THE ICONOLOGY OF GENDER II.

Edited by
Attila Kiss and **György E. Szőnyi**

Gendered Representations
in Cultural Practices

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The editors regret to realize, with apologies to Prof. Eva Federmayer,
that her paper accidentally has beenleft out from this collection.
As a feeble compensation we include it
in the format of an offprint,
with independent, citable page numbering.

Forums of Gender Antagonism in Literature

Dobolán Katalin

PÍCARA, PÍCARO, AND *MOLL FLANDERS*

This paper would like to reveal the presence of certain iconographic traditions in the picaresque novel.[1] Firstly, this will entail exploring the emblematic tradition related to the male and female social states and the systems of motifs connected to them. Secondly, how these elements and their configurations are varied and the role played by this process in changing the genre will be investigated. Spanish seventeenth century picaresque novels are the starting point of the analysis, but Defoe's *Moll Flanders,* a late variation of the original Spanish picaresque pattern will receive particular attention.

THE AGE OF A *PÍCARA*

A special dichotomous scheme of society as the central organising structure is asserted in the genre of the classical Spanish picaresque novel. A hero or heroine can belong to only one of two categories. Two female types can be differentiated according to the age and profession of the character – either the old pícara who practises as a matchmaker and sorceress, or the young and beautiful one who plays the whore. Parallel to this are the male types – either the aged picaro who, if he has been successful in life, lives off the proceeds earned marketing his partner's body, or the young pícaro who starts out as a servant.

Both male and female protagonists' paths through life consist of a number of iterative adventures which are in keeping with their social status. However, there is a fundamental difference between the sexes in the nature of what they are allowed to experience.

The borders confining two male picaresque types are not so hermetically closed as are those of female types. Evidence of this different permeability is recognisable in the fact that certain patterns of actions or adventure can be experienced by both young and old men, e.g. playing cards or gambling. Sometimes the young pícaro is even permitted to grow up and his old age is also described in the narrative.[2] However, the woman's roles are determined even in the underworld. The rigid delineation of the pícara does not tolerate any transition unless this be in a cited narration within the novel. The heroines never cross the border of their social state even if the context would allow them to. The narrative never goes so far as to allow a young type to become old in a natural way. She must end on the gallows beforehand.

It is clear that the picaresque novel provides a universal system of images for the pícara , but for.pícaros the situation is completely different.

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[1]   As for the definition of picaresque novel, see Guillén (1962)..

[2]   ie. Main characters of *Lazarillo de Tormes y sus fortunas y adversidades* (1553), Guzmán de Alfarachét, Mateo Alemán, *Guzmán de Alfarache* I–II (1559, 1603); Don. Alonso de Castillo Solorzano, *Adventuras de bachiller Trapaza* (1637), and *Garduña de Sevilla* (1642).

FABRICS AND PÍCARAS

Surrounding the pícara are a number of typical themes the most remarkable of which is that of fabrics.

The relationship between fabrics and women, *ab ovo* has an emblematic potency of its own. Simply naming the following figures is enough to evoke it: the Parkas, Ariadne, Penelope, Arakhne and so on. This potency is, in fact, so effective, as will be shown further on, that it is made real,and receives a visual expression.[3]

The weaving of fabric is an obvious sign of female diligence and the dress made out of it can also be a mark of social status. The context of picaresque novels deals with such marks or tokens in an ironic way. In some cases, direct reference is even made to them as, for example, in *La hija de Celestina*,[4] in which Elena boasts with her productivity and that she could fill several houses a day with the fabric she weaves.

Disregarding the picaresque modality, it can be generally noted, that dresses and disguises are signals for new adventures and since each type of adventure corresponds to a particular pícara-type, the plot will show how the pícara is to be identified and interpreted.

Celestina[5] can be regarded as the prototype of the old pícara; the fabric is for her both means to an end and end in itself or reward. It is means, as the yarn she spins is sold and in this way she can get to the girl she has chosen for her plans. Furthermore, in a metaphorical sense she also spins the girl into a net of words and when the victim is unable to defend herself, the pícara hands her over to the client. And the fabric is also a reward, because it enables Celestina to choose between a golden necklace, a gown, or a house for her work. There is a basic functional identity in these three gifts in as much as all of them are some kind of cover or shelter. Celestina chooses the ones with fabric features, namely the chain, i.e. a decorated length of yarn, and the gown. The house, the most valuable of them, is rejected.

