar, and many in spelling, lexicon, and semantics, make Chaucerian English effectively a foreign language. But if we were presented not with the text, but a recording, then his work would be even less comprehensible, because of changes in pronunciation. The phonetic transcription below, of the beginning of the Canterbury Tales, brings this home.

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendered is the flour;
What Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,

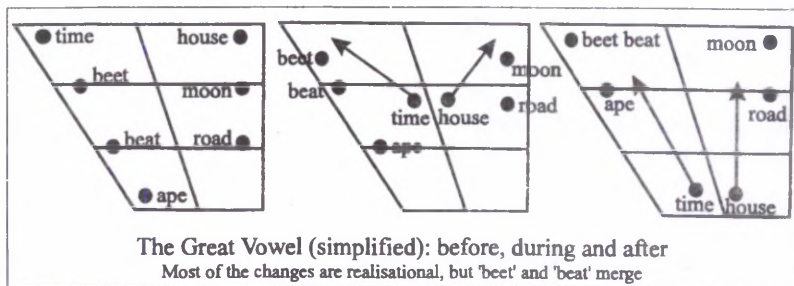
'wʌn θæt 'a:prɪl ,wɪθ hɪs 'ʃʊərəs 'soʊtə
θə 'drɒxt ɔf 'mɑ:ʃ hʌθ 'pɜ:səd ,tə: θə 'rʊ:tə
ænd 'bɑ:ðəd 'evri 'væm ɪn 'swɪʃ 'lɪkʊr
ɔf 'wɪʃ vɜ:tʊ en'dʒendəd ,ɪs θə 'flʊr
wʌn ,zefɪrəs eɪk ,wɪθ hɪs 'swetə 'bre:θ
ɪn'spɪrəd 'hʌθ ɪn 'evri 'hɒlt ænd 'he:θ
θə 'tendər 'krɒppəs ,ænd θə 'jʌŋgə 'sʊnnə
'hʌθ ɪn θə 'rʌm hɪs 'hʌlvə 'kɜ:s 'rʊnnə
ænd 'smɑ:lə 'fʊələs 'mɑ:kən ,melo'di:ə

That slepen al the nyght with open ye
 (So priketh hem nature in hir corages),
 Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages....
 [Chaucer; *Cant. Tales* (Prologue)]

θat 'sle:pən 'ɑ:l ðə 'nɪçt wɪθ 'ɔ:pən 'i:ə
 sɔ: 'pɹɪkəθ 'hem nɑ:'tʃər ɪn 'hɪr kʊrədʒəs
 θæn 'lɔ:ŋgən 'fɒlk tə: 'gɔ:n ɔn 'pɪlgrɪ'mædʒəs
 [After Cruttenden (1994:73–74)]

Compare in particular words with tense vowels, such as [ˈa:pɹɪl] 'April', nowadays [ˈeɪpɹɪl], [ˈrʊ:tə] 'root', now [ˈru:t], [ˈhe:θ] 'heath', now [ˈhi:θ], and [ˈfu:ləs] 'fowls', now [ˈfaʊlz]. These changes reflect the operation of the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) which, between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, dramatically affected the English long vowel system. Its effect is summarised in the vowel quadrilaterals below, which show the English tense vowel system before (*left*) and after (*right*) the GVS, together with an intermediate stage (*centre*). The general pattern is for front and back vowels to rise, and for the close vowels to diphthongise by virtue of an increasingly open central starting point. Additionally the vowels of 'beet' and 'beat', whose original distinctness is reflected in their different spelling, merge to yield quite a large set of homophones.

The relatively chronology of which vowels moved when is still a matter of dispute, and need not concern us here; but the fact that the GVS caused a major restructuring of the English vowel system is clear. The GVS accounts, incidentally, for why the use of roman vowel letters (such as 'i') in English is out of step with their use in most other European languages. If all that had happened to English since Chaucer had been the GVS, Chaucerian English would still sound like a foreign language.



But there were plenty of other changes. Not only, as can be seen from the transcription, were a considerable number of unstressed syllables lost (e.g. [ˈfuːləs] > [ˈfaʊlz]), but there were changes in short vowels and in consonants. For instance the short vowel /ʊ/ split to give *dull* [dʌl] vs. *full* [fʊl]; the velar fricative consonant /x/ was lost altogether; and the rhotic /r/ was lost in positions where it did not directly precede a vowel.

1.2. I suspect that sound change is like history: it appears to have come to an end some time before our education. For me history ends with the Second World War. The Vietnam war, the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the end of apartheid in South Africa are 'news' for me, albeit old news, not history. Perhaps this is different for the peoples of the Baltic states, who have experienced truly historic and momentous events in the last decade, but even so I think there is a strong inclination to feel that history, and likewise language history, stopped some time ago.

I hope this paper will serve to remind us that the sands of pronunciation have continued to shift since the codification of British 'Received Pronunciation' ('RP') early in the twentieth century, and continue to outpace standard descriptions. History is alive and well.

2. Twentieth-century trends

2.1. It is worth remarking that we are now in a better position than ever before to become aware of the rate at which pronunciation changes. We have recordings of the voice for at least the last hundred years, and descriptions of all aspects of languages, particularly English, which are more detailed and comprehensive than at any time in the past. We only have to watch a British film from, say, the 1940s, to become aware that the pronunciation of RP has changed. In the rest of this section I will deal with changes within a number of phonetic and phonological categories. I will try to give a general feel for the kinds of changes which have taken place rather than a detailed and comprehensive catalogue. Nor will I be specific

about the chronology of the changes — which happened earlier and which later — except that in section 3 I shall deal with some of the most recent, and potentially future, developments.

2.2. Some changes in RP are a matter of speakers preferring a different phoneme in certain words and classes of words. Phonemes are the basic building blocks of words, the contrasting sounds by which one word is kept distinct from another. Speakers are often aware of phonemic differences in pronunciation and comment on them explicitly. The table below gives four examples; here, as in subsequent tables, the middle column gives the older form and the right column the currently commonest form.

	<i>older</i>	<i>newer</i>
take the cloth off	/ɔ:/	/ɒ/
he sure is poor	/ʊə/	/ɔ:/
a useless system	/ɪ/	/ə/
Asia	/ʃ/	/z/

Thus very few speakers remain for whom the vowel spelt 'o' of words ending in a [+anterior] voiceless fricative (/f/, /θ/, /s/) is the vowel of 'law' rather than 'hot' — 'off, cloth, cross' all have /ɒ/. In the case of /ʊə/, on the other hand, the change is very much in progress; many speakers such as myself have the older pronunciation, and for no speakers has the change spread through the set of candidate words to which it might spread. 'Sewer', and 'Ruhr', for instance, are relatively unlikely to be pronounced with /ɔ:/.

In the case of /ɔ:/ and /ɒ/ there is, incidentally, no likelihood of a phoneme merger taking place, since outside the specific context of the change there are plenty of words which preserve the contrast — 'caught' with /ɔ:/ and 'cot' with /ɒ/, for instance. But with /ʊə/ it is possible that this vowel will eventually disappear from the system.

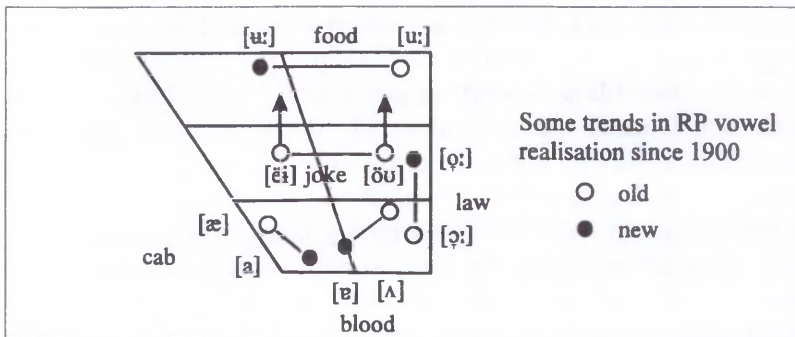
The change of some unstressed vowels from /ɪ/ to /ə/ is part of a general trend towards the further reduction of those unstressed vowels which were not already 'schwa', a trend which has gone further in some dialects (for instance Australian) than in RP. The voicing of the fricative in 'Asia' is a rather more limited development, on the other hand, which probably affects only a small number of words.

2.3. In most changes, unlike those above, the choice of phoneme in a word-class is not affected, but the phonetic realisation of the phoneme is. To put it another way, the same sound is used, but its pronunciation alters slightly. Speakers are generally less consciously aware of, and less able to comment on, such realisational differences, though undoubtedly they contribute to an impression of a speaker as 'old-fashioned' or 'trendy'. The table below gives five of the most important examples of such changes in RP in the course of the twentieth century.

	<i>older</i>	<i>newer</i>
a black cab	[æ]	[a]
blood and guts	[ʌ]	[v]
he taught law	[ɔ:]	[ɒ:]
choosing food	[u:]	[ʊ:]
it's no joke	[ðʊ]	[ɛi]

The change in the vowel of 'cab' is one of the more surprising changes of the twentieth century. In most dialects (American English, Australian English, and indeed non-RP London English) the trend in this vowel has been for it to rise, that is, to become more like the vowel of 'bed'. RP was part of this trend, and this is captured in the descriptions of RP which are used for EFL teaching, and indeed in the choice of symbol (probably created in the early days of the IPA expressly to signal that this English vowel was not the open vowel of French, German, etc.) which suggests a com-

promise between [ɛ] and [a]. Generations of foreign learners of English have struggled to achieve a realisation of the vowel of 'cab' which is between open-mid and open, phonetically. But since the middle of the century, surprisingly, this vowel has executed a 'Duke of York' manoeuvre (I owe this analogy to Geoff Pullum, who used it in a different context in phonology; for those who do not know the relevant nursery rhyme it goes 'The grand old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men, he marched them up to the top of the hill, and he marched them down again.') and begun to lower, so that it is now for many young speakers of RP a fully open vowel. This is shown graphically in the vowel quadrilateral below, which also shows the other changes listed in the table above.



A realisational change has also taken place in another historically lax vowel, that of 'blood'. The symbol /ʌ/ was chosen a century or so ago because the vowel was nearly (though not quite) a back vowel, and [ʌ] is the phonetic 'cardinal vowel' symbol for a back unrounded open-mid vowel. But in the intervening years the vowel has tended to become more front and open, at least to the extent of being a phonetically central vowel; and so if one were choosing the right symbol for today's quality it would be the central vowel [ɜ]. This change and the change in /æ/ reflect the fact that it is not only the historically tense vowels which drift around the vowel space;

but in general the changes affecting the lax vowel system have been much less fundamental.

The raising of the /ɔ:/ of 'law' is in a sense merely a continuation of the Great Vowel Shift. For most younger speakers it is at least a mid vowel, in contrast to descriptions early in the century which placed it between open-mid and open, and its rounding has increased concomitant with its rise. This is a vowel which arose from sources other than the Old English tense monophthongs, but which is following in the footsteps of the vowels of 'road' and 'moon' (see the GVS quadrilaterals in section 1.1).

It is free to do so, arguably, because the space into which it is moving has been vacated, both by the vowel of 'moon', which became close in the GVS, and by that of 'road'/'joke'. When RP was first comprehensively described the vowel of 'road'/'joke' was already a diphthong rather than a monophthong, and the descriptions suggest that it was near fully back (hence the symbolisation /ou/ found in Daniel Jones's work, or equivalently /ou/). Already by the time that Gimson was describing RP in the third quarter of the twentieth century he felt obliged to symbolise it /əʊ/, acknowledging the centralisation of the first element. In fact the diphthong as a whole seems to have been undergoing considerable fronting, so that 'no joke' as spoken by some younger speakers seems to old speakers to sound more like 'nay Jake'. Some confusions have indeed been reported anecdotally.

Likewise there has been a dramatic fronting of the vowel of 'food'. This is almost universally described in EFL textbooks as a back or nearly-back vowel, but in fact for young RP speakers it is at least central and even between central and front, with a tendency for lip-rounding to be lost. It may thus be associated by non-native speakers who have a distinction between back rounded and front rounded close vowel phonemes more readily with their front phoneme than their back phoneme. For example Estonian speakers may well hear 'food' as, in effect, 'füüd' rather than 'fuud'. I have myself misinterpreted a very fronted and under-rounded version of this vowel in the sequence [brɛ:m], hearing first 'bream' (a kind of fish) and then 'brim' before successfully using contextual information to derive the intended word 'broom'.

It is clear, then, that the kind of realisational changes described in the Great Vowel Shift were far from exceptional. There continues to be a constant ebb and flow of the vowels within the vowel space. The consonants are changing too. Four areas of change are exemplified in the table below.

	<i>older</i>	<i>newer</i>
that white yacht	[ðætwaɪtjɒt]	[ðæʔtwaɪʔtjɒʔt]
all girl band	[ɔ:l gɜ:l bænd]	[ɔʊ gʊʊ bænd]
get a lot of	[getəlɒtəv]	[gedəlɒdəv]
Fred Perry	[r]	[ɹ]/[ʊ]

The second half of the century has seen RP follow the non-RP accents of the south east of England in adopting glottal-reinforcement or glottalling — the addition of a glottal stop to a voiceless oral stop, or the replacement of the oral stop by a glottal stop — albeit in a more limited set of environments than in the other accents. The first line of the table below gives a typical example. Neither of the forms in the rightmost column would be perceived as ‘non-RP’ nowadays, unlike 50 years ago.

Pre-consonantal /l/ can be vocalised, that is, produced without any tongue-tip obstruction in the mid-line of the vocal tract. Again, this was a stigmatised feature, but is now commonly used and little noticed by RP speakers. However as with glottals, the trick is in knowing the environments; [wɔ:ʔə bɒʔʊ] ‘water bottle’ would still be regarded by most RP speakers as not the way to speak, or the way they speak (which does not, of course, guarantee that they would never produce such forms themselves!).

The voicing of /t/ when it occurs foot-medially (after a stressed syllable and before an unstressed syllable, as in ‘better’ or ‘get a lot of’) is now widespread, rather as in American English, although the process is far from being as categorical in its application as it is in American English. I suspect most RP speakers voice foot-medial

/t/ frequently in all but very careful speech, and equally most are unaware of it. I have transcribed the sound here as a short alveolar stop, as I am not convinced by descriptions of American English which treat it as a 'tap' or 'flap' implying a more ballistic gesture than that of a (short) stop.

Finally the historical process of /r/ weakening has continued, with tapped realisations (already only a minor variant in Daniel Jones's descriptions) becoming confined to hyper-explicit speech (e.g. communicating in noisy conditions) and a continuant virtually universal. The continuant is still mostly apical, but the labio-dental realisation [v] is probably gaining ground. The rise of the labio-dental, formerly an idiosyncratic variant of a few speakers, has been one of the most striking recent developments in urban English cities, affecting non-RP and RP alike.

2.4. Non-segmental aspects of any language are also susceptible to change. Intonation is notoriously problematic to describe, and hence it is difficult to track changes in it. For what it's worth my own intuition suggests that, for instance, the use of a 'low-rise' nucleus for yes-no questions, as described in O'Connor and Arnold (1973), now sounds rather old-fashioned, and more common is a 'fall-rise'. One might also point to the adoption by some (mainly younger) RP speakers of the 'High Rising Terminal'. This is the use of a high rise at the end of statements, particularly in the context of recounting events, with the apparent pragmatic purpose of checking that the listener is following. It has been described as being adopted widely in (particularly Californian) American English, and Australian English, to the point of becoming a potentially stigmatised feature.

Easier than intonation to monitor is stress. Pronouncing dictionaries mark stress in polysyllables, and can provide a useful supplement to other forms of observing the language. The table below gives six examples of where the predominant stress pattern for a word or compound has changed. Because, in English, stress placement determines vowel alternation, the change in stress brings concomitant changes in the vowels of some of the items.

	<i>older</i>	<i>newer</i>
an armchair	/ɑ:m'tʃeə/	/ɑ:mtʃeə/
ice-cream	/aɪs'kri:m/	/aɪskri:m /
formidable	/fɔ:mi'dəbl/	/fə'mi'dəbl/
exquisite	/ɛkskwɪzɪt/	/ɪk'skwɪzɪt/
secretive	/sɪ'kri:tɪv/	/si:kɹətɪv/
abdomen	/æb'dəʊmən/	/æbdəmən/

In the case of 'armchair' and 'ice-cream', the shift of stress onto the first element seems to reflect the gradual integration of the two elements into a semantically less divisible whole. 'Arm chair' was probably originally a neologism for a chair whose distinguishing feature was that it had arms, but increasing familiarity with the collocation has led to it becoming semantically and morphologically opaque (in common usage, though of course in a more analytical mode we can work out its logic), and so it is more natural to give it the stress pattern of a compound noun (e.g. 'blackbird') than that of a noun phrase (e.g. 'black bird'). The same is true, though rather later chronologically, of 'ice-cream'. American English tends to lead the way in this leftward shift of stress, so that to older speakers stress on the first syllable of 'ice-cream' may sound American.

Otherwise the changes in stress pattern affect longer words, and the stress may shift in either direction. I am not sure if there are any explanatory generalisations to be derived from these changes; the data here would suggest not, as the overall stress pattern of 'secretive' has changed to precisely the one which 'exquisite' is in the process of abandoning.

2.5. When we look at the landscape around us it seems permanent and immutable. But geologists can demonstrate that the earth's surface has been far from static on a 'geological' timescale. Rather, the landmasses have floated around and restructured the surface of the earth beyond all recognition, mountains rise, and valleys form. Knowing this, geologists are motivated to look for movement on a

human timescale, and, indeed, can show that the landmasses continue to move — albeit only by millimetres per year. Maybe this is an analogy for sound change. We know that restructuring has gone on; but now we have the techniques to watch our ‘soundscape’ change in our own lifetimes.

3. RP and ‘Estuary English’

3.1. So far, by implication, I have been discussing developments in that elusive variety ‘Received Pronunciation’ (RP). Nolan and Ker-swil (1990: 316) offer the following definition:

‘Received Pronunciation’ (RP) is the long established term for the prestige accent of South East England which also serves as a prestige norm in varying degrees elsewhere in Britain.

This differs from a common view which refuses to locate RP geographically, and instead views it as a non-regional prestige variety. I think this latter view is incorrect for two main reasons. First, an RP or near-RP speaker will, by default, be assumed to be from the South East by those who hear him or her, and this assumption has a high statistical probability of being correct. Second, RP is demonstrably phonetically and phonologically continuous with the range of other varieties of the South East in a way that it is not continuous with the varieties of other regions. For instance the fairly narrow diphthong [əʊ] of ‘home’ in RP is at one end of a continuum of diphthongs in which increasingly open first elements correlate with decreasing socio-economic prestige (culminating in ‘Cockney’ [aʊ]). The same is not true in South Yorkshire, where the most localised variant in ‘home’ would be [ʊə], and a more prestigious variant [ɔ:], neither of which can be straightforwardly placed on a continuum with the RP form.

Since the majority of RP speakers are in contact with one set of regional varieties, namely those of the London area, and since RP forms a continuum with those varieties, it is not surprising that there should be some parallels between the historical development of RP and that of these other varieties. Much comment has been devoted to such parallelisms, particularly under the heading of 'Estuary English'.

3.2. 'Estuary English' (EE) has been used to refer to the contemporary pronunciation of English within a 50-or-so mile radius of London, the name referring to the Thames Estuary. Rosewarne (1994a: 3) describes EE as follows:

Estuary English is ... a mixture of non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation. If one imagines a continuum with RP and popular London at either end, Estuary English speakers are to be found grouped in the middle ground.

(This definition sticks to the traditional line, of course, of treating RP as a 'non-regional' variety, contrary to the slightly iconoclastic view expressed above that RP is firmly a variety of the South East.) According to Rosewarne (1994b), EE is characterised by features such as l-vocalisation ([fi:w kəʊd] 'feel cold'), glottal reinforcement and replacement ([ə lɒ? əv blæf̥k ˈwʌnz]), closer than RP /æ/, fronted first element in /aʊ/ ([næʊ] 'now')... and many other features of 'popular' south-east speech. In all these respects, and in others not cited here, it involves values for sociolinguistically-sensitive variables which mark it as deviating from RP, as traditionally described, in the direction of the lower-middle and working class accents of London and the surrounding area.

3.3. Several claims seem to be implied variously by those who use the term Estuary English, for instance:

- *Estuary English is 'new'*. This is true; the term correctly recognises that pronunciation is not what it was 50 or even 25 years ago. This, of course, has always been the case, and so there is nothing

surprising here. The point of this paper is to highlight the fact that pronunciation is in constant flow, and there is no reason to expect any of the social groups of the South East of England to speak exactly as they did half a century ago. In any case, where better to find shifting sands than in an estuary?

- *Estuary English is the 'new RP'.* This is almost certainly not true if it means that at the current time EE is what the social groups who would traditionally have spoken RP speak. Most evaluative comment on EE is negative ('all those terrible glottal stops', etc.), as even Rosewarne (1994b) admits:

If the reactions of many members of the British public to articles and programmes on Estuary English are representative, then it is widely regarded as an unattractive and 'lazy' way of speaking suggesting that EE refers to a variety which is in contrast to the prestige variety, rather than its evolutionary replacement.

The claim arises, perhaps, because there are trends common to all SE dialects including RP, for instance vowel shifts and increasing use of glottal stops; but this does not necessarily mean that the gap between RP and 'sub-RP' varieties is lessening. Glottal reinforcement has long ago entered RP, but as glottal stops spread to more phonetic environments in RP, it is likely that non-RP varieties keep pace, extending the range of environments and frequency of occurrence of glottal stops.

Even though EE does not fulfil the traditional role of RP, the new non-RP pronunciations of the SE may show us the future of (particularly consonantal aspects of) RP, as they have in the past (as with the introduction of glottal stops, for instance). We might hazard a prediction that in the future the first of the pronunciations below, which would be used by more conservative RP speakers today, would yield to the second, which today would be judged distinctly non-RP in its use of glottal stops where no consonant follows, its /l/ vocalisation, and its loss of 'th' (the labio-dental realisation of /t/ is already a common personal characteristic in some RP speakers, so on its own would not exclude the second pronun-

ciation from RP status; but it might well become the commonest realisation in a generation or two).