Several old pícaras receive a piece of fabric as a gift. For example, Elena's mother in *La hija de Celestina*, whose story we get to know from Elena's narration, used to be a laundress, a very typical pícara occupation, and becomes a procuress in old age. We are also reminded of the old pícara in *Vida del gran Tacano*, a Quevedo novel,[6] who collects rags and sews them on young beggars clothes, thus creating a semblance of proper dresses. For a Celestina-type pícara the adventures and challenges are equal to other couples' love, and can be procuring, using love potions, bleaching hair and enabling it to bind hearts, and so on. In accordance, the symbol-system is mostly determined by the yarn in these cases, i.e. by the love-web, which had been spun by her. And the pícara would receive clothes in return, which means status.

The young pícara's relation to fabrics follows a similar pattern. Clothing indicates both means and reward. First of all, the clothes are considered which the pícara is wearing at the moment. Each and every item is connected with an adventure, therefore, a new affair will involve a new garment. The series may begin with a richly decorated and provoking dress; the pícara may get it for her virginity, or as a reward for her first deception as does Rufina, the main character of *Garduna de Sevilla*.[7]

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[3]   ie J. Cats, *Proteus,* fig. VIII; or *Sinne -en minnebeelden,* fig. IX,: http://www2.let.uu.nl/emblems/htmltest/c162709.html

[4]   Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo (1612), http://cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/05817282072425612040046/index.htm

[5]   Fernando de Rojas (1499)

[6]   http://cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/63690516439104209760046/index.htm;

[7]   http://cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/56438341988971274676791/index.htm

Then the series may continue with different disguises attached to the adventures until it gets to the final garment. In *Elena the Daughter of Celestina* we can find a specifically emblematic description of the hangman, who prepares the most permanent clothing of all.[8] And it also can be a variation of the witty gravedigger scene in Hamlet.

Thus, in the case of the young type, such clothes appear which are worn. These dresses are strongly associated with the fur or animal-skin which hangs down from the shoulder of the emblematic figures of Luxury, Lechery or Venus. Rufina's figure, named as the "marten" in the title of a Spanish picaresque, refers to this connection directly, and besides, it underlines the thieving features of the character. It should also be noted that Celestina lives in the tanners' street.

NORMAL SCHEME, "PUNK" SCHEME

Among those schemes relevant to the female role this twofold picaresque type is only one possibility, and it is perhaps a subsidiary one.

There is another emblematic tradition which can be found in *Corpus Hermeticum*. It presents a system in which physiological descriptions show the different ages through which a man passes. Almost needless to say, any attempt to classify the ages of women are dependent on the masculine view of them. Nevertheless , the system of defining a woman's age goes back to an even earlier period than the seventeenth century. In rudimentary form it can be perceived in Shakespeare's writings where there is a "maid-wife-widow" sequence, but there is also the outsider category of "punk" as well.[9]

This tradition, which Samuel Chew's study showed,[10] turned up systematically arranged and spread from the seventeenth century, but it had its first emblematic depictions earlier, namely, in Christoforo Bertello's book. The woman-age system is completed into six levels in the popular conduct book by Jacob Cats, the Houwelyck. The book consists of six chapters, and each of them is devoted to an age . Altogether they construct the girl-maid-bride-housewife-mother-widow sequence.

It is quite obvious that these schemes denote social states related to marriage, in harmony with the actual practice of that period. The pícara, like the "punk", adapts many of these states, although in an ironic way, i.e. seeming to be in a pseudo-status. Consequently, the young pícara often pretends to be a virgin, a bride or a wife and the old pícara can act like a pseudo-widow. To sum up, two state-schemes have been described so far: one of them is formed in conduct books, and the other appears in the picaresque. Both of them include elements concerning ages and social states.The conduct book scheme specifies the age according to the state, whereas the pícara scheme defines the state by the age.

AGE-SYSTEM IN *MOLL FLANDERS*

According to the above approach, the particularity of *Moll Flanders* is that it asserts both schemes at the same time. Moll was born as a vagabond, but her main goal was to reach a secure, and socially acceptable lifestyle. The novel makes this apparent by transferring the problem from a

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8   http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/12159405339092624198624/index.htm
9   see H. Scolnikov (2000) a study analising Jacques speech in *As you like it*, II/7
10   Samuel C. Chew 1962, 148–9 figs.; and Hall (1996), "Ages of Man"

psychological to a structural level. Thus, a fight for dominance emerges between the two schemes. In short, both models are present in Moll's life, but with certain anomalies.

Keeping the picaresque model in mind, the first anomaly is that all pícara types and sub-types are present in the narrative. The next is that all these types are sharply separated within Moll's character although, in some cases, certain combinations can be observed.

Separation can be seen in the fact that Moll receives the attributes of the corresponding pícara-types. She receives the signs of a new-born as she acquires ever newer mothers, foster-mothers and teachers,[11] and lives through various learning periods. A combination of the types can be seen when she earns money by playing the whore at the age of fifty, and her thief qualities flourish as she grows older. Later she repents in prison and will be acquitted. Compared to other pícaras, Moll's behaviour is unusual and is accented all the more since the novel contains a lot of regular pícara careers.

The anomalies of the conduct-book model are in relation to the fact that Moll can never reach the true state of a wife as she has never, neither morally nor legally, been validly married. For this reason, she cannot receive and experience the subsequent states and must become a pseudo-wife, a pseudo-widow, etc. but, in contrast to other pícaras, without any of the accompanying irony.

Moll's conversion and deportation bring a turn in this sequence and enable a new and final rebirth. When she converts in Newgate, she goes into a new world through a new gate. Then she can become a widow, a mother and a wife at the same time and can finally progress through the desired sequence, though in a reverse way.

FABRICS AND MOLL

The construct of a character passing through various stages of age common in picaresque novels is accompanied and supported by the transformation of the fabric-motif. So a new system of fabric-motifs appears in *Moll Flanders* besides the picaresque usage of them.

Moll frequently uses dresses in a typical pícara way, for instance, when she works as a cheat and a thief, the picaresque relationship operates between dresses and adventures. However, any attempt to describe Moll Flanders in terms of a traditional picaresque dress equals adventures system will again reveal certain anomalies.

First, Moll's fall is related to an embroidery-room[12] and two fine ties[13] and it is here that the relationship between a seduced woman and dresses is established.[14] Secondly, Moll meets with complete success only if she can wear the appropriate clothes. There is a close relationship between her person and the dresses she is wearing and she feels threatened when tried to wear beggar's rags or menswear.[15]

This marks a transition to the description of a new version of fabric-motifs created in *Moll Flanders* in the late version of the picaresque genre. So, I would argue, that Moll has fabrics as her personal identifier and the story of fabrics is an integral part of her own story. This play between the female identity and fabrics is realised also in visual form (see Jacob Cats, Proteo, VIII. emblem).

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[11] nurse, governess, mistress, schoolmistress, minister
[12] Defoe 1995, 23.
[13] Defoe 1995, 28.
[14] Defoe 1995, 25, 27, 32.
[15] Defoe 1995, 235, 278.

This identity game develops from the very first pages when little Moll is kidnapped by gipsies, who treat children like fabrics, i.e. they colour them. Moll is an exception and her skin remains white.[16] (Being marked has a picaresque origin and there is often a scar on the pícara's face or a brand. Moll herself managed to avoid this.)

The following significant element is the name "Moll" itself. Moll originally starts her career with the name "Betty", the name, by the way, of "Everywoman" in the novel. Betty-Moll renames herself when her second husband leaves her. This husband, who never gets divorced from her, is a tradesman-gentleman and sells fabrics. And when he escapes from his creditors, he leaves Moll some fine "holland" rolls. At this point in the novel Moll adopts the name of Mrs Flanders.[17] The semantical content of "flanders" includes either fine imported fabrics (especially lace), or lechery. According to a contemporary proverbial form, a handsome woman should be English to the neck, French to the waist, and Dutch below.[18]

So, Moll Flanders herself adopts this fabric-identifier. When Moll lives as a cheat, her success is due to the fact that her victims behave as required in the picaresque surroundings: they consider clothes as a sign of social status. Even Moll's thief-mates rename her and lend her the name "Flanders" once again , but of their own accord. When caught in the act, Moll is treated equally by both society and the underworld, i.e. everybody calls her Moll Flanders.

The name "Moll Flanders" get an unpleasant resonance beginning with her first crime, i.e. the puerperal bedclothes, and when she starts stealing fabrics and chronometers in quick succession, the fabric-Moll is becoming increasingly sullied, weary, and her time volatile. Nevertheless, Moll's repentance generates changes in the state of the fabric-Moll and in the state of Moll herself: "crossing the ocean" is a metaphor for both washing and being cleansed.

A summary of the relationship between the ages of women and fabrics and the interchange between them becomes evident in *Moll Flanders* and the picaresque treatment of fabrics in the novel.