	I thought Rachel wasn't at all bothered by it.
Old RP	aɪ θɔ:t ɪetʃəl wɒznt ət ɔ:l bədəd baɪ ɪt
Future RP?	aɪ fɔ:ʔ veɪʔʃu wɒzn əʔ ɔʊ bədəd baɪ ɪʔ

• *Changes in RP are due to influence from EE.* It has often been observed that some of the changes in RP have been in the direction of non-RP South-East English (cf. Wells 1994), for instance the introduction in restricted environments of /l/-vocalisation and glottal reinforcement. It is forgivable to assume that this is the result of non-RP varieties influencing RP. But we should be cautious in assuming that shared change proves influence. For instance if a younger brother has blond hair as a baby which gradually darkens as he grows up, we do not assume that his hair is changing because his older brother's hair has undergone the same change. Rather there is an external cause common to the change observed in both brothers (in this case a genetic one). There are common pressures (phonological, articulatory, and perceptual) which promote change along a similar pathway even in unrelated, geographically distant languages, and these could in principle be operating independently in the varieties of the South-East.

More plausibly there is influence, but it is mutual, with the whole of the South-East acting as a single sociolinguistically-stratified system. There are cases where RP has innovated, as in the case of the lowering of [æ] > [a] where RP reversed the trend common to many varieties of English to raise the /æ/ phoneme. It will be interesting to see whether this innovation is adopted by non-RP varieties in the South East.

Within this single sociolinguistically-stratified system we can see common trends affecting the different strata, particularly in the case of recent vowel developments. Back high vowels, including the second element of diphthongs, are fronting (see section 2.3 above). But this does not reduce the separation of the strata. In the case of the vowel of 'joke', for instance, the openness of the first element continues to be sociolinguistically sensitive. Whereas ear-

lier in the century RP [öu] might have been differentiated from popular London [äu], present day 'young' RP [ēi] is distinct from present-day 'young' popular London [æi]. In both varieties the diphthong has fronted and unrounded over time (particularly the second element), but the two new forms are kept apart by the openness of the first element as much as they ever were.

Whatever the truth about 'influence', the similarity of developments of RP to those in other SE varieties does underline the point that RP is in every real respect a dialect of the South East.

- *Estuary English is an emerging 'sub-RP' dialect which levels the differences between previously distinct South-East accents.* There is undoubtedly some levelling in the counties surrounding London, but it has not been demonstrated that, for example, one can't tell whether a (non-RP) speaker from near London is from north, south, east, or west of London. This is perhaps the most interesting and testable aspect of the EE hypothesis. What is required is systematic sociolinguistic research based in a number of crucial locations surrounding London, for instance in Essex, Kent, Hertfordshire, and Berkshire.

4. Some questions

A number of questions arise from the discussion above. Some, perhaps, should only be asked (and answered) tongue-in-cheek; others are more worthy of study by linguists. For instance:

4.1. *Do the changes in RP mean that the British prestige variety is deteriorating?*

Yes, of course. Ever since Chaucer, and earlier. The situation is only mitigated by the merciful habit of Nature to replace an older generation with a young generation who don't realise how bad things have become.

4.2. *But surely (e.g.) /θ/ and /f/ musn't merge or you won't understand each other?*

We survived the merger of the 'beat' and 'beet' word classes, 'w-'~'wh-', and so on in the history of English. Languages are forever allowing some distinctions to be lost; and, where necessary, creating new ones. But the large amount of redundancy in any language means that we have nothing real to fear from the loss of one or two phoneme distinctions. Objectors are rationalising aesthetic judgments (which of course have their own validity) by recourse to presumed threats to intelligibility.

4.3. Is the long-term stability of the English consonant system under threat?

This, I think, is a potentially interesting research question. The consonant system of English has been remarkably stable through the last few centuries, and now we seem to be in a period of dramatic change, for some varieties (see the example in section 3.3). But whether such changes become part of the prestige pronunciation, RP, may depend on the extent to which prescriptive judgments based on orthography keep their hold. Because consonants are discretely different from each other in a way in which vowels are not, floating as they are in the vowel space, it may be that the orthographic representation of consonants will inhibit at least those consonant changes which involve phoneme mergers.

4.4. Are improved communications accelerating the rate of sound change?

Again, this is an interesting question, and I think the answer is 'possibly'. Speakers are exposed to more variants because of broadcasting, so the pool of potential borrowed innovations is larger. Additionally, changes can diffuse more rapidly. But proof is elusive. Some EE vowel changes resemble Australian English, but is this a natural trend, inherent in the forces operating on a vowel system of the English type, or is it the effect of Australian soap operas on TV?

4.5. Do these changes take pronunciation further and further from spelling?

Yes.

4.6. *So is it time for spelling reform?*

No. If one tried to make spelling match pronunciation the question would arise 'whose pronunciation?' At present we have a spelling system equally remote from the pronunciation of all English speakers.

4.7. *Which British English should we learn and teach?*

Teaching a slightly out-of-date prestige norm has a number of advantages:

- it is widely and uncontroversially prestigious, albeit not 'trendy'
- descriptions of it are available
- it is stable, reflecting innovations which have survived and not those which were short-lived.

So although standard textbooks, even their most updated editions, describe a variety which is already being left behind by younger speakers, it is not a great disadvantage in my view to lag behind current trends in pronunciation.

5. The challenge of the future

Maybe the challenge of the future, for descriptive phoneticians and teachers of English, is how to reconcile the changing pronunciation of British speakers with the need in Europe for an International English. As English becomes *de facto* the language of the European Union (despite brave rearguard actions by Francophones) it would be unsurprising if eurocrats and business people increasingly developed their own variety of English — based on British English, since this is still the predominantly taught variety in Europe and the one spoken by a subset of the EU — but more and more distinct from it.

In fact it may be wrong to talk of Euro-English being 'developed'. Rather, it would remain relatively constant, an outpost of Jonesian and Gimsonian order, while the inhabitants of Britain pursue their constant phonetic revolution. Europeans may then be able

to echo the comment of an anonymous Irishman: 'Isn't it shocking what the English are doing to their own language!'

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AN ACCOUNT OF ONE'S OWN: NARRATING I-S IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES

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When taking up such an issue as first person accounts in postcolonial literatures I think we should first agree what should be understood by 'postcolonial'. First: I am using the term more or less as do the authors of the now almost classical survey *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* — that is, I am using 'post-colonial' as something like 'after-colonization' — to cover the period from initial colonization up to the present day. (Ashcroft 1994: 2) At least for my purposes it makes the logical period — a period with common themes and patterns to look at. Also, as the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* do, and as is proper at a British Studies conference, I am basically talking about postcolonial literatures in English although the topic of post-colonial writing and thinking is, of course, much wider.

Second: making use of the term 'postcolonial literatures' I presume that there are certain characteristics which all the literatures formed in cultures with colonial experience, share. That there are themes, structures, patterns and strategies which have been triggered and shaped precisely by this experience. For example, there is the basic imperative in postcolonial cultures of having to deal with the ideas of metropole and province, centre and periphery, canon and margins. The negotiability of notions such as identity, authenticity, history is foregrounded in the postcolonial writing, and there is, necessarily, a pervasive concern with language: a

sense for its symbolic values and sensitivity to sociolinguistic questions. Recent critics have pointed out structural features characteristic of postcolonial literature — like a distinctive use of allegory, irony, magic realism and discontinuous narratives.

In this paper of mine I would like to consider in that same framework of postcolonial writing that I have sketched the frequent usage of the rhetorics of first person in post-colonial literatures — viewing it as a characteristic touch of post-colonial discourse, a specific filter for post-colonial concerns.

For that, I will first discuss how the so-called ‘first-person narration’ is seen by structuralist or post-structuralist theories that roughly fall into the field called narratology. These theories — maybe characteristically — come not from British and American Studies but from the French and German side. Proceeding from the gained insights I will consider the matter in question in the light of some case studies. I will view the use of the first person statement in the 1850s bestseller *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and in two texts from the Caribbean region — Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Derek Walcott’s *Omeros*.

What is the ideosyncrasy of making a statement in the first person? According to Gerard Genette, the classical theorist of narratology, there is no fundamental difference between a narration in the first person, and a narration focused fully through the mind of one third-person character. There may exist some small differences in the authorial craftsmanship in these but they are for the most part ‘versatile’ in terms of narrative technique. And, therefore, they are roughly equivalent from the point of view of modal consequences — from the point of view how that which is narrated is transmitted through the perceptual filter. (Genette 1994: 112–113) That Genette should have stopped his line of thought there seems to spring from where the stresses are in his theory. Genette states explicitly that he wants to distance himself from the ideological and reader-response-related concerns in criticism, and makes a plea that he, the aesthetician, be left to his aesthetics. Such a self-limitation is, of course, valid, and may even be useful in some cases but, it can lead to drawbacks even in traditional narratological analysis. For example, Genette tends to assume far too easily the transparency of the narrator to the story. (Zeitblom in

transparency of the narrator to the story. (Zeitblom in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* and doctor Watson are his examples). (ibid.: 102) Genette is ignoring that that kind of narrators are not only perceiving and narrating but also modelling the text according to their perceptions.

As for post-colonial theory: although coherent readings entirely in Genette's terms would definitely be possible, there would nevertheless be a loss; certain characteristic features of post-colonial literatures would remain unaccounted for.

Post-colonial texts do not necessarily quite subscribe to the current European mainstream understanding of literature: true literature as a collection of non-ageing works of universal aesthetic value and appeal, read primarily for their context-transcending properties. As the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe would have it: "I would be quite satisfied if my novels /.../ did no more than teach my readers that all their past — with all its imperfections — was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is an applied art as distinct from pure art. But who cares? Art is important and so is the kind of education that I have in mind." (quoted in Ashcroft 1994: 126) To take interest in the local and the timely, the referential, is a very general feature of post-colonial texts. The authors whose texts foreground the particular as the *different* insist that their works should be read precisely against the background of cultural context. They do not want to be praised for their 'universal' qualities and come to question the validity and the meaning of this criterion altogether. To quote Achebe again: "I should like to see the word universal banned altogether from discussions of African literature until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe." (ibid.: 127)

Considering post-colonial stress on the particular and the referential, the German theorist Käte Hamburger seems a more useful starting-point than Genette for discussing how first person narrative functions in the post-colonial context. She asserts — with the illuminativeness of a very hyperbolic truth — that first-person narratives cannot at all be considered fiction proper. The origins of first-person narrative, Hamburger says, lie in the autobiographical

statement. “I/t is an innate characteristic of every first-person narrative that it posits itself as non-fiction, i. e. as a historical document”: the ‘I’ of a first-person account always intends to be a historical one, to filter historical personal experience, to make a ‘feigned reality statement’. (Hamburger 1973: 311) To an extent rather in the same line with Hamburger, Philippe Lejeune introduces the notion of autobiographic space, describing the distinct form of authenticity, the “effect of three-dimensionality”, it establishes. (Lejeune 1982: 214–216) What we can see from Lejeune is that an autobiographical narrator — and by extension, any first person narrator — although he may give a very improbable account of things, he will always be understood as representing a subjective reality of his own person. Quoting Lejeune: “His errors, lies, omissions and distortions, if we perceive them, will be taken as further aspects of his nevertheless authentic speech act.” (ibid.: 214) That is: a first-person narrator with a referential intention always tells a kind of particular truth.

Proceeding from these insights, it seems to me that first-person statement can function as an ideal rhetorical strategy for making certain ideological claims: for questioning ‘universally’ established truths from some ‘particular’ point of view. From the point of view of an individual, from the point of view that is subjective and possibly muddled, but nevertheless ‘authentic’.

Now I will consider this rhetoric in three postcolonial texts where it functions — in a way similarly, as I want to suggest — but still very differently, as the texts themselves are very different in their structures and in their style.

1. Harriet Beecher Stowe *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: The Real Presence of Distress

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* engages and uses a number of speech patterns, dialects and idiolects, as well as a wide range of contemporary arguments on questions of race and slavery. It is a third-person novel in the traditional terminology but the

voice of the authorial narrator is one of those speaking their mind in the novel. And this voice has a lot to say.

Now, Genette asserts persuasively that contrary to the usual classification, every narrative is, explicitly or not, in the first person, since at any moment its narrator (character or not) may use the 'I' pronoun to refer to himself. Yet, I find it for our purposes extremely important whether or not it is done, whether or not the narrator refers to himself explicitly in a particular text; and if he does — how often and to what extent it is done. These differences produce rhetorical effects that are worthy of notice.

The story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is mediated in the manner of a 19th-century subjective journalist: the novel is filled with signs of the presence of a speaking subject, a kind of an emotionally involved reporter, and, at that, with references to its own production. Also, the journalist's voice frequently appeals to the readers directly: informing them, explaining matters to them, rebuking and persuading them, confessing to them. Altogether these self-referential aspects of the discourse create an illusion of a present, contemporaneous relationship between the reader and the narrator — what I would call a journalistic effect. What role does this effect have in the novel as a whole?

A rhetoric that the polyphonic novel does seem to privilege is the strategy of sentimental persuasion: against the dominant authority of established clerical and secular institutions the text poses the authority of subjective personal experience. Let us consider here one characteristic scene. (Stowe 1981: 141–161)

Early in the novel we are introduced to senator and Mrs Bird. Mrs Bird is a gentle and home-oriented but compassionate woman. Her husband is the expert of extra-domestic matters, a public figure — a senator — who voted in favour of that more rigorous resolutions should be adopted against southern runaway slaves and their helpers in his native northern state. He warns against relying on sentiments when judging hot issues such as slavery: "we mustn't suffer our feelings to run away with our judgement; /.../ there are great public interests involved, /.../ we must put aside our private feelings" (UTC 144). Then, the fugitive Eliza and her son arrive, exhausted and terrified, intruding the comfortable home at-

mosphere of the Birds — as the novel itself was meant to intrude that of its readers. When the Birds ask Eliza why she had fled, she does not start an argument for her right to freedom, she speaks neither about the injustice of the legal system nor about the hypocrisy of church. Instead, she turns to the Birds, asking: “Have you ever lost a child?” When Mrs Bird acknowledges they have, Eliza asserts: “Then you will feel for me.” (UTC 149) The success of her private voice in reforming senator Bird’s opinions in public matters constitutes the typical Beecher-Stowian model of sentimental persuasion. The transformation of the senator is described by the narrator: “How sublimely he had sat [in the Senate chamber] with his hands in his pockets, and scouted all sentimental weakness of those who would put the welfare of a few miserable fugitives before great state interests. /.../ but then his idea of a fugitive was only an idea of the letters that spell the word /.../ The magic of the real presence of distress, — the imploring human eye, /.../ the despairing appeal of helpless agony, — these he had never tried.” (UTC 156)

Having once had the experience of Eliza’s suffering, the senator feels compelled to aid her, although it means discomfort and danger for himself. The religious overtones of calling Eliza’s distress “the real presence” suggest that it is the witnessing of suffering that is destined to have miraculous transformative power.

However, at this point one cannot but notice the inevitable gap in the text’s strategy. It is emphatically the literal physical *presence* of Eliza that converts senator Bird. Yet, the text’s own persuasiveness for the reader must depend “on the letters that spell the word”, the bare narrative evocation of the real presence of distress. Here, the journalistic effect, the journalistic presence plays an important part.

In the chapter where Eliza meets the Birds (as in the novel in general) most of the story is told in scenic presentation with a lot of detail, creating the illusion of reality. But it is told as a reportage. During its twenty pages, the narrator addresses the reader directly for the total of six times (UTC 153, 154, 156, 158). She occasionally shifts to the present tense and frequently uses words ‘now’ and ‘on the present occasion’ (UTC 142, 143, 144, 152, 155, 156). She

refers to the characters with an easy familiarity as if they were common acquaintances of hers and the readers': "our senator" (UTC 150), "our good senator" (UTC 155), or as if she and the reader were observing them together: "the delicate woman who sits there by the lamp, dropping slow tears." (UTC 154) Finally, the subjective journalist makes emotional appeals similar to those of her protagonists. If the reader knows Mrs Beecher Stowe's life-story from other sources, s/he can see a reference to the author's autobiographical grief when the narrator turns to the readers, expressing her knowledge of the sad experience of losing children (UTC 153–154).

So, as the author claims "real presence", the readers are to step into the shoes of the Birds and experience the distress as actually present. Apparently many of them considered doing so, because the concluding remarks of the novel are answers to the questions of the readers who had first read the story in the magazine. Their questions are: is it really true? Did this really happen? These are questions that typically dominate reactions to non-fiction works. (Frus 1994: xvii) So, the journalistic endnotes transcend the traditional finale of the novel where villains are punished and hero/ines rewarded. The story ends but the subjective journalist carries on speaking, in her own name, in the first person, and in her world — which is also the world of the readers - the distress is still present.

2. Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea*: The Other Side

Wide Sargasso Sea is a rewriting of the English classic Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*: a rewriting focused on and from the dim attic side of the mother-text. The first, mad, wife of Rochester in Brontë was a post-colonial from the West-Indies. In several letters and interviews Rhys (herself born in Dominica) has described how she had been brooding over "the all wrong creole scenes" in Brontë, and "above all, /.../ the real cruelty of Mr Rochester" to his first wife. (Quoted in Smith 1997: viii) That was all "only one side — the English side" (ibid.: vii) and hence she decided to "write the

story as it might really have been", to "write a life" for the first Mrs Rochester who "seemed such a poor ghost" in the Brontë text. (Harrison 1988: 128).

In the mother-version the madwoman, Bertha, has no verbal language, she expresses herself in lunatic laughter, snarls and yells. It has not been stated that Bertha never spoke, yet throughout the novel she is never quoted in direct speech and only once are her words reported at all: "she said she'd drain my heart," says her half-brother. (JE 272) Focalized externally, she is described as a monster (JE 272), a vampire (JE 250, 255), or also (by Jane) as a tragic ghost of mirthless laughter (JE 93, 94). From the very beginning she is associated with savagery: "the night /.../ was rent /.../ by a savage, a sharp shrill sound" (JE 181). When she steals to Jane's room and tears her bridal veil, she has a "ghastly" "savage" face. But most emphatically and consistently she is presented as "embuted" (JE 257), animal-like. She is described as a "clothed hyena" (JE 258); her characteristic ways of expression are "snarling" (JE 183), "growling", "bellowing" (JE 258).

When granting the speechless brute a language, a language in which to tell "the other side" — her side — of the story about her childhood, marriage and coming to England, the obvious choice would perhaps have been to let her tell it in a symmetrical opposition to Jane's account: fully herself, in the first person. It is known that Rhys considered doing it like that but then, however, rejected the idea of a "straight" one-perspective narrative. In *WSS* no voice has an overwhelming authority. Antoinette (equivalent to Brontë's Bertha) is the main narrator of parts I and III but part III begins with a passage by an unidentified narrator who refers to the characters in the third person; part II is mainly told by young 'Rochester' (who remains nameless in Rhys' text), with some passages by Antoinette. And these three are by far not the only narrators in *WSS*. There are many voices who get the opportunity to say things: those of Antoinette's mother and stepfather, of her black nanny Christophine, of Grace Poole, etc. Also, there are the anonymous voices of gossip. When Antoinette and Rochester complain they are being constantly pursued by a sound of whispering, then the reader can sense it too. The different voices are interrupting, chal-

lenging and frightening each other — as well as complementing each other's accounts. For all that, in WSS there is no such thing as a reliable narrator in the classical sense of the term: no voice can grant the reader assurance that the events and existents really were in the way it is saying. Antoinette's voice is not an exception here. There is a lot of the thing we have been calling subjective but 'authentic' personal truth. But throughout the text there is a general deficit of confirmed information. The characters, especially 'Rochester' and Antoinette, are obsessed with the idea of a concealed Truth about something most essential, and everyone is accusing everyone else of lying and distorting the real nature of things. Antoinette, most importantly, has the fear that people listen to lies only and not to 'the other side', not to her.

At the same time it has to be said that all these suspicious and quarrelling voices cannot but take up one another's discourses: referring to each other, summarizing and quoting each other. It is no accident that one of the central images in the novel is a parrot: the whole text is based on mimicry, repetition. The narrators incorporate in their narratives, mostly in direct discourse, what they have been told. The words of others, truthful or not, meaningful or not, are not to be forgotten, they change places and shift meanings but keep echoing. 'Rochester's' narrative, for example, takes over the words of Christophine and Antoinette: "Now every word she said was echoed, echoed loudly in my head:

'So that you can leave her alone.' (*Leave her alone*)

'Not telling her why.

(*Why?*)"' (WSS 98)

"I saw the hate go out of her eyes. /.../ She was only a ghost.

Nothing left but hopelessness. Say die and I will die. Say die and watch me die." (WSS 110)

It seems to be that the text's aim is a varied polyphony, causing meaning to slither and slide. One could say that the very strategy of rewriting as such dissolves uni-vocal authority, because both the mother-text and the rewriting are reduced to the status of possible versions of the story told — opening up the way to endless new

ones. This description makes it sound as if WSS was deploying techniques that we call postmodernist. But I am hesitating when using this label. There is a strong recuperative interest in WSS. It should not be forgotten that inside the novel it is exactly the voice of Antoinette which fiercely demands non-closure and deferral of judgement — precisely the voice that was missed out, reduced to snarls, lost in *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette's agenda can well be seen as a thematic parallel to the novel as a whole. Antoinette speaks both for herself and for Rhys's text when she answers 'Rochester's' question: "Is there another side?" with: "There is always another side, always." (WSS 86)

Against that background it is important to stress that Antoinette's aim is not an endless game of changing meanings. She too is interested in truth: throughout her account there are references to her almost religious sense of mission to see the end of her dream (she is having a serial-like dream about her fate) and, through that, finally to grasp it — the Truth. It is exactly for seeing the dream, that she is destined to take over the *Jane Eyre* topos of horror and loneliness: the room merging the features of both Thornfield Hall attic, and the room where young, raging "mad" Jane had been locked up by her cruel aunt.

In that final dream of hers Antoinette sees all the images of the text, the elements of all sides in the novel in a kind of a whirlwind and in the light of fire, fire red. The critic Wilson Harris has read Antoinette's last dream as converting the rigid dichotomies of *Jane Eyre* into the regenerative patterns of New World myth. (Harris 1981) There is something in this reading, I think, but it is not the whole story. In the context of the general double-voicedness and parodicism of the text this vision of unity in diversity cannot be final — and, actually, the vision is not even the end of the novel — the text still continues. Yet, for a moment meaning comes to a standstill at that point, with that dream. The whirlwind of fragments 'of all sides' is perceived by Antoinette in the light of fire red. In the context of her discourse it is her own and West-Indian colour, which she associates with sensuality, pantheistic regeneration, tangible authenticity. "Time has no meaning,"

Antoinette tells Grace Poole. "But something you can touch and hold like my red dress, that has a meaning." (WSS 120) Red is the colour of "fire and sunset", of "flamboyant flowers", and if one is buried under a flamboyant tree, one's soul is lifted up when it flowers. (WSS 120)

The meaning of fire as Antoinette accounts for it in *WSS*, makes a difference in relation to *Jane Eyre* where fire and red stood for destruction, horror and madness only. In a common phrase: things are seen in a different light. Difference here, however, is not yet another move in endless meaning-deferral. It is rather that a re-imagined and re-established first-person voice is pin-pointing difference as a meaning — a meaning that had previously been lost and missed out.

3. Derek Walcott *Omeros*: History of One's Own

Derek Walcott's *Omeros* also comes from the West Indies. And it too can be called a rewriting.

It is a text full of cultural tension and extraordinary combinations. Written in Dante's *terza rima* and drawing upon the motifs of Homer's works, it cannot but be read in association with classical epic. Yet epic, a genre that implies a feeling of tradition and communal memory, should hardly come naturally to an author of the linguistically, racially and culturally hybrid Caribbean region, where the colonial experience involved displacement, uprootedness, loss of traditions. In Ezra Pound's words epic is a "long poem including history". (Quoted in Pesch. I am also drawing upon Pesch's discussion of the classical epic.) What could or should be written as history in the Caribbean where concepts like 'origin', 'identity' — even 'culture' — are all problematic in the extreme?

Yet, *Omeros* in a certain sense actually is a long poem including history. It is a quest for history: a Dantean pilgrimage of the first-person narrator called Derek, like the author of the book. As I perceive it, it is an autobiographized epic, exploring the patterns, possibilities and temptations of post-colonial historiography. The

Ich-narrator, a post-colonial writer, plays with and worries over, discusses with the reader, subverts and deploys various ways to re-tell the story of his native St Lucia. And he is not the only historian on the island. There is also, for example, Dennis Plunkett, a retired British army major. He has gradually become uneasy in his identity and reached an ideological crisis. His military experience, as well as life at the edge of the former Empire, have disturbed his relationship to the Centre and alienated him from paradigmatic Britishness. Fascinated by his beautiful black housemaid Helen, Plunkett makes her the symbol of St Lucia and decides to write a history all her own. Plunkett's project is to write the history of the island as an allegoric refiguration of the battle of Troy — and to a certain extent the narrator clearly identifies with him. Plunkett's portrayal of St Lucia as Helena of Troy, as a prize for whom the French and the British fought in delirious love, is paralleled by his own allegorization of the same beautiful and pert island woman. Yet, at the same time he mocks Plunkett's attempt to turn the violent colonial power games into a noble romance: "Plunkett, in his innocence", he says, "has tried to change history to a metaphor, in the name of a housemaid." (O 270)

The narrator's own account of St Lucia, just as Plunkett's, re-writes a Homeric model, although he does not romanticize St Lucia but, on the contrary, defiantly turns Homer into an everyday island story. His Achille and Hector are ordinary St Lucian fishermen who quarrel over the attractive unfaithful Helen. Helen, who for the narrator, too, stands for the whole island, he makes his "love [...] common as dirt" (O 250): "Brown sheep bayed at it/as it sang an old hymn and scraped a yard with a broom." (O 250)

Yet, later in the text the narrator comes to ask if he has not been attached to his own "myth of rustic manners" as blindly as Plunkett to his poetic patterns. The characteristically post-colonial strategy of re-reading and re-writing European classics proves disappointing for him after all. He starts to feel that thereby he had only made "literature [...] as guilty as History". He asks: "when would I not hear the Trojan war/in two fishermen cursing [...]?" "when would I enter that light beyond metaphor?" (O 271)

At this point it should be emphasized that not the whole *Omeros* is a rewriting of Homer. There is a thread of meditations, events and perceptions in the epic that are presented as autobiographical and immediate. This line, too, plays upon intertextuality but it also has a specific claim to authenticity, to a lived tangible reality.

First of all, the name 'Omeros' is a more original and authentic version than 'Homer'. It is not a name out of a history book for the narrator; it has been given to him by a young Greek girl: "'O-meros,' she laughed. 'That's what we call him in Greek'". (O 14) It is exactly that particular form of the name that, before it becomes a Leitmotif of the book, acquires a specific palpable Caribbean meaning: "I said, 'Omeros',/ and O was the conch-shell's invocation, mer was/ both mother and sea in our Antillean patois,/ os a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes" (O 14).

The line of personal history is continued in the narrator's conversations with his mother (O 165–167) and father (O 68–72, 186–188), his meeting with an exile Polish waitress in Canada (O 211–212), his visit to the National Gallery in London (O 182–184), his meditation upon his marriage (O 240–241), etc. The autobiographically presented details: mother's amnesia; father's admiration for English culture and his longing for the metropolitan streets "that history had made great" (O 187); the narrator's own identification with the East-European political exile who had "that nervous/smile of the recent immigrant, that borders on tears" (O 211) — that all is related to (and allegorized to relate to) the quest for St Lucia's history. This history now, however, is written as an account of a particular lived experience (as opposed to a myth or a metaphor): it is history verified in the first person.

The borderlines and grey zones between life and fiction are repeatedly marked and re-marked in *Omeros*. Interestingly, the characters have different, occasionally shifting degrees of reality. In a gesture of ironic illusion-disturbance the narrator declares the figure of the young white American, Catherine Weldon, who experiences the extinction of native Americans in Dakota, a character of his own creation. Yet the gesture is double-edged, because there-with he also highlights his own 'real' feelings and reasons for creating her: "Catherine Weldon rose in high relief/through the thin

edge of a cloud, making a fiction/of my own loss". (O 181) Major Plunkett is also a figure who at some points appears on the same level of existence as the narrator: "the Major had trained us all as cadets", the narrator reports. (O 265) Yet, he is also fiction: "This wound I have stitched into Plunkett's character.[...] /affliction is one theme/of this work, this fiction, since every "I" is a/fiction finally." (O 28)

This last quotation can be seen as a nutshell of Omeric epistemology. On the one hand, life and any I is a fiction, in the sense that they are creations, constructs, open, besides everything else to re-readings and re-figurings. On the other hand — and actually, by the same token — fiction can be about life, referential of life as it is experienced.

Walcott's post-colonial epic with its endless plot ramifications and hopelessly disunited and ambivalent ideological course is obviously very different from Dante's and Homer's epics. Yet, *Omeros* does not lack its own point of homecoming and recovery: the Caribbean *Omeros* ultimately does lead the narrator, like Virgil Dante, to "the light beyond metaphor".

This culminational episode is also placed into the fictio-autobiographical space described above. It is an experience lived and voiced by the narrator. Significantly, the narrator's recuperative vision opens in St Lucia's 'own' light: in that light the island ceases to be a figure of poetry, a Helen, and becomes a poetess of her own story — a Homer.

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FANTASY AS THE REFLECTION OF REALITY: THE BENIGN APOCALYPSE OF GOOD OMENS

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Popular fiction is traditionally dismissed as trivial entertainment without any literary or social merit, published to make money and addle the brains of the masses. Yet, the label "of people" itself reveals an important angle: the books cater to and depend on the general public. To sell to a wide audience, popular fiction supposedly appeals to the lowest common denominator, using crude symbols and simplistic emotions. Yet, the genre also has to touch, overtly or covertly, the social consciousness of a given time to appear attractive or relevant. All social artefacts of any period, including "cheap literature", unavoidably record their surroundings. The means of escape have to sense what we want to escape from and where to in order to retain their relevance and sales pitch.

In a way, the "low" culture, rather than the "high", reflects the undercurrents of truly popular sentiment more objectively than earnest and serious realist writing. The latter is often produced by academics or intellectuals for a limited circle of insiders and hardly ever matches the register and concerns of the "common people". Even when the books deal with "regular" life, their form and content fail to attract the Everyman they are analysing. Popular culture, however, is accessible to all and has a wide appeal across class and educational hierarchies. The importance of "serious" writing is not diminished in the comparison but popular genres, too, can provide us with insights into the period when the works were written, even if they choose not to acknowledge or stress the

fact. Popular culture does not just happen, but is consciously created to satisfy the demands of a general reading public. Therefore, we should ask why something specific is presented at a given point in time.

Examples about links between fiction and social circumstances abound. For example, the genre of detective fiction has developed a whole new breed of female detectives who are a far cry from the privately prying Miss Marple. Respectable ladies and fussy spinsters have become worthy rivals to the macho heroes both in gun-slinging and guesswork, reflecting the changed role of women in society. Thus, popular culture constitutes another instrument for measuring social change. Escapism has to be up to date to make people want to escape into the particular alternative universe that is being offered. Popular culture might not set out to change the world but it may have more of an effect than would initially seem. The products are carefully balanced to hide any overt connection with anything serious but the deceptive simplicity of surface codes cannot eliminate the reflections of and a possible influence on the *Zeitgeist* completely. Subtler messages, encoded in the text consciously or subconsciously, can be decoded by a perceptive reader/interpreter. Almost any cultural artefact is worthy of analysis. In the case of popular culture we should have a closer look at what we are being offered as anodyne entertainment, when and why, if we want to understand our day and age.

Good Omens is not exactly a typical mainstream representative of popular fiction. The authors of the novel are both accomplished masters of the fantastic and mysterious. Terry Pratchett's widely-acclaimed Discworld novels present a cute and funny adult fairy tale. Neil Gaiman's cult comics *Sandman* introduce an entrancing and macabre lore of dreams, sleep and death. The connection of light-hearted fantasy with dark and apocalyptic imagery has produced an "irreverently funny and unexpectedly wise book", as a critic has said (Gaiman 1996: blurb).

Good Omens did not reach bestseller lists instantly on its publication but, through the years, its popularity has been growing, spawning a cult following. The novel, classified as a mixture of fantasy and comedy, has evidently hit a nerve somewhere with

what it has to say about the 1980s-1990s in Britain and the human condition in general. The humour is kind as it wants to heal, not wound. True to its oxymoronic title, the book offers a surprisingly benign view of our days and the end of the world. The caveat "Kids! Bringing about Armageddon can be dangerous. Do not attempt it in your home." can hardly be expected to herald an archly serious social treatise or gothically gloomy vision of human demise (Gaiman 1996). *Good Omens* offers a pre-millennial version of Douglas Adams's Hitchhiker's "Don't panic!" slogan (Adams 1981). In the latter we are assured that there is no need to get upset about the destruction of our planet. In *Good Omens* we are given to understand that the Apocalypse need not be that bad either. That does not seem like much of a socio-political platform but the willingness of the authors to save humankind from a spectacular destruction is refreshing in our era of the "end of history". One is reminded of the Monty Python song "Always look at the bright side of death" (Monty Python 1991). Indeed, in this case, the dark side has its bright moments and Death has quite a few puns in store, for example "Don't think of it as dying.... just think of it as leaving early to avoid the rush" (Gaiman 1996: 174).

Good Omens mingles the British humorous tradition with pre-millennial anxiety and postmodernist playfulness. The story itself shows a considerable infusion of each. After the Fall of Man both higher parties involved send their emissaries down to Earth to monitor human activity. The angel Aziraphale and demon Crowley (also known as the Serpent) discover early on that it is more sensible to co-operate than to feud. After a while they start to like people and find that they have more in common with each other than with their distant superiors. Therefore, they are distressed when the Book of Revelations starts to become a reality and they try to do everything to avert the disaster. In the process, the authors present us with an apt portrait of our late-20th century existence. The wit and hilariousness of the form do not reduce the validity or effectiveness of the message but just hide its sting under the guise of "simple entertainment".

The disrespectful yet intelligent jesting is reminiscent of the subversive Monty Python tradition of British humour, which suc-

cessfully combined hidden social commentary and intellectual references with crude gags and appealed simultaneously to the high- and low-brow audiences. In both cases, the public was provided with references to Britain and Britishness, irreverent jesting about anything from the literary establishment, colonial heritage or monarchy to national characteristics such as the stiff upper lip. *Good Omens* tries to reach a similar democratic audience and wide range of topics on paper, remaining at a more respectable and less subversive level. As such, the two also reflect the change in social circumstances. The Pythons shocked the establishment of their time with frequent references to (homo)sexuality or bodily functions, reflecting the new-found (sexual) liberation of the 1960s–1970s and the iconoclastic attitude of the counterculture years. The “neater” appearance of *Good Omens*, again, can be seen as representative of the relatively conservative, restrained and reasonable 1990s when status quo is more important than making a public statement.

The messages occasionally have similar roots but find different realizations. Both attack the surface-obsessed establishment but while Monty Python sketches seek release through sexual innuendo, mayhem and music hall grotesque, *Good Omens* employs more verbal and inactive means. Monty Python’s human characters get involved but the unearthly protagonists of *Good Omens* describe and bear witness to events that they triggered. The hapless King Arthur of the Pythonesque version of the Grail legend is subjected to an avalanche of manure, humiliating encounters with French soldiers and a police arrest (Monty Python 1974). Crowley and Aziraphale of *Good Omens* solve their scrapes with the establishment by distanced manipulation and observing the results with the impartiality of experimenting scientists. Authority figures do not get credit in either but in the novel they, be they minions of Heaven, Hell or earthly powers, remain blissfully ignorant of their misdeeds, revelling in their pomposity, whereas in the sketches they are constantly subjected to physical indignities and violence. The all-embracing baroque lavishness of Python grotesque has been replaced by muted ironies of an age of understatement when public manifestations are considered useless and embarrassing.

The world of *Good Omens* is very much a reflection of the oft-cited end of history and ideology where no creed is revered wholly and all are ridiculed. Neither Heaven nor Hell come out clean. Rather, both are depicted as ossified bureaucratic systems out of touch with reality and continuing only through inertia. Just comparing Crowley and some senior demons suffices. The latter, in their brief visits to Earth, have not grasped the development of human society and think that tempting a priest is a neat idea. Crowley, on the other hand, send souls to perdition through messing up the cellular phones of London on a business day. Such an ability to adapt has made Crowley and Aziraphale successful throughout centuries. Flexibility is considered subversive since it deviates from the "party line". The headquarters demand absolute obedience to written rules and precedents regardless of transformations in social or intellectual climate which they fail to perceive due to the breakdown of communication between themselves and the other end of the bureaucratic paper trail. The superiors are more right than they would suspect since the two agents have, indeed, an arrangement according to which they "made certain that while neither really won, also neither really lost, and both were able to demonstrate to their masters the great strides they were making against a cunning and well-informed adversary" (Gaiman 1996: 31). The fact that the miscreants never get caught only testifies to the blinkered nature of closed ideological systems.

In a way, we could interpret the self-deceiving make-believe atmosphere as a reflection of the end of the Cold War when the confrontation of the two "superpowers" had lost its previous significance, yet both sides had not yet managed to shake off their pomp or modify their behaviour, which left them inflated and ridiculous. Similarly, Heaven and Hell are so blinkered by their respective creeds and lulled by the security of tradition that they have been rendered obsolete by the changed circumstances to which they have not managed to adapt themselves. Thus, the "mighties" cannot even destroy each other or the world since their catalyst or secret weapon (Antichrist) is adulterated or, rather, brought up to date by his environment. The Antichrist, accidentally named Adam at birth, saves the world, instead of destroying it and, in a way, re-

introduces the innocent simplicity of the pre-fall era around him. The latter is probably not due to the authors' belief in a pastoral future of the post-Cold War global village. Rather, it introduces the theme of this world as a child's gameboard, where human history is played out by the random whims of a simple creature unaware of the portent each of his movements carries. The image, chilly as it seems, with its implications about the strength of sheer chance and the indifference of the fate/creator, is somewhat reminiscent of our current political situation where cataclysmic events are triggered by single people, not stable ideological systems and where atrocities of history have shaken past faith in a benevolent creator.

Good Omens presents the postmodernist concept that life is play, not struggle or a crusade. Those who enter the game with pre-adolescent glee, flexibility and mobility, survive and enjoy the process. Those who are overly zealous or rigid let a great part of the universe pass them by. Childlike suspension of disbelief and the ability to accept the seemingly impossible, fantastic or contradictory is not an escape into a dream world or insanity but actually a firmer and more sophisticated way to assess our surroundings. Ambivalent concepts become especially topical as we approach the millennium. The inevitable spate of doom-saying prophesies and diverse omens are bound to introduce elements of fairy tale into our reasonable late 20th century world that we have to cope with. *Good Omens* shows our rational goal-oriented existence as yet another myth in the continuum of other guiding narratives. Yet, we have included the Enlightenment creed among our common sense notions, turning it into an ostrich-like world view and self-fulfilling prophesy the totalitarian nature of which excludes the possibility of alternatives.

Such smug self-importance is lacking in children who have been unadulterated by the reign of reason. Their unbiased capacity for quick readjustments, acceptance of the multifariousness of the universe and the readiness to playfully struggle with a diversity of ever-changing roles has become especially important today when contradictory messages abound and old rigid systems fail to deliver. Our era has often been derisively called infantile. As *Good Omens* demonstrates, the feature need not be bad, after all. In our

endless pursuit of the rational we often just disregard other options. We are actually less prepared for major cataclysms than any other previous era as in the past we have always had a clear-cut ideological framework, be it religious or social, to guide us along and provide us with meanings and definitions. The end of such guidance has left us confused. We have not fully acknowledged or rationalised the shift and are unable to switch on the flexibility of a developing personality. We do not have to look for truth from somebody/somewhere else. Rather, it is inside us, suppressed in our psyches together with childhood dreams and our capacity for embracing the wonderful and magic.

The end of the world is also fitted into the framework of the world as childhood playpen. The apocalypse just denotes the end of one game, nothing more. In the playful virtual reality of the late 20th century more drastic solutions just do not seem to stick. As children playing war fail to grasp the finality of death, humanity has ceased to fathom an absolute destruction. The apocalypse is just the end of one session in a bigger endless game and means nothing more than just flexing one's muscles, regrouping the forces and redefining the rules to start a new series. The stress is not on any end or total victory but rather on the process of the game and the diverse configurations of players and situations. Somehow, the lull of recent decades has left us ill prepared for real evil, as exemplified by our helplessness in dealing with the atrocities of Bosnia or Rwanda. We have got used to the safe playpen and do not want to leave its security.

This is quite different from the equally hilarious extravaganza of Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker*-novels. In them Earth is actually a computer, custom-built to discover the meaning of life, the universe and everything but accidentally demolished to build a hypergalactic highway. The tone is irreverent and makes fun of many things earthy or unearthly but still recognisably human. Yet, there are notable differences with the later *Good Omens*. The end of the 1970s was still very conscious of the possibility of total destruction and the characters are able to handle the concept:

England no longer existed. He'd got that — somehow he'd got it. He tried again. America, he thought, has gone. He couldn't grasp it. He decided to start smaller again. New York has gone. No reaction. He'd never seriously believed it existed anyway. The dollar, he thought, has sunk for ever. Slight tremor there. Every Bogart movie has been wiped, he said to himself, and that gave him a nasty knock. McDonald's, he thought. There is no longer any such thing as a McDonald's hamburger....He passed out. (Adams 1981: 61–62).

Indeed, the planet is eventually wiped away. There are no overt references to the antagonistic superpowers but the unbending and inane bureaucratic system of the multi-species universal empire, headed by a reckless idiot, recalls the ideological rigor mortis of the mighties of the earth, unthinking in their desire to annihilate. Here, too, we are dealing with chance but one that has very tangible perpetrators. The common person is an unwitting victim of the big game of interstellar ping-pong. In *Good Omens*, however, each and every human is an accessory to the destruction of Earth. Crowley mentions more than once that humans have been extremely inventive in making the life of their fellow creatures and themselves miserable (Gaiman 1996: 26). Everybody is guilty in this pre-Apocalyptic universe yet, ironically, all are spared by Fate whereas all the innocents of Adams's Earth are eliminated, despite the tag "Mostly harmless" attached to the planet. The world of the 1970s, shaken by the Vietnam war and other international crises, was accustomed to violence against defenceless civilians. Life was a playing field where the rules were made by earthly powers above the unwitting common people who ended up paying the price for the miscalculations of their superiors. The game is still going on in *Good Omens* but the players have become more vague in their plans and less rigorous in upgrading their weaponry but they are constantly aided by the pawns who seem to have a knack for self-destruction. When Hitchhiker novels meet the eve of destruction fatalistically, smiling bravely, *Good Omens* denies the existence of a negative scenario and prefers to live for the deceptively simple present moment. Surface laughter and seemingly easy manner dis-

guise two divergent world views that reflect two very different eras: the restless and unsettled 1970s and the complacent and passive 1990s.

Even though the universe of *Good Omens* evokes the virtuality of a video game, it is also firmly placed in the last decades of the 20th century and offers a whimsical but critical look at the existence here and now. The implications of the post-Cold War power vacuum manifest themselves constantly. The dismantling of and disrespect towards all ideologies result in many irreverent portraits, for example, the Satanist nuns of the Chattering Order of St Beryl or the two-member Witchfinder Army, not to mention jokes about fundamentalists or devil worship (Gaiman 1996: 13, 18, 95, 158–167, 177–178). The representatives of both Heaven and Hell come off reduced in stature. Crowley, the shrewdest of observers, rightly hits the mood of the book and the era when he confesses he finds true-blue believers embarrassing and reaches the conclusion that “why’re we talking about this *good* and *evil*? They’re just names for sides” (Gaiman 1996: 45). Seriousness of purpose and belief in absolutes just seem to go against the grain of the Zeitgeist. The era is characterised by an unwillingness or, possibly even, inability to confront serious issues or try to solve them. Either humans ignore what is there, as Crowley demonstrates only too often, or try to dilute or trivialise everything — as pointed out in an interview with the Secretary General of the UN that easily switched onto the topic of Elvis-sightings (Gaiman 1996: 72, 103).

Bureaucracy and the press get their share of criticism, the former as the ossified bastion of dogma, the latter as the toothless watchdog of human liberty and conscience. The hierarchies of Heaven and Hell, bureaucracies par excellence, are cumbersome and out of touch with reality, therefore cheated by their flexible underlings. An example from the repertoire of Crowley on the differences in understanding human psyche in order to lead it to Hell:

14th century minds, the lot of them.... Admittedly it was craftsmanship, but you had to think differently these days. Not big, but wide. ... But demons like Ligur and Hastur wouldn't understand. They'd never have thought up Welsh language television,

for example. Or value-added tax. Or Manchester (Gaiman 1996: 9).