The picaresque novel is a plot-centred genre so the *Leitmotiv* "fabric" is an identifier that appertains to the elements of plot, namely, to the adventures. The sequences of statically iterative adventures are a configuration of the static personality of the itinerant pícara who is strictly confined by her age.

In the case of Moll Flanders, a reversed development emerges. The novel presents the personal story of a conversion and this is the detail which arranges the quasi-independent adventures to form a sequence. Moll's intention to be converted is mediated by social imagery in the novel. The desire to be converted is shown in Moll's relationship to the woman's age schemes developed in conduct books and generally accepted by religious ethics. It is her most ardent wish to apply this scheme to her life.

The text achieves a connection between the structural categories inherent in the person and the plot. At the same time the motific identifier of plot elements becomes the identifiers of personality. However, if the story is the most significant aspect of the personality, then personal identifiers have to possess a temporal aspect as well. And, it does.

At this point, the importance of the fabric motifs in the transformation of the picaresque genre should be clear. The qualities which fabrics possess and which constitute the fabric-motifs made this possible. Transformable as they are, they tell a story of their own. So fabrics have far-reaching emblematic content with several points of connection. In the Spanish picaresque tradition these possibilities are also exploited and are used in many emblematic contexts as signs

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[16]   Defoe 1995, 9.
[17]   Defoe 1995, 69.
[18]   Davidoff 1953.

of isolated adventures. One, for instance, is the hangman-example mentioned above. Another is created by a parallel between the novelty of second-hand clothes and the faith of their sellers, etc.[19]

These scattered elements are ultimately collected and combined to make a consistent story. The age-scheme gives the process its direction and is then realised by co-ordinating the character with the relevant theme and motifs. Consequently, the status-sequence of "girl-maid-bride-wife-widow" is reformulated using the thematic sequence of "fabric-tailing-sewing-using-washing". In earlier picaresque novels it is more difficult to find similarly widespread themes which would allow for the creation of such sequences. So the pícaro frequently remains a static character, like Moll's husband from Lancashire, a typical pícaro who never changes his profession.

Defoe's *Moll Flanders* expertly utilises the emblematic potential of the fabric and especially those possibilities which provide religious connotations. Not only those that are connected to purification are meant here, but also the Biblical references to the lily of the fields theme and the trust in God and salvation it evokes. Moll's worries about her material survival dominate all her thoughts and actions. Only when she reaches Newgate does something like detachment overlie her disquiet and open her soul for grace.

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[19]   http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/12159405339092624198624/index.htm

Márta Gaál-Baróti

ANDROGYNIE IN NOVALIS'
HEINRICH VON OFTERDINGEN

Die Polarität des Daseins spiegelt sich u.a. in der Dualität der Geschlechter. Die männliche und die weibliche Seinskomponente sind jeweils ergänzungsbedürftig, streben dementsprechend nach Vereinigung, nach Synthese. Die Vereinigung der polaren Kräfte kann als Ehe, als Hochzeit bezeichnet werden. Die Androgynie, als "Einheit von Männlichem und Weiblichem" verstanden (Lurker 1991, 35), kann dagegen als symbolischer Hinweis auf die Vollkommenheit, auf die Ganzheit verstanden werden. Beide Varianten werden von den Theoretikern der deutschen Frühromantik als symbolischer Ausdruck für die Möglichkeit der Vervollkommnung des Menschen, bzw. der ganzen Menschheit, geschichtlich gesehen als Ausdruck für einen verlorenen mythischen und einen möglichen zukünftigen Weltzustand wahrgenommen und verwendet.

Die Geschlechtsproblematik, die vereinigende Kraft der Liebe, die Vermählung als "leiblich-seelisch-geistiges Geheimnis" (Wehr 1998, 135) stehen von Anfang an im Mittelpunkt des philosophischen wie auch poetischen Werks von Novalis. Die Androgynie – von den Frühromantikern als Anfangs- und Endpunkt dieses nach Ausgleich, nach Synthesis strebenden Spannungsverhältnisses der polaren Kräfte verstanden – wird bei Novalis weniger häufig, aber mit besonderem Symbolgehalt thematisiert.