Similar elephantine inflexibility is characteristic of all big systems that get tangled in their own web of rules and paperwork. The press, instead of drawing attention to the many shortcomings of the world, just prefer the ostrich-like strategies of denial and distraction by dealing with the harmless, brainless and undisturbing, not alerting people but sedating them. Other institutions that should help people cope with the complexities of life, for example, religion, spiritualist advice or New Age establishments, prove to be as ineffective. So, once again, blind humanity is led by other blind who, unaware of their own imperfection, loudly assert their supreme knowledge. This world is not saved by sage statesmen, shrewd commentators/philosophers or macho superheroes but an unaware child through his simple love for his home.

If an extreme self-confidence has been characteristic of human condition for centuries, there are other touches that point uniquely to our day. The riders of the Apocalypse provide a good example. They, unlike many minions of Heaven and Hell, have kept very much in touch with reality and through them we get some incisive social commentary. Thus, here doom is heralded by four motorcycle-mounted horsepersons — in our politically correct age one of them is a woman. Not only is War a woman but she is also a war correspondent, a barb against the vultures of modern journalism. She dabbles in arms trade, encouraging terrorism and instigating local feud between little factions. After all, our age is characterised by meaningless squabbles, rather than large-scale confrontations. The seemingly inconsequential affairs do not have to add up to a major mayhem to lead to a disaster — the world need not end in a bang but it can also do so with a mere whimper and every little thing helps on the way to chaos (Gaiman 1996: 46–48, 102–104).

Famine thrives in the late 20th century and has amassed a fortune as a result. Ironically, in our age of affluence, we long for hunger and Famine caters to the wish. He has become an extremely successful diet writer who prescribes a foodless menu that leads not just to a dramatic weight loss but also to slow but sure death.

The idea, naturally, sells fantastically in our slimming-crazy days and Famine has to admit he has never seen so many rich people so hungry. Encouraged by his publishing success, he decides to go corporate with another revolutionary concept — fast food with no nutritional value but all the less salubrious aspects of the particular “cuisine” (Gaiman 1996: 48–50, 137–138). Our age of wealth and abundance has been kind to hunger, once again pointing out the human penchant for self-destruction.

Pestilence, “unfortunately”, has been ousted from business by the advances of modern medicine and has retired. He has been replaced by Pollution who has his hands full at a variety of nuclear power plants, oil tankers, big industries and research teams. His presence, always unnoticed by those around him, should be credited in events like the Chernobyl disaster but also in products such as the petrol engine, plastics or the ring-pull can. Even though Pollution is a major mover here, humans have proved to be eager students, once again carelessly playing with the fate in their conspicuous consumption and frenzied exploitation of the environment (Gaiman 1996: 50–51, 149–150).

Death is as majestic as ever, busily doing his work in the wake of his companions. Despite all its effort, the 20th century has not managed to change or divert the business of the Grim Reaper. Rather, human beings have added to his duties by inventing many new and unorthodox methods of both direct and indirect (self)destruction which has made Death as optimistic as his colleagues and more voluble and witty than traditional representations of the figure. The four heralds of doom have retained their contemporaneity and dignity, even when people fail to grasp their presence. Human minds just do not accept the age-old universality and simplicity of the concepts. Instead, they instantly conjure up some ludicrously petty grievances. Thus, the four ancients, now transformed into bikers, meet a group of eager followers who decide to join the team freelance and adopt the following names: Grievous Bodily Harm, Cruelty to Animals, Things Not Working Properly Even After You’ve Given Them A Good Thumping, No Alcohol Lager and Really Cool People (Gaiman 1996: 257–259). That, side by side with the grim finality of the old categories, demonstrates the cur-

rent immaturity that is incapable of dealing with absolutes and has managed to trivialise concepts surrounded by awe and mystery in previous eras, such as death and perdition,.

However, contemporary society is exceedingly serious not only about its own comfort but also, true to the yuppie mentality, competition and profit. The philosophy is lucidly taken together by a management trainee muttering business mantras during a paintball battle in slogans such as Do Unto Others Before They Do Unto You, Kill Or Be Killed or Survival of the Fittest (Gaiman 1996: 86). The glee with which entrepreneurs undertake a war game reveals the nature of the predatory business world as, significantly, the game becomes more active after Crowley turns the bullets in their toy guns into real ones (Gaiman 1996: 90). The law of the jungle in the trivial pursuit is what matters to people more than the possible demise of the race, any ideas or human relations.

If the self-styled Ramboesque Übermensch is the inhabitant of the urban wilderness, the countryside is not an innocent pastoral idyll either. Instead of preserving and furthering more human relationships and values, it is populated by pedantic obscurantists, like a certain R. P. Tyler who loves to berate his fellow citizens through missives to local papers in the style of "I noted with distress a large number of hooligans on motorbicycles infesting Our Fair Village. Why, oh, Why, does the government do nothing about this plague of ..." (Gaiman 1996: 300). Such abhorrence of change rivals the progress-hunt of city-dwellers. Country people, too, are wrapped up in their petty concerns, unwilling or unable to tackle intellectual issues or questions of human existence. The new pastoral, in fact, is rather deceptive in its nature, "with a scattering of lights to mark the slumbering villages where honest yeomen were settling down to sleep after a long day's editorial direction, financial counselling, or software engineering" (Gaiman 1996: 73). The countryside cannot avoid change, yet keeps up the mask of tradition. But, in the best British manner, the locals are good at pretending that nothing has altered. The picture book *Good Old England* exists as a cardboard prop, complete with moonlight, mists, romantic ruins and a local witch, deceiving the eye on a superficial observation but revealing hollowness on a closer inspection.

In a way, reality is just another virtual experience. We have turned our present, together with history and heritage, into another game. Visions of future or remembrances of things past are at best vague in the world that lives only for today, obsessed with surface, not substance. In *Good Omens* two true keepers of historical continuity are, in addition to the stagnant Heaven and Hell, the descendants of the witch-prophet Agnes Nutter and the witchfinder Pulsifer. Neither Anathema Device nor Newt Pulsifer whose names already mark them off as fringe characters, is truly adapted to or accepted by the society whose rational frame of reference finds no place for them. Their very marginality and liminal experience has enabled them to remain true to their roots, consciously or subconsciously. The eccentric scenario from a historical limbo does not seem a very attractive or viable one. Our century preaches flexibility and change. We should face the fact without hiding behind props or myths that have lost their validity or relevance. History should be remembered and incorporated, not shielded behind (as Britons tend to do) or run away from (as is characteristic of Americans). *Good Omens* and its authors are staunchly against the faux Bridesheads as the obsession with the false past prevents us from embracing today on all its levels. Dreams and myths have an inalienable part in our lives but they should be acknowledged as such, not disguised as history or pressed into a rational straitjacket, thereby destroying their magic integrity in addition to distorting our vision of the world.

All this is laid out in a traditional British subdued form of irony and understatement. One does not always need lofty slogans or garish colours to deliver a penetrating critique of social circumstances. *Good Omens* meets the challenge more subtly — consciously so, as oblique references are characteristic of our post-modernist existence. Laughter is a potent weapon and by laughing at the novel's absurdities we might recognise ourselves and stop to contemplate our existence. A seemingly simple funny novel might do that as effectively as an earnest treatise, if we just take the time to decode and analyse all the layers that are laid out for us. We should not be deceived by the seeming transparency of popular culture or take it at face value. A more in-depth analysis might

provide us with a picture of a society at a given point in time, both by what is shown and what is hidden. Silences may be as eloquent as slogans. As such, all products and artefacts of popular culture may become useful tools in self-discovery but also in teaching cultural studies or, for that matter, sociology, granted we approach them with our critical faculty alert. The truth is out — or in — there! Just go and dig it out.

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ANCESTRAL VICES: THE ENGLISH LANDED GENTRY IN THE NOVELS OF TOM SHARPE

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“These old families. The haven’t survived by relying on chance. They know their onions,” comments old Mr. Ganglion, family lawyer to the Handymans, at the end of their remarkable struggle for survival which has held the reader spellbound all through Tom Sharpe’s novel *Blott on the Landscape*. This traditional county family, living in the obscurity of South Worfordshire, had taken on the full force of the modern state and come out the winner.

Tom Sharpe is a conservative writer whose satire is biting and funny. He loves to expose the quirks and eccentricities of his fellow countrymen, and occasional foreigners. He rarely betrays his sympathies as none of his characters is entirely likeable. They are, by and large, comic exaggerations of recognizable types whose characteristic folly is grossly magnified, until most of them become two-dimensional caricatures. With such a method Sharpe fits into a long line of fellow English satirists stretching back to Chaucer and into a tradition which ultimately reaches back to the Romans. Sharpe’s concern lies with late 20th-century follies and his range is wide. Boldly outspoken on many ills, he reserves his most vituperative satire for the Welfare State.

By the 1970s, when Sharpe’s major books started to appear, the experiment in social planning in Britain, known as the Welfare State, had exhausted itself. The relative boom of the 1960s was followed by an economic slump. Britain entered a decade of galloping inflation, interminable strike action, street violence and

sinking morale. Her international prestige had sunk to an all-time low, with the empire in ruins and her place in world affairs hijacked by the USA. Once the smithy of the world, Britain now found it hard to compete with more energetic nations and was forced to witness the death-throes of her industrial regions. The cities had also changed. Town councils with money to burn had in the 60s swept away whole city centres to make room for concrete boxes and multi-level freeways. For a traditionalist there was ample reason for concern.

In three of Sharpe's novels — *Blott on the Landscape* (1975), *The Throwback* (1978) and *Ancestral Vices* (1980) — tradition and modernity clash, with surprising results. Central to all three books is the conflict between a long-established county family, the embodiment of conservative values, and the bureaucrats and other narrow-minded representatives of the Welfare State.

Sharpe's protagonists belong to families with long pedigrees. The Handyman family in *Blott on the Landscape* has held land in Cleene Gorge in South Worfordshire, a fictional county on the English-Welsh border, since 1472. The Petrefacts of *Ancestral Vices* pride themselves on "being one of the oldest families in the Anglo-Saxon world" and they count among their ancestors "several who pre-dated the Conquest" (AV 6). In 1784 they turned "land-owning wealth into industrial fortune" (AV 89) by building a cotton mill in Buscott, near their ancestral seat "in the Vale of Bushampton in the heart of England" (AV 68). In such remote valleys of the West Midlands the Industrial Revolution was born. The Flawses in *The Throwback* have lived in Northumberland "since God alone knows when" (T 45). "Flawse Hall on Flawse Fell under Flawse Rigg" (T 44) first rose amid the bogs and swamps of barren moorland in the 16th century to provide the family with shelter from Scottish raiders and local cattle thieves from Redesdale and North Tynedale. This location makes the Flawses a Border family.

Sharpe's choice of location is significant. The Welsh and Scottish Marches are remote regions and the mountainous regions of the West Midlands are close enough to the Welsh March to share in its character. Culturally this speaks volumes. The Welsh

Marches were created after the Norman Conquest to keep Welsh raiders out of the English kingdom. While the Norman kings were careful not to give large estates to their vassals in one region lest this put rebellious ideas into their heads, the Marcher Lords were given large, compact estates on the Welsh border on the understanding that they could enlarge them at the expense of the Welsh and their own Norman neighbours. The subjugation of Wales in such a manner took over two hundred years to complete and determined the character of the region. Even after the Welsh surrender the Marcher families retained their exceptional semi-independent status and, while the more peaceful parts of England were abandoning feudal values as the Middle Ages drew to a close, the nobles on the border remained warlike, restless and quarrelsome and eagerly participated in baronial revolts. Significantly, the Handymans of *Blott on the Landscape* got their estates in 1472, amidst a bloody dynastic dispute known as the Wars of the Roses.

A similar situation prevailed on the Scottish border. Remote and lawless, the Border region was a site of frequent warfare and mutual raiding for the Scots and English until long after the Union of the Crowns in 1603. "The King's writ didn't run in the Middle Marches until well into the seventeenth century and some say, later. It would have taken a brave law officer to come into these wild parts much before 1700," explains old Mr Flawse to his new wife from the South of England in *The Throwback* (T 45). The Flawses' own family record contains both saints and sinners whose true cast of mind is wonderfully revealed by the episode with Headman Flawse, a private executioner to the Duke of Durham in the fourteenth century who had "when his time came to lay his own head on the block, gallantly offered to sharpen the axe for his successor, a gesture so generous that it had been granted: to the extinction of the new headman, fifteen bodyguards, twenty-five bystanders and the Duke himself, all of whom lay headless while Headman Flawse put his expertise to private use and escaped on the Duke's own charger to spend his days as an outlaw among the mosstroopers of Redesdale." (T 88) Such an indomitable will and a refusal to yield even against overwhelming odds, coupled with level-headed practicality, has sustained the family through centu-

ries. It is unthinkable for a Flawse to flinch in the face of adversity and the creed they adhere to is raw individualism. "The Flawse might, and indeed, had been thieves and robbers, cut-throats and mosstroopers, even saints and bishops, but whatever their calling they had laughed the devil to scorn and made a mockery of misfortune, and their religion had been less Christian than that of personal honour." (T 90)

The Petrefacts of *Ancestral Vices* have long since left their ancestral seat in the Heart of England to seek their fortunes in other parts of the world. A family of eccentrics and monomaniacs, it has nevertheless managed to cling to its immense wealth with a tenacity quite atypical of the great landed families in the twentieth century. The secret of their success lies in inconspicuousness. "Our honour and, I feel sure, our strength, lie in obscurity," claims Emmelia Petrefact. This obscurity should not be taken to mean a total social eclipse. It is obscurity for the vulgar masses but not for the chosen few. "[T]he reputation was a means to wealth. Put a Petrefact, however penniless, anywhere on earth and he would by dint of hard work, commercial cunning and self-esteem become a wealthy man. It was irrelevant that such a Petrefact could always borrow from the family bank or, if need be, use the credit of his name elsewhere to raise capital. Without the name he would have no credit and it was her business to see that the name remained exclusively obscure. Other great families had had similar opportunities and had disappeared into both poverty and total obscurity by profligate ostentation." (AV 88) To preserve her anonymity Emmelia lives in self-imposed isolation in her mansion on the hill, with only cats and roses and a maid for company. She rarely ventures into the town below, which her family controls, and then only in her car or when taking a secret walk at night. She gets all her information about town affairs from her gossipy maid while maintaining the guise of absent-minded geniality. Her isolation is even more extreme when we consider Buscott's total isolation from the rest of Britain. Cut off climatically and geographically in the midst of moorland wilderness, its canal silted, the railway line cut off and bus companies ignoring its presence, it is a totally self-sufficient community.

The extremes of isolation are carried even further in *The Throwback*. Flawse Hall, situated in the wildest reaches of Northumbrian moorland, seventeen miles from the nearest town, is an enclave where time has stood still. The old Mr Flawse has refused to relinquish the world of his youth when Britain ruled the waves and has created a totally self-sufficient community on his estate, cut off from the modern world. He has refused to install electricity, takes in no newspapers, does not even possess a transistor radio and, having no faith in the internal combustion engine, makes his infrequent trips to the nearest town in an ancient horse-drawn brougham.

Such isolationism is clearly intentional and seems to serve two purposes. Firstly, it underlines the serene Garden of Eden-like aspect of the protagonists' lives before the intrusion of the mean Welfare State officials. Secondly, it enables Sharpe to indulge in a fantasy of revenge. By making his communities self-sufficient, he as if takes them out of the jurisdiction of the state and can thus ignore realities which under less extreme conditions would make fantasies of an inviolable retreat implausible.

The Garden of Eden aspect is present in all the three novels, with a varying degree of emphasis. It is least pronounced in *Ancestral Vices* because the book's main concerns lie elsewhere, but is clearly outlined in *Blott on the Landscape* and *The Throwback*.

Emmelia Petrefact in *Ancestral Vices* lives the life of a genteel countrywoman. Hers is an elegant Regency mansion, set amid very English landscaped grounds with herbaceous borders and flowering shrubbery and the inevitable conservatory gleaming along one side of the house. Her unperturbed existence centres on her cats and her garden which she tends to herself. The town her New House presides over is prosperous and cheerful. Having refused to share the fate of similar mill towns elsewhere in Britain, it is thriving, its Mill working, its cottages brightly painted, its businesses doing well and its people content with their lives. And all this despite the fact that the Petrefacts own ninety per cent of the housing, all the shops and directly employ more than half of the town's population. Determinedly eluding classification as a pov-

erty trap, it equally determinedly shuns politics and trade unionism and invariably votes Tory out of a long habit.

While Buscott's natural setting is quite unremarkable, that of Handyman Hall in *Blott on the Landscape* is renowned for its untamed beauty. The Cleene Forest and Gorge in which it stands are designated areas of natural beauty, one of the last pockets of virgin woodland left in Britain. To Dundridge, an executive from London, a trip to the house seems a journey backwards in time. Leaving behind Worford, an archaic market town which the Handyman family controls, he enters an alarmingly undomesticated territory, with none of that "neatness he found so reassuring in Middlesex" (B 65). A moss-grown road leads him through dark woods to the Gorge. He gets out of the car and looks down at the house: "Below him the Cleene tumbled between cliffs overgrown with brambles, ivy and creepers. Ahead lay Handyman Hall. It stood, an amalgam in stone and brick, timber and tile and turret, a monument to all that was most eclectic and least attractive in English architecture. /.../ Ruskin and Morris, Gilbert Scott, Vanburgh, Inigo Jones and Wren to name but a few had all lent their influence to a building that combined the utility of a water-tower with the homeliness of Wormwood Scrubs (a well-known London prison — P. R.). Around it lay a few acres of parkland, a wall, and beyond the wall a circle of hills, heavily wooded. Over the whole scene there lay a sense of isolation. Somewhere to the west there were presumably towns and houses, shops and buses, but to Dundridge it seemed that he was standing on the very edge of civilization if not actually beyond it." (B 65)

This raw primordial aspect is even more pronounced in *The Throwback*. Lost to the outside world amid the windswept hills and empty moors of wildest Northumbria, Flawse Hall wears "the air of deliberate containment" (T 44). No concession to modernity has been made. Taking in no gas or electricity, the mansion gets its fuel from a private coal mine, its food from its own garden and its flocks of sheep roaming the hills. Though wearing the imprint of many periods, the heart of the house — its stone-flagged kitchen — resolutely retains its medieval air. Inside the walls is a miniature replica of the landscaped gardens of the south, with a

few stunted trees, gravelled walks and a fountain but its incongruity only underlines the granite resolution of the house and the countryside out of which it grows. Unappealing to outsiders, looking too much like “Dartmoor Prison in a miniature way” (T 44), like Handyman Hall, for its inhabitants it is a retreat from the hostile and alien world outside its walls. Significantly, the old Mr Flawse has refused to pay taxes for the last fifty years and has not allowed his grandson to leave the house to go to school, or his birth to be officially registered. While his own name still figures in the tax register, his grandson does not even exist in the eyes of the world.

The timeless serenity of these communities is broken by an unwelcome intrusion from outside. Like in the original Garden of Eden, where Satan/Serpent tempted Eve and thus destroyed the idyll, havoc in these paradisaal communities is played by an evil outsider, unappreciative of the community’s values, or by a family member turned traitor.

The latter is the case in *Ancestral Vices*. Ronald Petrefact, out of a deep loathing for his entire family, and his own offspring in particular, recruits an extreme left wing radical, a Professor Yapp from Kloone University, to write a merciless exposé of his family. An egomaniac with a temper to match, whose smile is habitually described as “serpentine” or “reptilian” (AV 5, 31), out of a perverse sense of power wants to see his family members squirm with embarrassment when the protective veil of obscurity is torn from them and all their manias and dirty secrets become public knowledge. By sending Yapp to Buscott to research the family archives for his book, he hopes to stir up a hornet’s nest at the very centre of his family’s empire. Yet even he is unprepared for the extent of scandal to hit his family should Yapp succeed. His disinherited son Frederick has meanwhile converted the unprofitable textile mill into a sex-aid operation, its produce euphemistically known as “ethnic clothing”. The town’s cheerful and innocent-looking prosperity is thus built on catering for the extreme forms of human sexual depravity. Yapp has to be stopped at all costs.

In *The Throwback* and *Blott on the Landscape* it is the outsiders who set the train of events into motion.

When the ninety-year-old but still sexually voracious Mr Flawse in *The Throwback* wants to get rid of his bastard grandson and gain a maximum fleshly benefit from the transaction himself, he marries the boy to the only daughter of an upstart widow out to marry an old and decrepit rich man herself. The double marriage having taken place, the old Mr Flawse takes his new wife to his bleak and comfortless Northumbrian estate. The extent of her miscalculation dawning on her, the new Mrs Flawse demands the immediate updating of the house. To punish her for her refusal to grant him any more sexual favours until the modern conveniences have been installed, and out of sheer malice, Mr Flawse persuades her to stay on with a promise to leave her everything in his will. She is eventually cheated out of this inheritance by a clause in the new will by which everything will revert to Lockhart, the bastard grandson, should he find his father whose identity had so far remained a mystery. Her efforts to hasten the old man's demise in order to take possession of the house before Lockhart's father is identified, spurs the young man into decisive action. The old man and the age-old lifestyle at the Hall must be preserved until he can come into his inheritance.

Maud Handyman of Handyman Hall in *Blott on the Landscape* has sold herself to an unscrupulous man out of a sense of duty. Being the last in a line going back five hundred years, she has set her mind on producing an heir. At thirty-five, big and ungainly, she had accepted Giles Lynchwood, a City speculator, for whom her position and estate meant social acceptance and opened a way into Parliament. Now, after six years of sexless marriage, for Giles had failed in his husbandly duties, she is running out of time. In return for marriage she had sold him her estate on the condition that it would revert back to her should he die without giving her an heir or should misconduct on his part lead to divorce. Giles' firm refusal to even think of sex with her, his utter lack of sense of duty before her ancestors, sets her thinking about getting rid of him. But should she initiate divorce or beget an illegitimate child, the Hall would remain legally Giles'. Giles, in his turn, fearing the exposure of his perverted sexual habits in the divorce court and the loss of public reputation this would entail, hits upon a plan of having a

motorway built through the estate. He would get rid of Maud and the Hall and the compulsory purchase order would bring in a nice compensation from the state. While Maud in desperation is tapping his phone in the hope of finding compromising material about his sexual escapades in London, Giles sets in motion the complicated bureaucratic machinery of the state to destroy her home. Faced with the inanity and corruption of the representatives of state, Maud has to resort to unorthodox methods to preserve her inheritance.

The world our protagonists encounter outside the protective walls of their homes retains little of the old values according to which they have been raised. These values are essentially Victorian, centring on doing one's duty and preserving one's honour. Uprightness, dignity, a sense of personal worth and a refusal to flinch in the face of adversity, qualities which come naturally to them, are hard to find in the modern world where it is "all slipshod and cover-up" (T 64). These are Lockhart's sentiments when he compares the uncomplicated values of his youth, when, gun in hand, he roamed the open moorlands of his estate, and his experiences of working as a clerk in London. In the north if you "aimed at a grouse it was hit or miss and miss was as good as a mile" (*ibid.*). Or "if you built a dry-stone wall it stood or fell and in falling proved you wrong" (*ibid.*). At his late father-in-law's firm in the south there is no room for such simple equations. Here the rule is tax evasion, or as his superior Mr Treyer prefers to put it, Income and Asset Protection. "Ask Mr Treyer a question and the answer he gave was no answer at all; it was a balance sheet. On one side there were debits, on the other credits. You paid your money and took your choice" (*ibid.*). At first he had been baffled by what he saw. Having failed to grasp how a prosperous architect, who made 80,000 pounds a year, paid 1,758 pounds in income tax, while poor Mrs Ponsonby, earning only 6,315.32 had to shell out 2,472, and having in his simplistic way caused havoc with company records and loyal clients, he was given a separate office with an express order not to do anything by way of work until the firm could relieve itself of his presence. As he is driving north to take his young wife to Flawse Hall, his disgust for the south grows with

every mile that takes him away from London and his detestable life there. It is not his world: "He was being paid not to work and other men who did not work were making fortunes out of buying and selling options on cocoa yet to be harvested or copper still unmined. And having made their money by swapping pieces of paper they had it taken away from them by Income Tax officials or had to lie to keep it. Finally there was the Government which in his simple way he had always thought was elected to govern and to maintain the value of the currency. Instead it spent more money than was in the Exchequer and borrowed to make good the deficit. If a man did that he would go bankrupt and rightly so. But governments could borrow, beg, steal or simply print more money and there was no one to say them Nay. To Lockhart's arithmetical mind the world he had encountered was one of lunacy where two and two made five, or even eleven, and nothing added up to a true figure. It was not a world for him, with all its lying hypocrisy. "Better a thief than a beggar," he thought and drove on." (T 64-65)

This hypocritical modern state employs officials who are singular in more senses than one. Though employed in different capacities, they share a number of common features. Not surprisingly, the society that relies so heavily on planning produces individuals with a peculiar cast of mind. Their most striking feature is their extraordinary fondness for computation.

Dundridge, the troubleshooter in *Blott on the Landscape*, is a numeration fanatic. In order to bring a reassuring sense of order into the generally chaotic nature of existence, he has subjected his private world to a rigorous system of numeration: "Everything he possessed was numbered and marked on a chart above his bed. His socks for instance were 01/7, the 01 referring to Dundridge himself and the 7 to the socks and they were to be found in the top drawer left (1) of his chest of drawers 23 against the wall 4 of his bedroom 3. By referring to the chart and looking for 01/7/1/23/4/3 he could locate them almost immediately" (B 47). He travels to work by tube, this in his opinion being the only rational way to travel: "Seated in the train he was able to concentrate on essentials and find some sense of order in the world above by studying the diagram of the Northern Line on the wall opposite. Far above him was

chaos. Streets, houses, shops, blocks of flats, bridges, cars, people, a welter of disparate and perverse phenomena which defied easy categorization. By looking at the diagram he could forget that confusion. Chalk Farm followed Belsize Park and was itself followed by Camden Town in a perfectly logical sequence so that he knew exactly where he was and where he was going. Then again, the diagram showed all the stations as equidistant from their neighbours and while he knew that in fact they weren't, the schematic arrangement suggested that they should be. If Dundridge had had anything to do with it they would have been. His life had been spent in pursuit of order, an abstract order that would have supplanted the perplexities of experience" (B 46).

Professor Walden Yapp in *Ancestral Vices* is an even bigger train and computation fanatic. Having been raised by his religious aunt on the grim diet of the Bible and *Encyclopedia Britannica*, lest his morals should be corrupted, he had amused himself by reading the old railway timetables that had belonged to his grandfather and which constituted the only other reading matter in the house. This removed him even further from the society of normal children and gave him a peculiar cast of mind: "While other boys experienced the disorientation of puberty, Walden was discovering how best to get from Euston to King's Cross by way of Peterborough, Crewe, Glasgow and Aberdeen, the best way in his view being that which was the most complicated. The fact that half the stations no longer existed and that lines had been axed was of no importance. It was enough to know that in 1908 he could have travelled the length and breadth of Britain without once having to enquire the time or destination of the next train at any booking office. Better still to lie in bed at night and visualize the effect of altering the points at three strategic junctions at exactly the same moment. According to his calculations it would have been possible to bring the entire network of the LMS, the LNER and the Great Western Railway to a catastrophic halt. It was here, in these extraordinary compounds of useless knowledge with valueless mathematical and spatial computations, that Walden Yapp's brilliant future was born. Of reality he knew nothing" (AV 15).

While Dundridge is simply a non-descript lower middle class official, Yapp has an impeccable socialist pedigree. Elaborating on Yapp's "model" social background gives Sharpe an opportunity to mock the Labour Party, from the beginning the driving engine behind the Welfare State.

Yapp's grandfather, who "had dropped dead on the march from Jarrow" (AV 13) was one of those desperate shipbuilders from the north who in the 1930s marched to London to draw the rich southerners' attention to the hunger and unemployment in Britain's industrial regions. Such marches during the Great Depression had left a lasting impression on the public's mind and had been a powerful argument in favour of planned economy in the 1940s.

Another stock ingredient of the socialist movement, the Spanish Civil War, is introduced through Yapp's mother, the Red Beth, the "perfect" Labour MP. In her teens she had run away to Spain to serve as a part-time waitress in the International Brigade on the republican side. Here her colourful career took off. Having been "captured, raped and consigned to a nunnery by Franco's troops", she makes her escape, travels "as an itinerant leper through Seville to Gibraltar" where she is refused entry "as a health hazard". Her subsequent attempt to swim to freedom results in her accidentally being "picked up by a Soviet troopship and transported to Lenin-grad" which secures her reputation as an extreme left-winger. Her Soviet-inspired pacifist activities during the early years of the war, when she denounced the government "as capitalist warmongers", and her total change of policy when the Soviet Union entered the war, when she used her "histrionic gifts to exhort factory workers to defeat Hitler and to elect a Labour Government at the next General Election", had opened a way to a safe Labour seat in Parliament after the war. Here she "had represented Mid Shields with an extremism so unmitigated by practicality that she had never sullied her reputation by being offered a post in Government". Instead, in a characteristically Labour way, "she had gone from strength to strength reviling the leaders of her own party for class treachery and the rank and file of all others as downright capitalists, while ensuring that Walden received the best education invective could by" (All quotes AV 14).

Following in her footsteps Walden had secured for himself an equally unblemished "reputation for unthinking radicalism and indeed for unthinking thought" (AV 16). His peculiar gifts and quite literally encyclopedic knowledge, coupled with an unwavering dedication to the workers' cause, were just the right ingredients for a brilliant academic career to be made in the new concrete universities of the Sixties. His second book *Syphilis: An Instrument of Class Warfare in the 19th Century* and his reputation "as the most harrowing chronicler of the horrors endured by the English Working Person in the post-Industrial Revolution since G. D. H. Cole and even Thomson" (radical 20th-century British historians — P. R.) (ibid.) had in due time led to his election to the Professorship of Demotic Historiography at Kloone University. Not only were his activities restricted to the academe. To popularize his brand of demographic history, he had written several TV plays "on the domestic agonies of Victorian Britain" which, besides causing "more than one viewer to vomit", had "helped to make the name of Walden Yapp and keep that of Kloone University before the disgusted public" (ibid.). Moreover, "governments, anxious to appear impartial in the war to the national death waged between management and unions" (ibid.) employed him as an arbitrator in prolonged strikes. Yapp's intervention, always firmly pro-union, after intense and interminable negotiations "had resulted in the need to nationalize several previously profitable companies" (AV 17) and confirmed the right-wingers' suspicion that he was "an agent of the Kremlin" (ibid.).

Yapp and Dundridge are "singular" also as far as their sex lives are concerned. Boring and unimaginative individuals, with negligible social skills and no experience of the opposite sex, their lives are shaken and changed when they step outside the bounds of theory and meet a real woman in the flesh.

When Yapp comes to Buscott and looks for accommodation in a boarding-house or B&B on the principle that "only the rich and reps stayed in hotels" (AV 85), he is directed to the Coppetts on Rabbitry Road. After the initial disappointment occasioned by Buscott being a prosperous and thriving market town, Rabbitry Road is a pleasant surprise. Squalid and rundown, it is precisely the

kind of deprived proletarian neighbourhood he had come to find. Yet the Coppett household is to provide a few shocks even to his sensibilities rigorously trained to cope with the inexorable inequality under capitalism. Rosie Coppett, a large and homely housewife, has a mental deficiency only matched by her husband's physical one, he being a diminutive dwarf who works as a tripe carver at the local abattoir. Appalled at what he perceives to be the extremes of social deprivation, Yapp makes the mistake of other well-meaning state officials who have tried to run the Coppetts' lives for them. A series of misplaced gestures of kindness towards the Coppetts ultimately brings about Yapp's arrest and imprisonment.

Actually the seemingly mismatched couple is perfectly happy with their lives. Far from being underprivileged, Willy thoroughly enjoys his social status as Buscott's only dwarf and Rosie is fully contented to keep a spotless house and cook for Willy the tripe he brings home from work. Their peace is occasionally disturbed by the Health Inspector who comes to check whether Willy would not be better off in a home for the handicapped but invariably leaves with positive impressions. More damage though is caused by the ill-advised visit of the Marriage Counsellor who tries to instil in the uncomprehending Rosie a proper feminist sense of sexual grievance. Misunderstanding their situation, she urges Rosie to exercise her rights to regular orgasms by having an extra-marital affair. Mistaking Yapp's working-class solidarity for sexual interest, Rosie thus feels called for to offer Yapp some "extras". Yapp, aroused by her clumsy efforts at hospitality, is overcome by a mindless physical passion for the first time in his life. Unable to withstand his feelings and Rosie's insistence, he takes her for a drive in and around Buscott without a second thought as to how this generous gesture might be interpreted by others. The proximity of Rosie's abundant, if mindless, charms and her loud kiss of thanks is too much for Yapp's inexperience and brings along an urgent need to change his underpants. Leaving behind a bewildered Rosie and several interested neighbours, he drives off into the countryside to find a quiet spot to make himself decent again. The traffic on the road being too dense for his purposes, he climbs over a gate into a

field and seeks shelter in a coppice. While he is divesting himself of his Y-fronts rain comes on.

Meanwhile Willy, who has been following Yapp on Frederick Petrefact's orders, is drunkenly making his way home when he is hit by a tractor. The driver hides his mangled body in the boot of Yapp's deserted car. The rain over, Yapp makes his way back to town, having firmly resolved to leave Buscott as soon as possible in order not to break up the marriage of such underprivileged persons. His departure being delayed for several days due to a flu, he quietly steals away one morning leaving behind a generous gift of money for Rosie with a fond but highly ambiguous note. Discovering his fastly decomposing fellow passenger later in the day, he thinks he has been framed by the Petrefacts in order to silence him. Having during his career repeatedly denounced the police as "the fuzz on the face of fascism" (AV 138) he can count little on their sympathy. In a blind panic he drops Willy's body in a river and drives back to his university. All evidence and his own frank account of what happened point to a crime of passion and with the same unthinking efficiency which had sustained his own belief in progress and rational government, he is tried and sentenced to life imprisonment for Willy's murder.

The news of Yapp's arrest comes as a great relief to the Petrefact family gathering at the New House. To Emmelia's disgust other family members had been ready to cooperate with Yapp on his book. She had taken them on a tour of the Mill and the atrocities manufactured there had convinced them that the loss of their cherished obscurity was a small price to pay to avoid an even bigger scandal. Illusions about her family shattered, Emmelia is forced to recognize the streak of ancestral brutality in her own nature. Convinced of Yapp's innocence, she determines to redress the wrong done to him by the establishment and indirectly by her own family. Only thus can she restore family honour, at least in her own eyes.

Realizing that the real murderer will never come forward with his story, she sets about directing suspicion away from Yapp by impersonating a male dwarfist at night, accosting and harassing female dwarves in the district. Her strategy works, though not

without peril to herself. An amateur and mock criminal that she is, she leaves behind clues to her identity and it is ultimately her family's influence that saves her from prosecution. Yapp is released for good conduct, much against his will. The ordered nature of prison life, its egalitarianism and predictability have provided the perfect answer to his social needs. Thrust out of its protective walls, he seeks shelter in the anonymous regularity of his computer data bases. If programmed properly, they could finally provide some rational explanation to the things that have happened to him. Emmelia returns to her cats and her roses.

Dundridge's and Lady Maud's paths cross when he is appointed troubleshooter Motorways Midlands to pacify the local feeling about the proposed motorway through Cleene Gorge. By the time he arrives on the scene Maud has almost exhausted all the legal means of stopping the motorway. She has been the driving force behind the committee for the preservation of the Gorge which has drawn up petitions, organized protest meetings, raised money, printed posters. To mask his initiatory role in the motorway project, her husband Giles, as MP, has used his influence to set up an Enquiry into the matter, hoping for a favourable outcome for himself. It is common knowledge, and as Dundridge's superior tells him: "Enquiries, Royal Commissions and Boards of Arbitration are only set up to make recommendations that concur with decisions already taken by experts" (B 49). They and the alternative routes are only red herrings designed to divert public attention. Realizing this Maud has used the occasion to get maximum publicity out of the hearing. Her arrest and undue police brutality in the courtroom and her subsequent dramatic passage across the street to the police station, faithfully recorded by TV cameras, followed by a riot in town in her support, has alarmed the government. Dundridge is sent in to save the Ministry of Environment's face.

Dundridge's career at the Ministry had been marked by a series of notoriously impractical initiatives which sounded good but would have proved disastrous if put to the test. He has thus been "carried upward by an ineluctable wave of inefficiency and the need to save the public the practical consequences of his latest idea", until he has reached "that rarefied zone of administration

where, thanks to the inertia of subordinates, his projects c[an] never be implemented" (B 46). Now, swelling with an unaccustomed sense of authority, he is determined to grab this chance to finally make a name for himself.

Charmed by Maud's determined efforts to humour him during an interview at the Hall, he comes up with a typically impracticable alternative to the motorway, a tunnel beneath the Cleene Forest. Alarmed at this, Giles determines to neutralize him by blackmail. As a result Dundridge, whose sexual experience has so far been restricted to fantasies, is picked up by a gorgeous female at the club. When he wakes up next morning in a lay-by on the London road, he is about to undergo a transformation from a nincompoop into a man of serious, if misplaced, resolution. Glossy photos of unspeakable sexual acts between himself and an unidentifiable hooded woman tell him how he has spent the night. A threatening phone call demanding a thousand pounds convinces him that he has been framed.

Meanwhile, inspired by his sexual interest, Maud has decided to make him the father of her child. Her clumsy and misguided attempt to seduce him over dinner at the Hall frightens him into thinking that she is a raving nymphomaniac. To avenge her for his fright and humiliation he decides to put the route through the Gorge. When Maud discovers copies of the compromising photos in Giles' safe and wants to talk to Dundridge about her husband's attempt to blackmail him, he misconstrues the situation and thinks Maud to be behind it. This adds considerably to his zeal to attack the Hall at once.

Unaware of Dundridge's suspicions, Maud meanwhile has to deal with her own concerning Giles. His uncharacteristic good humour and various incidents related to the motorway make her realize that Giles is behind the whole thing, that he is selling her home in the only way legally available to him. She had sold herself to the man she despises to preserve the house and the family and he had broken their contract by conceiving the idea of a motorway that would destroy everything she held dear. Maud feels the blood of ancestors stirring in her veins. She would sell herself to the devil if need be to destroy him and stop the motorway.

She decides to turn the estate into a Wildlife Park. A number of great houses after the war had done that to survive and besides the British might demolish houses and evict families who lived there but they would take a firm stand on preventing cruelty to animals. With the fencing of the park under way, Maud travels to London with Blott the gardener to come to terms with Giles. Trailing him they discover his mistress's address and make a deal with her. Then from his flat Blott impersonating Giles orders the latter's stockbrokers to sell all his stocks and transfer the money to his and Maud's joint account in Worford. They then confront Giles in his mistress's flat where, interrupted in his favourite sexual game of bondage and flagellation, he is in no position to refuse signing divorce papers and unwittingly also share transfer certificates. He is also to use his influence to stop the construction of the motorway within a month or the pictures Blott had taken of him bound and gagged would reach the Prime Minister, his fellow MPs and the press. He is never to set foot on Maud's property again.

Desperate now, Giles tries to stop the motorway but it is too late. Dundridge's men are rapidly advancing into the Gorge and the compulsory purchase order has been sent to the Hall. Suffering from delusions of grandeur, he has given the whole operation of moving into the Gorge a military character and his mania is worsened by the news that Lady Maud is about to open a Wildlife Park.

With Giles's money the fencing is finished in record time and wild animals are installed. Blott likes the fence. It shuts out the world and brings back happy memories of the war and his own arrival in England. An orphan of unknown parentage, he had been found in the Ladies Room in the Dresden railway station. Though classified in Hitler's Germany as an Aryan, his hook-nosed, dark looks and short stature seemed rather to indicate a Jewish origin. When he had been assigned to the crew of an Italian bomber in the war, he had taken the opportunity to emigrate. The sole survivor of a plane crash in North Wales, he had been discovered naked in the wreckage and taken for an Italian. He had been happy not to reveal his real origins and his indifference to the war and reluctance to escape from the prison camp had confirmed his credentials as a true Italian. In 1942 the camp had been moved to Handyman Hall

and it became Blott's first real home. It was paradise: "He lived in a great house, he had a park to walk in, a river to fish in, a kitchen garden to grow things in, and the run of an idyllic countryside full of woods and hills and fair women whose husbands were away fighting to save the world from people like Blott" (B 25). His only fear was that the Germans might win the war. It seemed all too probable, given the astonishing inefficiency of the British. To guard himself against such an eventuality Blott had, during his nocturnal roamings of the countryside, assembled a small arsenal from weapons filched from the unguarded ammunition dump nearby and buried it in the forest. Should the question of his repatriation arise under German occupation, he was ready to fight a private guerilla war. In the end it had not been necessary. His loyalty to the Handymans and his skill as a gardener had paid off and he had been allowed to stay on.

His living quarters were the Lodge, the gatehouse the shape of a triumphal arch above the main entrance to the park. Here he had assembled a sizeable library of second-hand books, all on English history. Intensely curious about the country of his adoption, he had immersed himself in the romance of the past of the nation he revered above all others. To be English "was the supreme virtue" (B 25) and if "the secret of being an Englishman was to be found anywhere it was to be found /.../ in the past" (B 76). The Handymans and the Hall were the epitome of Englishness for Blott and when he fell in love with Maud he endowed her with the virtues of the Virgin Queen. Worshipping his loved one from afar and conscious of the immense social gulf between them, he romantically dreams of "changed circumstances, of Lady Maud in in peril, an act of heroism on his part that would reveal his true feelings for her and bring them together in love and happiness" (B 85).

Delighted by Maud's request to help unmask Giles, he has been practising upper class accent while tapping Giles' phone. Not knowing who he really is he has been trying on other people's personalities to fill the void, "the nothing that was essential Blott" (B 25). His next step on the road to becoming a true Englishman is when Maud fits him out with proper gentlemanly clothing, down to

a bowler, when he accompanies her to London. When they return to the Hall, he has been taken fully into Maud's confidence.

With Dundridge advancing rapidly into the Gorge, Blott decides to take matters into his own hands. When his tactics of moving Dundridge's mobile headquarters about the countryside at night and altering the positions of the pegs that mark the route to direct it off course fail to bring desired results, he decides to disgrace the whole enterprise by giving it some negative publicity. He takes over one of the Handyman pubs for a night and serving the extra-strong Handyman beer liberally tempered with vodka he gets the construction workers into a nicely belligerent mood, especially one bulldozer driver whose ability to demolish a house at one blow he constantly puts in doubt. Eager to prove his expertise and egged on by Blott, he takes his bulldozer to the village and smashes two cottages, one vacant but the other still occupied by an eminent Rotarian and his wife. Their drunken progress through the High Street pitifully wrecks what had until then been a well-preserved 18th-century village, a historical monument. The resultant public outcry nevertheless proves insufficient to stop the motorway.

Meanwhile Giles in London, fearing for his political career, has decided to get rid of Maud, the incriminating pictures and the Hall at one blow, by burning it down. Though forbidden by Maud to set foot on her property again, he sneaks back to the Hall one night. Maud catches him in the act of trying to set the house on fire and the enormity of this latest betrayal seals his fate. A great believer in the law of the jungle, he is shut out of the house and left to fend for himself in the fenced-in park where hungry lions prowl. He tries to plead with Blott to let him drive away but Blott is unmoved by his offer of money: "Sir Giles meant nothing to him. He was like the pests in the garden, the slugs or the greenfly. No that wasn't true. He was worse. He was a traitor to the England that Blott revered, the old England, the upstanding England, the England that had carved out an Empire by foolhardiness and accident, the England that had built this garden and planted the great oaks and elms not for its own immediate satisfaction but for the future. What had Sir Giles done for the future? Nothing. He had desecrated the past and betrayed the future. He deserved to die" (B 193). Maud, not at

heart a cruel person, almost wavers in her resolution to leave him to the lions but by then it is too late.

Shaken by Giles's death and the results of Blott's initiatives in the village, Maud closes the Wildlife Park and warns Blott to stay within the law and not endanger life. She had fought fire with fire to preserve everything she loved but the violence involved had degraded her. Henceforth Blott is free to act but without her knowledge.

Now that the zoo is gone, nothing stops Dundridge from attacking the Hall. The recent adverse events have only increased his paranoid resolve. But the only way to get to the Hall is through a narrow passage in the cliffs obstructed by Blott's Lodge. He has to be evicted first. And Blott is prepared to meet him.

An Englishman's home is his castle and Blott turns the Lodge into a veritable fortress. He fills the ground floor rooms with concrete, covers the roof with sharpened rods and barbed wire, secures an independent water supply from the river and stores enough food, gas and candles to withstand a prolonged siege. Knowing the British would never endanger life, they would not demolish the Lodge or dynamite the surrounding cliffs without getting him out first. The authorities would try to negotiate with him and all in vain. He had seen the sort of well-meaning persons on television: "Social workers, psychiatrists, priests and policemen, all of them imbued with an invincible faith in the possibility of compromise. They would argue and cajole /.../ and do their best to make him see the error of his ways and they would fail, fail hopelessly because their assumptions were all wrong. They would assume he was Italian whereas he wasn't. They would think he was acting on instructions or that he was simply being loyal, whereas he was in love. They would think a compromise was possible ... With a motorway? Blott smiled to himself at the stupidity of the idea. The motorway would either go through the Park and Handyman Hall or it wouldn't. Nothing they could tell him would alter the fact. But above all the people who came to talk to him would be city-dwellers for whom talk was currency and words were coins. An Englishman's word is his bond, Blott thought, but then he had never had much time for stocks and shares. "Word merchants" old

Lord Handyman had called such people, with contempt in his voice, and Blott agreed with him. Well they could talk themselves blue in the face but they wouldn't shift him. Everything that he cared for and loved and was lay in the Park and the Garden and the Hall. Handyman Hall. And Blott was the Handyman. He would die rather than give up the right to be needed" (B 222–223).

The police and motorway people having been unable to persuade Blott to leave the Lodge, Dundridge secures the cooperation of the army. Using mountaineering equipment the commandos assault the Lodge in the darkness of the night but are beaten back by Blott pouring cooking oil down the walls and blinding the climbers with the flash of his camera. When the military are in retreat, Blott climbs down and completes their attack with machine-gun fire and the anti-tank missile he had retrieved from his ammunition dump in the forest. By morning he is famous. The police, newspapers and TV summoned by Maud are appalled by the undue violence used by the army to evict a peaceful Italian gardener in an idyllic corner of rural England.

Dundridge is sacked by the Ministry, arrested and charged with "being party to a conspiracy to commit a breach of the peace, attempted murder, malicious damage to property and obstruction of the police in the course of their duty" (B 234). Despite his protests that he is innocent he is advised to plead guilty, is convicted and sent to prison. Like Yapp, he finds prison life entirely to his taste. What appeals to him most is that he has a number, 58295. He spends his time cataloguing the prison library.

The motorway is discontinued and life at Handyman Hall resumes its regular course. Giles's seat in parliament being vacant, Maud uses her influence to have Blott elected the new member for South Worfordshire. She then has Blott's name changed to Handyman and marries him. The couple's first priority is to produce an heir to carry on the Handyman line. And Blott is himself at last, "the possessor of a new past and a perfect present" (B 237). With loyalty and courage, like Maud's ancestors of yore, he had turned himself from a mere, anonymous blot on the landscape into a man of consequence. And best of all, he was now "an Englishman whose family had lived in the Gorge for five hundred years and if

Blott had anything to do with it would be living there still five hundred years hence" (ib.).

While Blott is happy with his new identity, Lockhart Flawse in *The Throwback* has to come to terms with his lack of one. Having lost his job at Sandicott and Partner, he tries to get help from the Labour Exchange and the Social security office. At both he is rejected for lack of any means of identification. Having no passport or birth certificate, having never paid any National Insurance stamps, never voted or held a health card, he is a bureaucratic non-entity. Having done nothing for the state, the state is unwilling to do anything for him.

Without income and any legal means of getting one, he is inspired by a chance remark from his wife Jessica ("I don't see why we have to obey a law which hurts us when the Government won't obey a law which helps us") (T 80) to go outside the law. The only way to get money is to sell Jessica's property.

Jessica's father, the late Mr Sandicott, had left his daughter twelve substantial suburban residences in the Sandicott Crescent little knowing that the Welfare State in the form of the Rent Act and Capital Gains Tax would nullify his provisions for his daughter's future. Expensive as the houses are to keep, their sale will be even more unprofitable, most of the money going to the Exchequer in tax. Besides the tenants have long leases, are in good health and pay fixed rents with no legal possibility of evicting them. Contemplating this deadlock Lockhart feels something dark and devious stirring in his mind, a long-forgotten instinct of the hunt and with it "a barbarity and anger that knew nothing of the law or the social conventions of civilization" (T 81). He decides to make life hell for the tenants so that they would leave of their own accord.

With the brutality and cunning which would have done any of his Flawse ancestor proud, he manages to raise such havoc in the erstwhile quiet residential area that even the most hard-headed tenants are finally forced to vacate the houses and they can be sold. As money is pouring into Jessica's bank account, Lockhart earns a modest million himself by a devious libel suit against Jessica's employer, a popular novelist. Now financially independent, Lockhart plans a permanent move to the north. His ancestry is pulling

him back to where he belongs: "Every so often he would find himself breaking out into song, strange songs of blood and battle and feuds over cattle which were as surprising to him as they were out of place in Sandicott Crescent and seemed to spring spontaneously from some inner source beyond his comprehension. Words reverberated in his head and increasingly he found himself speaking aloud a barely intelligible dialect that bore but little resemblance even to the broadest brogue of the North Tyne. And rhyme came with the words and behind it all a wild music swirled like the wind haunting the chimney on a stormy night. There was no compassion in that music, no pity or mercy, any more than there was in the wind or other natural phenomena, only harsh and naked beauty which took him by force out of the real world in which he moved into another world in which he had his being" (T 162).

He is as yet unaware of who his paternal ancestors may be but the need to find a father becomes really pressing when the old Mr Flawse has a fall and is about to die. Summoned to the Hall by Mr Dodd, the old servant, he comes up with a plan to keep up appearances of the old man still being alive by taping his semi-delirious ramblings and when he has passed away by having him stuffed and wired for sound by an Italian taxidermist from Manchester. When Mrs Flawse discovers that she is actually a widow and can lay claim to her husband's property, Lockhart hastily claims the taxidermist as his father, securing his cooperation with a promise of a rich reward. All legal procedures concerning Lockhart's father having been taken care of, there remains only the part of old Mr Flawse's will which stipulates that should the father of the bastard ever be found, he should be flogged to within an inch of his life as punishment. This is the last straw for the Italian already unnerved by the bizarre circumstances of his latest commission. He dies of heart failure and is buried as Lockhart's grandfather as the latter can no longer be fitted into a coffin.

Back in the south Lockhart withdraws his money and Jessica's from the bank in untraceable one-pound notes, much to the annoyance of Jessica's bank manager who reports the strange transaction to the Inland Revenue officer in London, thus foiling Lockhart's attempt to disappear without a trace. As the young couple pack

their bags and move north, they are pursued by a Mr Mirkin, Senior Collector Supertax Division for the evasion of paying Capital Gains Tax on the profits of selling Jessica's houses. As Lockhart has no intention of paying income tax on his estate or Death Duties either, he and Mr Dodd make preparations to meet the taxmen should they want to seize the house and everything in it.

A new coarseness has become manifest in Lockhart's manner and speech. Now truly the head of the Flawse family, he feels free to give rein to the moss trooper stirring in his soul. With the new ruthlessness comes a new way of speaking. His grandfather's educated accents fall away and are replaced by Mr Dodd's lilting dialect. He also takes to reciting ferocious ballads to the tune of Mr Dodd's Northumbrian pipes, poetry "as harsh and unflinchingly tragic in its view of life as it was gay in the face of death" (T 203).

The Flawse estate borders on the army firing range and into this Mr Dodd had lured the greedy Mrs Flawse. Her death as a result of successful target practice of the Royal Artillery gives Lockhart an idea how to protect his home. So while the tax and Customs and Excise men prepare for an assault on the Hall, Lockhart and Mr Dodd are busy wiring the countryside. The attack is planned for the night as Mr Mirkin's experience of a daytime visit to the Hall has landed him in hospital, Mr Dodd having opened the sluice gates of the dam, almost drowning him and his car. As the Excise men steal across the moor accompanied by the indefatigable Mr Mirkin in a wheelchair a terrible din breaks out around them. A thousand loudspeakers hidden in the moss and bracken bombard them with shell- and machine-gun fire, bombs, screams and a high-pitched whistle so that the sheep and bullocks grazing on the hills and the Flawse hounds go mad. Deafened and trampled on by maddened animals the representatives of the state rush back to their cars, leaving behind Mr Mirkin who, having lost his crutches, had the misfortune of falling and landing on a large loudspeaker which transforms the Senior Collector of Taxes of the Inland Revenue "into a sort of semi-human tuning fork" (T 213). Having lost his hearing, his mind and control over his body the parts of which keep vibrating at different frequencies, he is committed to a mental hospital where he becomes a mere anonymous digit "in the most padded and soundless of cells"

(T 220). Other tax collectors, deaf and shaken, feel no inclination to visit Flawse Hall again and blame the army for neglecting to inform them that they had been entering an artillery range.

Life at the Hall resumes its quiet pace. Modern conveniences are installed in preparation for the baby and the considerably mellowed Lockhart takes to composing poetry in his study. One day, as the gypsy had predicted, he discovers the identity of his father when composing a song. It turns out to be the loyal family servant Dodd, the embodiment of the rugged self-sufficiency of the countless generations of men who with bravery and cunning had carved out an existence in the harsh world of the moors.

"I am as much a moss trooper at heart as I am an Englishman and a man of so-called civilization" (T 190), the old Mr Flawse had boasted when elaborating on his theory that inheritance determines temperament and indeed we have seen how the strain of ancestral ruthlessness has reasserted itself in the case of three ancient families. When provoked beyond endurance, they have laid aside the veneer of idle sophistication to reveal a viciousness which has ensured their survival through centuries. We might as well give Mr Flawse the last word. "I'll not have it that ye can change a nation's or a man's character by meddling with his environment and social circumstance. We are what we are by virtue of the precedence of birth and long-established custom, that great conglomerate of our ancestral heritage congenital and practical. The two are intertwined. /.../ And what we be is all mixed up with alien blood and refugees from tyranny like a bag pudding boiled within this pot we call the British Isles. 'Twas ever thus; 'twill ever be; a ragamuffin race of scoundrels born of pirates on the run." (T 216)

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ULYSSES ON THE EMAJÕGI: READING JOYCE IN TARTU

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Notwithstanding the first component of the title of this conference, *New Britain*, my concern here will be 'old Ireland' instead, but *the Heritage of the Past and the Challenge of the Future* will suit my purpose splendidly. Well over seventy years now, this *fabulous* (please note the two main meanings of this adjective: 'celebrated in fable' and 'incredible or absurd') novel has been part of the heritage of world literature, challenging the imagination (and patience) of countless readers, and providing daily bread for innumerable professors and scholars. However loose-boundaried the notion of 'world literature', it should surely include our own, at least since the downfall of the Soviet empire, and 'our own' literature, when understood broadly, embraces translations into Estonian, as well as critical and scholarly impact of works that are still untranslated, yet which exert their influence in subtle and unpredictable ways. *Ulysses* is surely one of those. The obvious crib that I have used in the first half of the title of my paper (*Ulysses*, or in the postmodernist spirit, just Ulysses — an ambiguity that will be undone in writing — *on the Liffey*), an echo of Richard Ellmann's work, will be recognized, hopefully, by more than just a handful of listeners/readers.

The adjective *fabulous* that literally presented itself at the very beginning of this paper led me further to the noun *fable* and its meanings as a 'short story not based on fact, often with animals as characters, that conveys a moral: *Aesop's fables*,' and as 'untrue

statement(s) or account(s): *distinguish fact from fable*' (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). No one who has ever held this weighty (both heavy and important) novel in his/her hand (but most often, not having it in hand) would ever consider it short, of course, although it certainly comes in segments, originally bearing Homeric titles. (To risk sounding frivolous, one could recall a famous quote here, 'none ever wished it longer than it is', a thought that must have crossed many a reader's mind at one point or other.) As to animals, those do have a considerable role to play in *Ulysses*, as they do in *Odyssey*, both directly (consider the prolonged scene of Bloom and his cat in Chapter/Episode 4: Calypso) and symbolically (a soft-bodied black cat or panther as Bloom, or a forlorn dog — 'poor dogsbody' — as Stephen). And it certainly conveys a moral too, or, several morals, if you wish — often in a reversed manner, and the more so in retrospect. In addition, the story of publishing and bowdlerizing *Ulysses* has taught us important practical lessons, some of which are still relevant at the close of this 'moral' century. Things get more complex and complicated when it comes to *distinguishing fact from fable*, or, to put it in a more postmodernist frame, *distinguishing fact from fiction*. The awesome work of Richard Ellmann both as biographer and scholar interpreting Joyce's life and oeuvre covers this dangerous ground, as do, indeed, the books of innumerable other serious authors. In the suffocating presence of the immense scholarship of Joyce industry, how is the uninitiated reader to open this fabled book for the first time, especially if (s)he knows next to nothing about Ireland or Dublin, 'dirty and dear', being light years away from the Liffey, on the banks of the Emajõgi, of all places? I shall attempt a tentative answer.

Keeping in mind but not getting stuck in the theoretical intricacies concerning reading, be it the idea of a single or first reading ("there is no *first* reading ..." — Barthes 1990a: 16) or rereading ("...one cannot *read* a book: one can only reread it" Nabokov 1980: 3), we shall venture to open the book at the very beginning. *In the beginning was ...*"stately, plump Buck Mulligan..." (Joyce 1986: 3), not any of the three central figures, Bloom, Molly or Stephen Dedalus. It is a classical beginning in the middle, *in medias*

res, ushering in the lateral character of Mulligan whom various authors unanimously characterize in negative terms, e.g. "the spirit that always denies" (Ellmann 1986: xiii) or "the gay parasite and usurper", "Stephen's parody and grotesque shadow", and "the happy, robust, blasphemous vulgarian, a phony Greek pagan, with a wonderful memory, a lover of purple patches" (Nabokov 1980: 291). Leaving intact the ages-old tradition of talking about literary characters as if they were 'real' people to be gossiped about with neighbours (or among critics), we shall ignore the secondary or hindsight knowledge of them on this 'first' reading of this first page of ours at this point. What we cannot ignore, however, is the peritext, i.e. the overall title (*Ulysses*) and the titles (or absence of titles, as the case may be) of separate episodes or chapters. The general title being so well-known and established, there is next to no chance that even a 'chance' reader has never heard it before and would fail to notice its Homeric aura. Should it, however, come to pass, it would indeed be an ideal case of *tabula rasa* and a genuine treat for devoted theorists of reading. As to how seriously the title might colour the entire novel is highly individual and does not matter much in this context. What is essential, though, is whether or not the cover bears a modest (or insidious) subtitle of *The Corrected Text*. This immediately asserts the high quality (somewhat adjusted by Richard Ellmann in the Preface) of the Gabler edition and casts doubt upon the authenticity of various earlier editions (that, as we now can see, have (badly) needed correction). The reader, thus, can heave a sigh of relief. All correction being relative, the Gabler text, at least, has been modified in this direction. This leaves the obvious question of how seriously the Homer parallels should be taken. Here, too, we have a wide choice between the extremes: on the one hand the serious hairsplitting scholarship of the minutest possible and impossible analogies in numerous guides, companions, revised and expanded volumes of annotations, faithful following of Linati and Larbaud schemas, the eloquent evidence of the beloved Joyce quotation about keeping the professors busy for centuries arguing over what he meant and thus insuring his immortality. On the other, of course, the more sceptical

opinions most radically voiced by Nabokov in his lengthy tirade worth quoting in full:

"I must especially warn against seeing in Leopold Bloom's humdrum wanderings and minor adventures on a summer day in Dublin a close parody of the Odyssey, with the adman Bloom acting the part of Odysseus, otherwise Ulysses, man of many devices, and Bloom's adulterous wife representing chaste Penelope while Stephen Dedalus is given the part of Telemachus. That there is a vague and very general Homeric echo of the theme of wanderings in Bloom's case is obvious, as the title of the novel suggests, and there are a number of classical allusions among the many other allusions in the course of the book; but it would be a complete waste of time to look for close parallels in every character and every scene of the book. There is nothing more tedious than a protracted and sustained allegory based on a well-worn myth; and after the work had appeared in parts, Joyce promptly deleted the pseudo-Homeric titles of his chapters when he saw what scholarly and pseudo-scholarly bores were up to. Another thing. One bore, a man called Stuart Gilbert, misled by a tongue-in-cheek list compiled by Joyce himself, found in every chapter the domination of one particular organ — the ear, the eye, the stomach, etc. — but we shall ignore that dull nonsense too. All art is in a sense symbolic; but we say "stop, thief" to the critic who deliberately transforms an artist's subtle symbol into a pedant's stale allegory — a thousand and one nights into a convention of Shriners." (Nabokov 1980: 287–288)

Not questioning the achievement and contribution of the scholars mentioned above, least of all in the extravagant manner of Nabokov, one still feels drawn to the 'moral' of his utterance: respect for the autonomous nature of art, its freedom and elusiveness from 'fact' (however biographically, psychologically, historically, etc. bolstered) and, above all, its right to exist other than mere 'material' for scholarly research. In a very pronounced manner, *Ulysses* definitely belongs to the number of books that boldly as-

sert their right to be there as neverending sources of pleasure (aesthetic or otherwise, more learnedly, providing the kind of unsettling ‘bliss’ of which Barthes tells us — Barthes 1990b) not just for the cognoscenti but for ordinary fledglings as well. Which takes us closer to our main theme that I have sidetracked from: reading and enjoying Joyce in Tartu, doing so in a classroom (a somewhat disadvantageous place for experiencing bliss) with a group of young students, some of whom have not heard Joyce’s name before.

Therefore, back to “stately, plump Buck Mulligan” coming “from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed.” (Joyce 1986: 3) Before plunging into the jungle of notes and subnotes, it would be a good idea to read Joyce’s sentences aloud the way poetry is read, in order to sense their rhythm and get the music of the alternation of sounds. One could, just for the fun of it, mark the accented syllables, note the stressed monosyllabic words that add energy to the opening sentence, the recurrence of different sounds and the effect they create (the /a/ in “plump Buck Mulligan, the /r/ in from, stairhead, bearing, mirror, razor and crossed (ibid.) — and the resultant implication of sharpness that the latter evoke). The contrast between the opening sentence and the next one is quite remarkable, the latter being more peaceful in rhythm and melody, conveying a sense of mellowness (“sustained gently”, “on the mild morning air”) and ease (“a yellow dressinggown, ungirdled,” — ibid.). The third sentence, “He held the bowl aloft and intoned:” (ibid.), in which the verb “intoned” means reciting in a singing tone, has a strange pacifying, almost sleepy (this being an early morning, as it is) effect — rhythmwise. The repetition of the prefix of “**int**oned” in the Latin phrase that follows, “**Introibo**...” (ibid.) intensifies the same effect, being in sharp contrast with the abrupt and aggressive call that follows: “ — Come up, Kinch! Come up, you fearful jesuit!” (ibid.) It would perhaps not be an overstatement to suggest that it is the language itself that speaks here through the carefully chosen sound of the words, creating masterfully certain moods and shattering them in an equally masterful manner. What’s more — all this ‘information’ is simply there in the text, on the page itself, available and accessible to any reader, including the one unequipped with the

secondary sources. Of course, it is the teacher's (just another reader, though better informed and probably more experienced, yet equal in his/her standing as a reader) task or opportunity to inform the uninformed about the intricacies of the Mass, the negative liturgical connotations of colour yellow, the violation of the priestly vow of chastity through the image of the ungirdled dressinggown, a parody of the tightly girdled robe worn by the priest celebrating Mass. All this is important, yet not absolutely vital for the appreciation of the text. It may suffice to say that the whole scene is a gross mockery of the Mass, the ceremony commemorating the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ as bread and wine in the Catholic church, a gibe at Stephen, the "fearful jesuit" (although at this point, of course, the reader may not know anything about Stephen's catholic upbringing as yet, nor of Joyce's own, or his previous work, notably *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; a letter of George Moore on behalf of Joyce that turned into an anti-Irish tirade could be cited here, to show that Joyce was not alone in his anti-catholic feelings and 'blasphemy': "The Irish like priests and believe in the power of priests to forgive them their sins and to change God into a biscuit." (cited in Ellmann 1983: 406) One would surely not expect the Estonian students to be as acquainted with religious terminology and especially Catholicism as students elsewhere, especially in Ireland. Their own religious background may be very slim, Lutheran mostly, or else nonexistent. This should be kept in mind throughout the novel.

The question of names comes up at the very bottom of the opening page. Names matter a lot in this book. Malachi Mulligan ("two dactyls" *ibid.*: 4) calls both Stephen's name ("Your absurd name, an ancient Greek!" *ibid.*: 3) and his own absurd, claiming the latter to have a Hellenic ring as well. The keenness of observation, the ear for the sound and its subtle alliance with sense in characterizing Mulligan's name (one thinks of the musical talent of Joyce here) is amazing: "Tripping and sunny like the buck himself" (*ibid.*: 4), a kind of assurance that our own attempt at the very beginning of the episode was not entirely inappropriate or misleading. Mulligan's nickname for Stephen, Kinch (after *kinchin*, or child, but also "in imitation of the cutting sound of a knife" —

Ellmann 1983: 131) bespeaks the same. The minute references to ancient Greek and Christian connotations of the names are scholarly solid and admirably documented in, say, Don Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated* (1989: 14) or elsewhere, but they might easily confuse the novice (sic!) and prolong the reading process endlessly. At times, the notes exceed their neutral role by hinting at ways of interpretation as is the case in Gifford's comment on Mulligan's exclamation on p. 3: "Your absurd name, ...". After explaining the ethymologies and retelling the myths of the names *Stephen* and *Dedalus*, he goes on to assert: "As son, Stephen is Icarus (Telemachus) to Daedalus (Odysseus), the father — just as Stephen plays Hamlet, the son, through this day" (Gifford 1989: 14). The lofty mentioning of Hamlet at this early stage seems somewhat premature, the rest may be confusing, while being, undoubtedly, insightful and intellectually challenging, to say the least. Nabokov's approach to the occurrence of the name of Chrysostomos is less learned than the commentators' but not less illuminating. He asks bluntly: "But why does the name crop up? Quite simple: it is Stephen's stream of thought interrupting the description. /.../ Stephen sees Buck's gold-stopped teeth gleaming in the sun — gold, gold mouth, Mulligan the oracle, the eloquent speaker — and a brief image of the church father flits across Stephen's mind, after which the narrative is immediately resumed with Haines whistling in answer. This is pronounced a miracle by Buck who now tells God to switch off the current." (Nabokov 1980: 295) Nabokov, one recalls, is a great writer, which is to say, a great fabulist.

The special way Joyce uses language, or, perhaps, lets the language use him, is conspicuous as early as in these first pages of his novel, that otherwise are easily readable: a few puns here and there ("secondleg" for Stephen's secondhand trousers, for example, on p. 5), some unconventionally joined adjectives, foreign quotations explained in the notes, and the unsettling combination of the robustly funny with the poignantly serious. Stephen's dirty snot-green ("A new art colour for our Irish poets..." — *ibid.*) handkerchief sets off an avalanche of associations culminating in the juxtaposition of the "dull green mass of liquid" of the bay and "the green sluggish bile" in the bowl of white china at his mother's

deathbed (ibid.: 5). The bay and bowl association is reinforced in the intensely poetic passage on page 8: "A cloud began to cover the sun slowly, wholly, shadowing the bay in deeper green. It lay beneath him, a bowl of bitter waters." The musicality of the passage immediately preceding this is likewise of the highest order: "Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings, merging their twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide."

Even though there are no dim tides on the Emajõgi and its waters are lighter than the ones that gave Dublin its name, the "wavewhite wedded words" of *Ulysses* may be read and relished here as anywhere else in this world.

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SMALL JEWELS: PAUL SCOTT'S AND ARUNDHATI ROY'S INDIA

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According to Sara Suleri, ““books about India” are inevitably books about the representation of India”. (Suleri, quoted in Gorra 1997: 5) The aim of this paper is to discuss the representation of India as offered by two novels: *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966) by Paul Scott and *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy. The choice is determined by the fact that both books have recently appeared in Estonian translation. Thus it is assumed that they are likely to contribute to the image of India constructed by the reading audiences in today's Estonia. Accordingly, the final part of the paper sets out to analyse the reception of the novels in Estonia on the basis of the press coverage accompanying and following their publication.

At first sight the task of a comparative reading may seem to lead to an obvious solution: isn't a paper of the kind likely to belong to what Michael Gorra identifies as first stage in criticism on post-colonial fiction; i.e. opposing an author representing the Centre to another from the colonial margin (op. cit.: 4)? Indeed, Paul Scott has been criticized for concentrating on the English in India and, proportionally, neglecting the native Indian point of view. Patricia Waugh argues that Scott, as well as another Anglo-Indian author J. G. Farrell, “though innovatory, remained broadly within the Eurocentric paradigm, challenging but remaining situated within the consciousness of the British characters”. (Waugh 1995: 202) Criticism in the same vein comes from Salman Rushdie, who

suggests that in Scott's fiction "Indians... remain, for the most part, bit players in their own history." (Rushdie 1991: 90). Arundhati Roy, on the other contrary, would seem to give a voice to those hitherto marginalized. Not only does a native Indian get a hearing, but she also happens to be a woman — the doubly-suppressed subaltern does finally speak. This seems to support the opinion voiced by Waugh, that "since the 1980s literary attention (is) given to the problems and existence of post-colonial peoples whose histories had been subsumed by and identities forcibly generated in relation to former colonial powers" (Waugh 1995: 202).

This binary approach, however, is not shared by everyone. Michael Gorra in his work *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* claims that "the fetishization of the nation, by those on either end of the political spectrum, has meant that British writers like Scott are still too often considered either in isolation from or in some sense inevitably opposed to those whose origins lie in the countries of England's former empire." (Gorra 1997: 7). Following his approach, it seems worth while considering the novels of the two authors not so much as irrevocably opposed, but rather as a logical continuation to each other, reflecting issues concentrated round an essential central notion shared by both.

Common elements occur already on the levels of the plot and the story. It strikes the observant reader that in many aspects the novels follow the same pattern. Firstly, both operate on two time levels: the fictional present, that can be dated around the time of the works' first publication, allows for a contemplation of past events that have occurred approximately a quarter of a century earlier. In Paul Scott, in 1966 a stranger researches into the circumstances of a rape that took place in August 1942. In Roy's novel, at the beginning of the 1990s, after twenty-three years of separation, a young woman returns to her twin brother and recollection of events of 1969. Secondly, the attempts of recapturing the past that has had strong implications for the present make up the bulk of both works. Thirdly, the pasts are located in periods of political unrest, featuring colonial upheavals following Mahatma Gandhi's arrest by the British on the one hand and Marxist-Naxalite demonstrations on the other. Fourthly, in both cases the key motive is a forbidden re-

lationship in which the woman is socially superior to her partner, either because of her nationality as in Paul Scott, or caste as in Arundhaty Roy. Again, in both cases the lovers meet at a forsaken house located on the other side of the river, that has been abandoned in connection with the violent end of a cross-cultural love affair. And finally, the man involved is charged with fabricated accusations of rape that result in tragic consequences for him, although there is, in Scott's words, "no trial in the judicial sense" (JC 9).

As apparent already from the prolonged flashback span, India is not represented as a static fixed image, but is seen to undergo changes during decades, with a fair share of the emphasis laid on the political element. In a nutshell, the Victoria Road in Scott's Mayapore is renamed as Mahatma Gandhi Road. At the same time, difficulties accompanying later reconstructions of history are acknowledged; either by the use of different, at times contradictory, accounts of events rendered from different points of view as in *The Jewel in the Crown*, or by the acknowledgement of one of the characters in *The God of Small Things* that History, metaphorically described as the house of the ancestors, is out of our reach "because we've been locked out. And when we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering. And we cannot understand the whispering, because our minds have been invaded by a war." (GST 53)

The notion of the war is indeed strongly present in both novels, wars devastate the country locally, but can also ravage on the global scale, yet pass fairly unnoticed in India. Thus WWII might as well not go on as far as the British colonial establishment in Scott's novel is concerned. In the words of Daphne Manners, recently arrived from England where she was driving an ambulance in the Blitz: "Here the war has only just begun — and sometimes I'm not sure a lot of people realize that it has." (JC 107) For her, British India is still living in the 19th century, taking Hitler for a joke, because "he was a house painter and still looks like one even in uniform." (ibid.) In *The God of Small Things* that war has already reached the status of processed fiction, constituting an eagerly anticipated stock element in the success movie *The Sound of*

Music, so that children are reluctant to leave the cinema when "Nazi soldiers haven't even come". (GST 110) Yet meanwhile another war is looming nearby in Vietnam that they are as blissfully unaware of. "Further east, in a country with similar landscape (jungles, rivers, rice-fields, communists), enough bombs were being dropped to cover all of it in six inches of steel. Here, however, it was peacetime and the family in the Plymouth travelled without fear or forboding". (GST 35) Such apparent isolation in ignorance, however, does not make India an idyllic or peaceful place; rather, it remains a country, in Roy's words "poised forever between the terror of war and the horror of peace" (GST 19).

However, the war that has invaded the people of India has implications deeper than pure physical violence. It is "(a) war that we have won and lost. The very worst sort of war. A war that captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves" (GST 53), bestowing upon them the self-hating, auto-destructive identity of the native of Frantz Fanon. The people whose minds have been fashioned by Shakespeare and Walter Scott are Anglophiles, who are "pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own history, and unable to retrace their steps because their footprints had been swept away" (GST 52). Thus Anglophile, if not directly Anglicized Indians in Roy's novel acknowledge, (despite Rushdie's denial of the same), their minor part on the large stage of history where their role is likened to that of paravans, the Untouchables who in the bygone times had to move backwards and sweep away their footsteps so that people from upper castes would not defile themselves by stepping into them.

In Scott's world, Englishness is still considered an asset coveted by Duleep Kumar, a mimic man whose thoughts as well as words are articulated in conscious mimicry of the rulers. Despite his desire, the coveted quality remains unavailable even for his son Hari, brought up in Britain and educated at an exclusive public school, just because of "the little matter of the colour of the skin" (JC 72). Roy's "native" has already become conscious of the double-edged value of the presence in the mind of a longing for Englishness, as it may prove an obstacle in reaching out for the past. Still, both the

“English” Hari, who does not act according to the prescriptive norms that curb the rights of the native, and the not-English Velutha, Roy’s paravan who ignores the unwritten laws determining the rights of his caste, meet the same fate. Both novels highlight the attempts of the characters in one way or another to avoid “the Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits” (GST 3) strictly imposed upon them, that turn out to be doomed from the beginning.

Border-crossing characters need not fit the rigid system, governed by “the usual western way that says black is black, and white is white, and right is the opposite of wrong” (JC 80), as Scott’s character Lili Chatterjee puts it, through conscious action. However, the reason for their defiance of categorization may just as well lie in their being what they are. Lili’s self-description runs, “What an old mess I’m with my Rajput blood, my off-white skin, my oriental curiosity, my liking for the ways of your occidental civilization, and my funny old tongue that is only properly at home in English.” (ibid.) Beside the worst offence to the colonial system — an Indian with an upper-class English voice who *is* that English boy in his mind and behaviour like Hari, we find children born to parents from different nationalities like Roy’s Sophie Mol who can declare to the twins: “You’re both whole wogs and I’ m a half one” (GST 16), or Parvati who symbolically makes her appearance on the final pages of *The Jewel in the Crown*. The twins, although whole wogs, are in their turn “Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry” (GST 45) and, sharing each others’ dreams and sensations, do not even confirm to the usual line of distinction between separate persons.

In *The God of Small Things* the notion of hybrid states exceeds humans and expands to cover the animal world and even lifeless objects. That not recognizing boundaries is socially unacceptable is made manifest by the old dog Kubchand, who cannot make his way through the dog-flap in the door and would “push his head through it and urinate unsteadily, bright yellowly, inside”. (GST 12) Being caught between two states, performing in the one what lawfully belongs only to the other, is condemned — even banana jam that is too thin for jelly and too thick for jam is banned by the

authorities as "an ambiguous, unclassifiable consistency" (GST 30) and has to be produced illegally. In the words of Homi K. Bhabha, "The exercise of colonialist authority,..., requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred with the visible and apparent mark of power." (Bhabha 1995: 33)

Thus, it may be concluded that the core of the representations of India under discussion is their awareness of the country's multiplicity, incorrigible plurality, the hybrid nature that I have tried to capture in the title of this presentation and that defies any strict categorizations superimposed on it either from the outside, by the British colonial power, or from the inside, by the caste system and religious differences. The major importance of hybridity in colonial discourse is also emphasized by Bhabha, who remarks on it: "It is such a partial and double force that is more than mimetic but less than the symbolic, that disturbs the visibility of the colonial presence and makes the recognition of its authority problematic." (op. cit. 34)

If clear-cut binary divisions have more weight in Scott who does speak of "two nations in violent opposition" (JC 9), he still admits that these "were locked in an imperial embrace of such long standing and subtlety it was no longer possible for them to know whether they hated or loved one another or what it was that held them together and seemed to have confused the image of their separate destinies" (ibid.). And it is Scott who, according to Gorra, "explored, through his invention of the Indian Englishman Hari Kumar, a conundrum that in an age of liquid borders seems increasingly the norm". (Gorra 1997: 9) The phenomenon defined in the novel as "the left-over, the loose-end of our reign, the kind of person we created" (JC 475) will, e.g., reappear in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of the Suburbia*, a novel that is also familiar to the Estonian reader.

Rudyard Kipling's "...never the twain shall meet" does not seem to apply in *The Jewel in the Crown*, and even less in *The God of Small Things*. (Despite the fact that, Scott makes an officer in the colonial army sincerely recite *Tommy Atkins* as an incentive to

his soldiers — admittedly, though, with a touch of irony.) However, Kipling and his works are recalled in both works and not only as quoted by British officers. In the more cerebral Scott, Kipling appears as a topic for a literary discussion that involves a fine contradiction of the reader's assumed expectations — it is the English Deputy Commissioner who does not admire the author, while it is the Indian Minister for Education who, anticipating T. S. Eliot's judgment, appreciates him, although reverse opinions would seem more likely at first sight. In *The God of Small Things*, *The Jungle Book* serves as bedtime literature for the twins; under more emotional circumstances it is joyfully assimilated by the children who are ready to jump in with the lines they know by heart. "We be of same blood, ye and I" even serves as an assertion of a bond with their mother.

In addition, *The God of Small Things* also explicitly draws on another classic text from the history of colonial fiction. The one-time owner of the house where the lovers meet is "The Black Sahib. The Englishman who had gone native. Who spoke Malayalam and wore mundus. Ayemenem's own Kurtz. Ayemenem his private Heart of Darkness." (GST 52) For the children, the same house represents the metaphoric House of History. At this point it may be recalled that also Scott's MacGregor House, the neutral mixing place of the two races that is connected with the lovers' meeting-place Bibighar by "the dark currents of a human conflict" (JC 150), gives the visitor "the feeling of mounting into the past" (JC 95). The MacGregor house is a museum that can "arrest history in its turbulent progress" (JC 82).

And finally, both novels include an emphatically obvious reference to the colonial tradition: the image of the rape, in this context signalling a direct relationship to E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. The use of the image as bearing the weight of the metaphor for the colonial condition in general has already become a tradition in itself. To give another, geographically dislocated, but nevertheless topical example, it also constitutes the centre for Seamus Heaney's poem *Act of Union*.

Estonian reviewers, however, do not refer to the literary tradition incorporated in the novels, although Kipling and Conrad have

long since been available in Estonian translation. Rather, they appear at a certain loss, trying to find points of departure that would help them to relate to the texts. The case seems to be easier with Roy: her book is quickly defined as an international No 1 bestseller and as such given coverage (which is rare as single titles go) in the magazine *Luup* under the title "A Literary Bomb from India" even before its Estonian publication. This, as well as the author's visit to Estonia and the eventual Booker prize, contributes to focusing on the literary event rather than the text itself. As concerns the publisher, the interviews given in connection with the release of the title, stress, as could be expected, its status as a bestseller — and also its exoticism. To quote Editor M. Mutt, "The book will strike our reader as alien, as it differs from the style of narration familiar to us as much as the flat Estonian landscape differs from a jungle". The reader is baited with the lure of the Other, the Local Colour, which in a way is ironic when you recall the attitude of the novel towards Regional Flavour serving advertisement purposes for the Overseas Market, a mercantile tendency symbolized by the Kathakali dancer, performer of legends, "left dangling somewhere between heaven and earth" (GST 230), who becomes a Regional Flavour performing stunted short attention-span dances for foreign tourists or featuring on pickle factory billboards.

Critical reviews, however, shift the emphasis toward the notion of universal human nature. Livia Viitol's review in *Eesti Päevaleht* recognizes that the novel is wholly focused on India, but the main attention is devoted to such abstractions as Love, Good, Evil and the flux of history. Toomas Raudam in *Postimees* concentrates on the skilful linguistic accomplishment and admires the vivid sensory images. The novel's translator Anne Lange, in her commentary in *Sirp*, stresses a common human core, stating that "an author need not cling to the distinct or distinguishing. A human being, the creator of losses, is very much the same in Kerala or anywhere". Advocating the concept of universalism, however, implies treading on a dangerous ground, as it will disregard the distinctive characteristics of the particular post-colonial society. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin put it: "The assumption of universalism is a fundamental feature of the construction of colonial

power because the "universal" features of humanity are the characteristics of those who occupy positions of political dominance." Nevertheless, Estonian critics find in it an appropriate standpoint from which to relate to the novel. (The same has happened also in British reviewing, e.g., the blurb on the Flamingo paperback cover quotes a Daily Telegraph review declaring that the book "cuts through the clothes of nationality, caste and religion to reveal the bare bones of humanity".)

As becomes apparent from the press coverage, Arundhati Roy's novel is either marketed as fundamentally the Other or domesticated as an embodiment of universals. Traces of both attitudes can be noticed in a later article by Kati Murutar on two Estonian women authors that also evokes Roy. A universal characteristic, implicitly attributable to all women, namely detailed autobiographical tinkering with oneself, is foregrounded, but Roy also receives a compliment cum Otherness marker, being subject to a tentative comparison with Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

The scope of press attention paid to Paul Scott is remarkably different. There is no extensive launching programme from the publisher, no full-length reviews, at least not in major papers, just the regular brief notices in the New Books columns. The background against which the novel is introduced is Granada TV tie-in, prompted by the publisher's blurb. Why such apparent lack of interest? Even if critical attention was understandably greater in Roy's case, translations of major novels, that in the original may have appeared decades ago, fairly often deserve at least some notice. The answer may lie in the quality criticized by Waugh and Rushdie, the fact that it is mostly the British point of view that is dominating and, because of the hybrid, post-colonial nature of Estonian culture itself, makes taking a stand difficult.

The faults Estonians were charged with by the German landowners are not so different from those listed as typically attributable to Orientals by Edward Said: "gullible, devoid of "energy and initiative", ---, inveterate liars, they are "lethargic and suspicious," and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (Said, 1983: 38–39). In this century, Estonians have been wanting to be Europeans as desperately as Scott's Hari

Kumar wants to be English; at the same time, they have not been willing to abandon their national identity. After all, the slogan of the Young Estonia movement from the beginning of the century read, "Let us be Estonians, but let us become Europeans, too". Thus, it may be argued that the Estonian editor or reviewer departs from a hybrid position that she is uncomfortably reminded of when faced with a text fundamentally based on the same notion. On the one hand, the critic would like to remain a representative of the European cultural mainstream, which would mean identification with the British colonial power and the respective governing point of view of the novel. On the other hand, the historical experience does not encourage treating the colonized nation, whose situation is made explicit in the text, as the Other. Thus, the desire is undermined, but remains strong enough to prevent identification with the native.

The uncertainty as to the vantage point is likely to be one of the main factor's behind the silence surrounding Scott's novel. In Roy's case, the attendant circumstances made a reaction from the press a must. Yet the critics' overwhelming emphasis on the self-same circumstances at the expense of the novel itself, or — as newspaper reviewing does not tend to favour ambiguous positions — opting for the first horn of the dilemma presented above, does not really seem to do full justice to the novel that operates "in the penumbral shadows between two worlds, just beyond the grasp of their power". (GST 44)

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RECENT BRITISH DICTIONARIES — IN SEARCH OF NEW QUALITY

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English has become a truly global language. It is fashionable to think of it as the second global language after Latin. Be that as it may, the globalization of English is also a major challenge for all the dictionary makers, especially for the British ones. In fact, the 20th century has been largely the century of American English. British lexicographers have abandoned the idea that “‘correct’ English is spoken only in England and more particularly only in Oxford or London” (NODE 1998: XVI). The new British dictionaries have made efforts to present a balanced treatment of the two main national varieties — American English and British English. There are also signs that Australian English is increasingly regarded as the third major national variety, and it deserves an equally balanced treatment. In addition, various other native Englishes such as Canadian, Caribbean, Scots, Irish, Indian, or South African English are included. As is known, Britain is currently trying to redefine its identity and role in the world, and dictionary-making can be regarded as an area where one can already see the first fruits of the changing mentality. After all, the English language is a major intellectual resource of Britain, and the British have always done their best to use it to their advantage. The aim of my article is to give an overview of a number of recent British dictionaries and focus on the treatment of new words. Second, four new EFL dictionaries will be inspected briefly with regard to the treatment of British and American English.

Digitization, which has already changed most aspects of our life, has also changed our dictionaries. First, the corpus-based print dictionaries have reached a new quality of lexicographic description. Second, the traditional print format has been supplemented by two formats of new electronic dictionaries: 1) CD-ROM dictionaries and 2) online internet dictionaries and glossaries. The arrival of CD-ROM dictionaries opened up dramatically better possibilities to make searches, find lexical units, and group words in a number of ways that would otherwise be impossible or very time-consuming. The online internet dictionaries are also helpful in a number of ways. First, they can be updated much more easily. Second, you can get access to linguistic information that is otherwise hard to find such as new areas of specialized vocabulary.

The new era began in 1995 with the publication of four new learner's dictionaries. The *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (henceforth CIDE) was a totally new dictionary with a number of interesting innovations such as lists of false friends for 16 languages and cross-referencing between American, British, and Australian English. The third edition of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE3) introduced among other features corpus-based graphs to illustrate various usage points. The second edition of the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (COBUILD2) is a totally new dictionary — in comparison with its first edition in 1987, its Bank of English was at the time of publication ten times larger than the corpus material for the first edition and amounted to 200 million words. The fifth edition of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD5) continued the glorious traditions of its preceding editions while adding 2,300 new words and 9,000 corpus-based examples. The dictionaries claim the following number of definitions on their covers: CIDE — 100,000; LDOCE3 over 80,000; COBUILD2 — over 75,000; OALD5 — 65,000. According to the estimates of Paul Bogaards, however, LDOCE3 could actually contain more lexical units than claimed on the cover (more than 90,000; perhaps over 100,000 items), whereas COBUILD2, OALD5, and CIDE could contain between 70,000 and 75,000 lexical units (Bogaards 1996: 182).

The year 1995 saw the publication of also two CD-ROM dictionaries by COBUILD: 1) COBUILD1 together with a five-million word bank and 2) COBUILD English Collocations. The former is an excellent resource for high-school students to prepare their home assignments, whereas the latter is intended for advanced dictionary users such as English language teachers and specialists. In fact, the COBUILD collocations CD-ROM gives you a glimpse of modern lexicographic research methods. For example, if you are not familiar with the concept of *concordance* as yet, then this is the dictionary to explore (see <http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk>). All in all, the collocations CD-ROM provides up to 20 collocations for the 10,000 most frequent words, the total number of illustrative examples reaching 2.6. million. In fact, each year after 1995 has added new important dictionaries: 1996 — the CD-ROM version of *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (New SOED), 1997 — the CD-ROM version of OALD5 (with sound), 1998 — *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (NODE) and the CD-ROM version of the ninth edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (COD9), the latter is also with sound. It is clear that the new and more diverse situation takes some time to assess as to what, but it is also clear that a new standard of dictionary-using skills is expected from dictionary users. A dictionary user needs to know what to expect from the new print dictionaries, CD-ROM dictionaries, and internet dictionaries. Therefore, it is important for us to follow the new developments and to educate our students.

The state-of-the-art general dictionaries are either *corpus-based* or *corpus-driven* (the latter term is used by the COBUILD team of lexicographers, and it presumes a closer relationship between corpus material and the dictionary). The British National Corpus (100 million words) and the Bank of English (at the moment 320 million words but growing rapidly) are the most frequently mentioned large corpora, but actually each major dictionary-maker has access to a network of corpora of both written and spoken usage of English. It is true that the large British corpora focus on British English, which in its turn results in the British bias of the dictionaries. The name of the British National Corpus speaks for itself. COBUILD2 states that about 25% of its corpus focuses on American English and 5% on

the other varieties, thus remaining 70% of the corpus data have to come from British sources (COBUILD2: 1995, XII). In comparison with COBUILD2 the target percentages for the Longman/Lancaster English Language Corpus look better balanced — are 50% British, 40% American, and 10% other varieties (Summers 1993: 193). CIDE is the only dictionary to claim that its corpus covers British and American English on an equal basis (CIDE 1995: VIII). In addition, the publishers of learner's dictionaries are developing various learner corpora in order to make pedagogical generalizations for the global perspective and to identify false friends for speakers of English as a second or foreign language. As has already been mentioned, CIDE provides lists of false friends for sixteen languages. Although an innovative feature, it is clear that both Indo-European and Indo-Europeanized languages contain thousands of false friends. Stephen Coffey examined the treatment of Italian false friends in CIDE and found that many important items were missing, whereas some, which are included, are unnecessary (Coffey 1996: 387). Thus, further research is needed in this area. In recent years the communications revolution has resulted in much closer contacts between lexicographers working in various countries. Therefore, we are looking forward to more international cooperation here, which in its turn will contribute to the reliability and trustworthiness of the future editions.

What is interesting is that in order to get a good dictionary, corpus-based data have to be complemented by large banks of hand-picked citations of new words that are collected by means of reading programmes. The Oxford Reading Programme, for example, has already collected over 40 million words and is paying a lot of attention to this method of data collection. Della Summers has pointed out that reading programs provide breadth while corpora focus on depth (Summers 1996: 183). NODE claims that it provides a "detailed and comprehensive survey of plants and animals throughout the world" (NODE 1998: VII). It is obvious that the analysis of a large general corpus is of relatively little help in the preparation of entries about specialized vocabulary. Such material can be explored more efficiently by means of a targeted reading programme, which would result in a citation database.

Next we will examine how new words are reflected in a number of recent general and learner's dictionaries. Let us begin with the internet terminology, which is a characteristic feature of the vocabulary of the 1990s. Each computer-literate person is familiar with such terms as *browser*, *cyberspace*, *home page*, *millennium bug*, *mouse potato*, *netiquette*, *newsgroup*, *screen saver*, *smiley*, *super-highway*, *website*, *World Wide Web*. The inclusion of these words has become an indication whether a dictionary has stayed in touch with the new developments or not. There is strong likelihood that a potential dictionary buyer may first wish to check whether or not the *cyber-* and *web* words have been included in a new dictionary.

Table 1. Internet vocabulary in recent British dictionaries

	NODE	CIDE	COBUILD2	LDOCE3	OALD5	NewSOED	COD9
browser	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
cyberspace	+	-	+	+	-	+	+
home page	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
millennium bug	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
mouse potato	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
netiquette	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
newsgroup	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
screen saver	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
search engine	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
smiley <i>n.</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
information super-highway	+	-	+	+	-	-	+
voice mail	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
web site	+	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1 shows (see also Tables 2 and 3) that at the moment NODE is by far the most contemporary dictionary. Its coverage of new

words is far beyond any other dictionary that I am using. CIDE, COBUILD2, LDOCE3, and OALD5, which were published in 1995, are already in need of updating. The three past years have seen surprisingly important new developments, which are all reflected in language. COD9 shows somewhat better results. The New SOED, on the other hand, with its impressive 500,000 definitions is invaluable but rather conservative. Evidently it will take some time to get a new word into a dictionary of this scope. It should be pointed out, however, that the New SOED shows reasonably good results in discussing the new foreign concepts, which may look rather exotic to most people (see Table 3). A relatively recent possibility to update dictionaries is to update their web-based online versions if such exist. In the case of COBUILD, the free online version of the *Collins Cobuild Student's Dictionary* (CCSD) has a list of new online entries, which includes, for example, *browser*, *euro*, *inline skate*, *Internet*, *Java*, *virtual reality*, etc. (see <http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk>). It seems that this practice will spread in the coming years as dictionary publishers have realized that web presence is a perfect opportunity to stay in touch with their dictionary users both for feedback and education. It should also be pointed out that for a fee (currently £500 per year) you can search both the online version of COBUILD2 as well as the 56-million-word COBUILD*Direct* corpus.

As a global language, English has a large number of national varieties, and it also absorbs new words from a large number of the languages of the world. *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (1997) is far from being a collection of new British words and expressions such as *Blairism*, *Blairite*, *Britpop*, *Estuary English*, *National Lottery*, *trainspotter*, *tummelberry*, or *twoc*. Its coverage is international when it comes to reflecting the varieties of English and recording the new loanwords and translation loans from other languages. Actually, for Oxford dictionaries the process of internationalization seems to have started with the preparation of the four supplement volumes to the Oxford English Dictionary, which were published between 1972 and 1986 (see McArthur 1998: 424). As can be expected, *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* includes a large number of American words, for example, *acquaintance*

rape, *carjacking*, *dress-down Friday*, *road-kill*, and *sports bar*. African-American words include among others *diss*, *gangsta*, *nigga*, and *phat*, US and North American slang is represented by *awesome*, *dweeb*, and *rad*, etc.

Table 2. Neologisms in recent British dictionaries

	NODE	CIDE	COBUILD2	LDOCE3	OALD5	NewSOED	COD9
acquaintance							
rape	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
carjacking	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
decaf	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
dis	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
dweeb	+	-	+	-	-	+	+
Ebonics	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estuary							
English	+	-	-	+	-	-	-
ethnic							
cleansing	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
gangsta	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
ice beer	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
in-line skates	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
mommy							
track	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
phat	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
phone sex	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
road kill	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
speed bump	+	+	-	+	-	+	+
sports bar	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
trainspotter	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
trophy wife	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
twoc	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
unplugged	+	-	+	-	-	-	-

Table 2 checks the coverage of a short list of relatively new words. I included *mommy track* (1989) 'a career path that allows a mother flexible or reduced work hours but tends to slow or block

advancement' because this word was sent to me electronically as *Merriam-Webster's Word of the Day* for January 30, 1999. It seems that the word could be important enough for possible inclusion, however, no British dictionary under discussion has included it as yet. The informal British word *twoc* 'to steal a car' is an acronym from 'taken without owner's consent'. In this category, too, NODE shows its strengths, COD9 taking up the second place. OALD5, however, is more conservative than the other three. I checked the electronic version of OALD5 for this list as well, but it did not reveal any differences. On the other hand, the electronic version of OALD5 deserves my deep respect — it is clearly superior to its print edition for a number of reasons. First, it contains some 500 interactive pictures that are very useful for vocabulary learning — to work with them is real fun. These illustrations make perfectly clear what is what. The only confusing thing about them is that the words in the interactive pictures do not have labels for British and American English. Second, it is a talking dictionary, i.e. you can hear the British pronunciation of headwords from your speakers or headphones. Third, its excellent search possibilities enable you to explore English in many ways that would otherwise be impossible. Fourth, it includes a section of linguistic entertainment where you can solve crossword puzzles, guess idioms, etc. I perceive the electronic version of OALD5 as an excellent resource for self-study, be it at home or in a computer room.

Some other languages that have recently contributed words and concepts include, for example, Japanese — *anime*, *functional food*, *kaizen*, *kanban*, *karaoke*, *karoshi*, *otaku*; Russian *near-abroad*, *Pamyat*; German — *Ossi*, *traffic calming*, *Wessi*; Italian — *orzo*, *tiramisu*; American Spanish — *basuco*, *fajitas*, *taqueria*; Arabic — *fatwa*, *Hamas*, *intifada*, *Islamic Jihad*, and Chinese — *feng shui*.

As can be seen, NODE includes the full list of the selected words. As most of these words may look exotic to you, let us take a look at the definitions of the new words of Japanese origin in NODE: *anime* 'Japanese film and television animation, typically having a science-fiction theme and sometimes including violent or explicitly sexual material, *kaizen* 'a Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement of working practices, personal

efficiency, etc', *kanban* 'a Japanese manufacturing system in which the supply of components is regulated through the use of a card displaying a sequence of specifications and instructions, sent along the production line', *karoshi* '(in Japan) death caused by overwork or job-related exhaustion', *otaku* (in Japan) young people who are highly skilled in or obsessed with computer technology to the detriment of their social skills'. *Tiramisu* is the Italian word for a layered sponge cake.

Table 3. Some recent contributions from other languages

	NODE	CIDE	COBUILD2	LDOCE3	OALD5	NewSOED	COD9
anime	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
fajitas	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
functional food	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
intifada	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
kaizen	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
kanban	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
karaoke	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
karoshi	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
otaku	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
tiramisu	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
traffic calming	+	+	+	+	-	-	+

A relatively new feature of recent British dictionaries is that they provide cross-references between the two major national varieties of English — British English and American English. CIDE provides such information also for Australian English, which is, by the way, extremely instructive — sometimes Australian English coincides with British English and at other times with American English. However, as Table 4 shows, the use of national labels is often inconsistent. Evidently there is room for further improvement. On the other hand, the true picture is rather complicated, and in many cases it is not easy to draw valid conclusions. In general LDOCE3 and CIDE are more helpful and provide more cross-

Table 4. Treatment of American and British English in four learner's dictionaries

OALD5	LDOCE3	COBUILD2	CIDE
<i>Brit infml</i> bum-bag	bum bag	bum bag	<i>Br and Aus</i> bum-bag <i>Am</i> fanny pack, waist pack
<i>esp Brit</i> secateurs	<i>BrE</i> secateurs <i>AmE</i> clippers	<i>BrE</i> secateurs <i>AmE</i> pruning shears	<i>Br and Aus</i> secateurs <i>Am</i> pruning shears
potholing <i>Brit</i> caving	Caving potholing <i>AmE</i> spelunking	<i>BrE</i> potholing	<i>Br</i> potholing <i>Br and Aus</i> caving <i>Am</i> spelunking <i>Aus</i> speleology
—	<i>BrE</i> mobile library <i>AmE</i> bookmobile	—	<i>Br, Aus</i> mobile library <i>Am</i> bookmobile
roundabout merry-go-round <i>US</i> carousel <i>US</i> whirligig	<i>BrE</i> roundabout <i>AmE</i> merry-go-round <i>AmE</i> carousel whirligig	<i>BrE</i> roundabout <i>AmE</i> carousel merry-go-round	<i>Br</i> roundabout <i>EspAm</i> merry-go-round <i>Am</i> carousel
—	phonecard	—	<i>Br and Aus</i> phone-card
cellular phone	mobile phone mobile cellphone cellular phone	mobile phone mobile cellphone cellular phone	Mobile phone Mobile telephone Cellular phone <i>Br also</i> cell phone
—	—	—	Edge trimmer <i>Br tradmk</i> strimmer <i>Am tradmk</i> weed whacker
removal van	<i>BrE</i> removal van <i>AmE</i> moving van	removal van	Removal van
<i>Brit</i> roundabout <i>US</i> traffic circle	<i>BrE</i> roundabout <i>AmE</i> traffic circle	<i>BrE</i> roundabout	<i>Br and Aus</i> round-about <i>Am</i> traffic circle

OALD5	LDOCE3	COBUILD2	CIDE
<i>Brit</i> candyfloss <i>US</i> cotton candy	<i>BrE</i> candyfloss <i>AmE</i> cotton candy	<i>BrE</i> candyfloss <i>AmE</i> cotton candy	<i>Br</i> candyfloss <i>Am</i> cotton candy <i>Aus</i> fairy floss
			<i>Br</i> teacher-training college <i>Am</i> teacher's college <i>Aus</i> teachers college
cling film	<i>BrE</i> <i>trdmk</i> cling-film <i>AmE</i> plastic wrap	clingfilm, cling film	<i>Br</i> clingfilm <i>Am and Aus</i> plastic wrap
cobweb	<i>BrE</i> cobweb <i>AmE</i> spiderweb	cobweb	Cobweb Spider's web <i>Am and Aus</i> spiderweb
Plasticine	<i>BrE</i> <i>trdmk</i> plasticine <i>Trdmk</i> Play-Doh	<i>Br</i> <i>trdmk</i> Plasticine	<i>Trdmk</i> Plasticine <i>Am</i> <i>trdmk</i> Play-Doh
French window <i>US</i> also French door	French windows <i>Esp AmE</i> French doors	French window/windows French door/doors	French windows <i>Esp Am</i> French doors
<i>Brit</i> maize <i>US</i> corn	<i>BrE</i> maize <i>AmE, AustrE</i> corn <i>SafrE</i> mealie	<i>BrE</i> maize <i>AmE</i> corn	<i>BrE</i> maize <i>Am and Aus</i> corn
<i>Brit</i> paraffin (oil) <i>US</i> kerosene	<i>BrE</i> paraffin <i>AmE</i> kerosene	paraffin <i>AmE</i> kerosene	<i>EspBr</i> paraffin <i>Am and Aus</i> kerosene

references, COBUILD2 stands in the middle, and OALD5 provides the smallest number. Thomas Herbst has found that LDOCE3 and CIDE are neutral in this respect and do not show any British bias because they provide cross-references in both directions, whereas COBUILD2 and CIDE tend to refer from American English to British English (Herbst 1996: 343). NODE claims that it has more than 14,000 words and senses with geographical labels (NODE 1998: XVI). NODE, too, refers from American English to British

English but not in the other direction. For example, the entry *bumbag*, is labeled as *Brit. informal*, but it does not mention the American equivalent *fanny pack* in the dictionary, whereas *fanny pack* is defined as the *North American term for bumbag*. *Secateurs* carries the label *chiefly Brit.*, whereas *clippers* is regarded as general English and has no geographical label, *pruning shears* is missing. So, if one wishes to compile a parallel list of words for the major national varieties, one could start with LDOCE3 and CIDE and then check the information in COBUILD2, OALD5, and other dictionaries.

To conclude, the recent British dictionaries provide a lot of food for thought. No doubt, the arrival of corpus-based dictionaries means a major breakthrough in the standards of lexicographic description. We have become aware of the new search possibilities with regard to CD-ROM dictionaries, and we are using the internet both for using the online dictionaries as well as for better communication. On the other hand, it is the sign of the times that everything needs to be updated on a regular basis. It is likely that we are going to witness more interesting developments in the near future. So, what we have to do is to learn constantly in order to understand what is happening.

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THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN IRELAND: SIGNS OF AN ANCIENT CELTIC HERITAGE

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Ireland is a country with many faces. First, it is one of the British Isles and therefore sensitive to British culture. There are some obvious similarities between Britain and Ireland which are due to the long period of British rule. To bring some trivial examples: the Irish also drive on the left, drink tea and speak English. Although Ireland became an independent country in 1922 and ceased to be a member of the Commonwealth in 1949, the actual closeness of Britain still continues to play an important role in Irish life. This can be seen in the interest Irish people show in watching BBC programmes, but also in Irish economy (Britain being the closest English-speaking country and the most probable receiver of thousands of Irishmen/women in search of employment). Another growing influence is the EU which has helped to bring Ireland on the international market. Today it is a cosmopolitan country which has become more or less like other welfare states in Europe.

However, there is something in Ireland that makes it different in our modern civilisation. In addition to being one of the English-speaking countries and a competitor on all sorts of markets, Ireland is also the home of a rich Celtic culture. Today it still carries on some of the traditions which originated in Central Europe almost three thousand years ago when Rome had not been built and nobody knew anything about the Germanic tribes. Because of the changes that have taken place in the meantime Celtic culture has lost its importance and now only survives in small areas in Western

Europe such as Ireland, Wales, Scotland and Brittany in France. Irishmen, Welshmen and Scotsmen have all been strongly influenced by English culture, while Bretons are being absorbed by the French. In the present-day world language is one of the most effective ways in which the Celtic peoples can reassert their self-confidence and determine their own identity. This is probably why the Republic of Ireland has declared Irish its first official language. Even though the number of speakers of Irish is very small, efforts have been made to preserve the language at least symbolically.

On the state level, Irish is still surprisingly present. Even the modern name of the country — *Éire* — comes from the Gaelic tradition. Another poetic term which derives from the same word and denotes Ireland is Erin. The man who made the first step towards using Irish in administrative circles was Eamonn de Valera, the long-time Prime Minister and President of Ireland, who introduced a new constitution which proclaimed Irish the first official language in 1937. Though de Valera himself, like many other Irish politicians, did not speak the language, he tried to encourage its use and is known to have said that he would be ready to forget his English in order to be able to speak some Irish.

One of the most interesting things about Ireland is the absence of English words when it comes to discussing politics. As it happens, most of the political vocabulary is in Irish. Thus, the President is called *Uachtarán*, the Prime Minister *Taoiseach* and the Deputy Prime Minister *Tánaiste*. Some of these words go back to the times which have nothing to do with presidents or parliamentary debates. For instance, the Irish word for Prime Minister — *Taoiseach* — has the literal meaning of “chieftain” and reminds us rather of some gory figure from ancient Irish history than the present Prime Minister Bertie Ahern. We cannot do without Irish terminology even when talking about the work done in Parliament. This institution is known in Ireland as the *Dáil* and its members are called *Teachta Dála* (which explains why people refer to them as TDs and not MPs). The Irish Parliament also contains two famous political parties which have beautiful Gaelic names: *Fianna Fáil*, which means *Warriors of Ireland*, and *Fine Gael*, which could be translated as *Tribe of Ireland*.

The source which still yields interesting information about the country is Irish geography. Though most place-names have been anglicised, it is quite easy and sometimes even amusing to try to guess their original meaning. The most usual components used in Irish place-names seem to be *Baile* ("village") and *Cill* ("churchyard"). For example, places like Ballycastle, Ballyferriter, Ballymena and Ballynagall have all something to do with the word "village". On the other hand, Kilkenny which is the name of a town, but also known as a famous Irish beer, is connected with the words *Cill Chainnigh*, i. e. the churchyard of a man called Cainneach. The Irish name of the capital city which is popular even among its inhabitants who do not know Irish is *Baile Átha Cliath* ("Town of the Ford of the Hurdle"). Another village! In fact, even its English name Dublin is actually a borrowing, meaning "Black Pool".

In addition, Irish words are also constantly used in every-day life. Bilingualism is encouraged everywhere. Though there are not many people who speak the Irish language in Dublin, everything has been done in order to make Irish speakers comfortable. Street names and road signs are always written in both languages. In buses the exit is pointed out with helpful notices saying *ÉALÚ*. There are some situations when everyone has to use Irish words. The majority of people do it unconsciously because they are so accustomed to being surrounded by Irish expressions that they do not even notice it. They have no real difficulty with assimilating an odd word here and there, as they have been taught Irish as a compulsory subject at school. Besides, it gives them a possibility to distinguish themselves from other speakers of English. This is why a number of common institutions have Irish names. For example, the Irish Police Force is known as *An Garda Síochána* ("The Guard of Peace") or simply *Gardaí* ("Guards"). The word written on Irish police cars is also *GARDA*. Another important institution is the Television. Though most of its programmes are presented in English, it is usually called *RTÉ*. This is an abbreviation of *Raidió Telefís Éireann* ("Irish Radio and Television").

Irish names have also been adopted by many big companies. This shows the symbolical feeling Irish people still have for their culture. To bring only a few examples: *Bus Éireann* ("The Irish

Bus”), *Iarnród Éireann* (“The Irish Rail”) and *Telecom Éireann* (“Irish Telecom”). The Irish Airlines which has decorated its aeroplanes with the emblematic sign of Shamrock is called *Aer Lingus*. A very appropriate name has been given to the Tourist Office that deals with welcoming visitors to Ireland — *Bord Fáilte* (i. e. “Welcoming Board”).

Curiously, the part of Irish traditions which has survived best is associated with English. These are usually things that Hibernian English or the dialect spoken in Ireland has borrowed from Irish. There are a number of words connected with the traditional way of life which were transported into English when the Irish people adopted a new language in the 18th–19th centuries. These words often refer to something in oral literature (the most common art form at the time). One of such folkloric ideas that has spread all over the world thanks to English is banshee, meaning a woman who is seen crying near a house where someone is going to die. Banshee is derived from two Irish words, *bean* (“woman”) and *sídhe* (“fairy”) — “a fairywoman”. Two other words which occur in Irish stories are poteen and shebeen. Poteen is a very strong home-made whiskey named after the small pot in which it is prepared (*poitín* is “small pot”). Shebeen means an illegal pub where poteen is consumed. It could be a diminutive of *siopa* or “shop”, i. e. “a small shop”. For example, we could imagine a sentence: “The men went to drink poteen in a shebeen.” Besides, there are also several Irishisms that have gained popularity through Irish music. In a famous ballad called “Star of the County Down” we see the following lines: “From a boreen green came a sweet colleen”. This would probably seem very strange English to anyone who hears it for the first time. However, both words are typical in Irish usage. Boreen is another diminutive which means a lane or a narrow road (*bóithrín*). Colleen comes from the Irish word *cailín* and has the meaning of a “young girl”.

In the end, it can be said that in modern Europe where all nationalities have to deal with the danger of losing their identity the question of language and culture has become more important than ever before. This is why making full use of one’s cultural heritage is not just a way of coming to terms with one’s past, but also holds

the key to the challenging future both in Ireland and all the other countries.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO IRISH WORDS:

In Irish words the stress is always on the first syllable (even if there is a long vowel in one of the following syllables). Consonants can be either "slender" or "broad". Slender consonants are marked with an apostrophe ('). They are always palatalised. When it precedes a back vowel, a /y/ sound is added to the consonant. Consonants not followed by an apostrophe are always broad. Broad consonants are dark or velarised. When it precedes a front vowel, a /w/ sound is added. /s'/ represents the English sound "sh-". /L/ and /N/ are pronounced more intensely.

Éire /e:r'ə/

Uachtarán /u:əxtəɾɑ:N/

Tánaiste /tɑ:Nə's't'ə/

Taoiseach /ti:s'əx/

Dáil /dɑ:l'/; Teachta Dála /t'ɟ:xtə dɑ:Lə/

Fianna Fáil (in English /f'i:nə 'foil/, in Irish /f'i:nə fɑ:l'/)

Fine Gael (in English /'finə 'geil/, in Irish /f'in'ə ge:L/)

Baile /ba:l'ə/, Baile Átha Cliath /b'l'ɑ:k'l'i:ə/, stress exceptionally on /i:/

Cill /k'il'/, Cill Chainnigh /k'il' xɟN'ə/, Cainneach /kɟ:N'əx/

Éalú /e:Lu:/

An Garda Síochána /əN ga:rdə s'i:xɑ:Nə/, Gardaí /ga:rdi:/

Raidió Telefís Éireann /ra:d'o: t'el'əf'i:s' e:r'əN/

Bus /bus/, Iarnród /i:əNro:d/

Aer Lingus /e:r L'ingəs/

Bord Fáilte /baud fɑ:L't'ə/

bean sídhe /b'ɟ:N s'i:/

poitín /pot'i:N'/

siopa /s'upə/

bóithrín /bo:r'i:n'/

cailín /ka:l'i:n'/