Nikolaj Berdjajews Worte können auch für die frühromantische Auffassung von der Androgynie stehen: "Der Mythos vom Androgynen ist der einzige grosse antropologische Mythos, auf dem die antropologische Metaphysik aufgebaut werden kann." (Berdjajew: Die Bestimmung des Menschen. Deutsch zitiert nach: Wehr 1998, 102). Wir haben es nämlich in diesem Fall mit einem Menschenbild zu tun, das die Ursprungsgestalt des Menschen als geschlechtlich undifferenziert, also als männlich *und* weiblich versteht und versucht, diese "Urbildlichkeit zu vergegenwärtigen bzw. sie in Erinnerung zu halten und sie wiederherzustellen", dadurch zugleich eine "menschlich-menschheitliche Vollendung" anzustreben (Wehr 1998: 103). Somit ist die Androgynität mit dem Urbild und Zukunftsbild des Menschen verbunden. Novalis und die Frühromantiker verknüpfen mit der Idee der Androgynie die menschliche Ganzheit, nicht aber die physiologische Abnormität des Hermaphroditen. Sie bedeutet für sie die Vereinigung der Aspekte und Kräfte, die den beiden Geschlechtern eigen sind. Somit zeigt die Androgynie eine Parallelität zum Symbol des Hieros Gamos, der Heiligen Hochzeit, wobei die beiden Geschlechter nicht neutralisiert, sondern ihre Wesenheiten eher aktiviert werden.

Die Polarität Mann und Frau, Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit wird auf der Grundlage der "Wechselraepresentationslehre des Universums" (Novalis 1978, 2, 499) als Einheit und zugleich Verschiedenheit von Novalis gedeutet. In den *Vorarbeiten 1798* formuliert er:

> Die Holzkohle und Der Diamant sind Ein Stoff – und doch wie verschieden – Sollte es nicht mit dem Mann und Weib derselbe Fall seyn. Wir sind aus Thonerde – und die Frauen sind Weltaugen und Sapphyre die ebenfalls aus Thonerde bestehen. (Novalis 1978, 2, 410)

Der traditionellen Auffassung entsprechend ist "das Tonangebende" im Mann "Vernunft", dagegen im Weib "Gefühl (beide positiv)." (Novalis 1978, 2, 186) Nach der für Novalis' Denken typischen Analogiekonzeption, die eine Wesensgleichheit andeutet und eine höherführende Ver-

vollkommnung zum Ziel setzt, schätzt er im *Allgemeinen Brouillon* (1798) die Polarität als eine Gleichung ein, und definiert den Menschen mit deren Hilfe folgendermaßen:

> Die Gleichung für den Menschen ist Leib = Seele – für das Geschlechte – Mann = Weib. (Die Polarität ist eine echte Gleichung.) (Novalis 1978, 2, 704)

Als Spuren der ehemaligen Ganzheit des Menschen sind die grundlegenden Entsprechungen im inneren Wesen von Mann und Frau zu betrachten, die sich nicht nur in zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen abbilden, sondern auch die Verbindung und Aufhebung der inneren Gegensätze ermöglichen, und somit den idealen (androgynen) Menschenzustand andeuten. In den frühen *Fichte-Studien* (1795/96) finden wir die Jungs *animus-anima*-Lehre vorwegnehmende Formulierung: "Das Beywesen des Mannes ist das Hauptwesen der Frau" (Novalis 1978, 2, 186), die später im *Allgemeinen Brouillon* in folgender Variante erscheint: "Der Mann ist gewissermaßen auch Weib, so wie das Weib Mann" (Novalis 1978, 2, 495). Die Idee des Ideal-Synthetischen des Menschen, die Auffassung vom Menschen als Einheit und Dualität, als Glied eines grösßeren Ganzen und "Variation"/Individuation des Wesentlich-Einheitlichen, der "Ehe" wird in den *Vorarbeiten 1798* knapp folgendermaßen dargestellt: "Alle Menschen sind Variationen eines vollständigen Individuums, d. h. einer Ehe" (Novalis 1978, 2, 354).

Der Symbolbereich der Androgynie erstreckt sich u.a. auf erotische, mystisch-religiöse/alchemistische, tiefenpsychologische Ebenen, die oft ineinander übergehen, und auch zeitliche Dimensionen aufweisen können, indem sie die der Vergangenheit zugeschriebene ursprüngliche Ganzheit, die gegenwärtige Entzweiung und die mögliche zukünftige Vereinigung andeuten.

Das Männliche und das Weibliche, sowie ihre Beziehung zueinander erhalten in Novalis' Romanfragment *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) eine zentrale Rolle. Die Vertreter der Geschlechter treten vereinzelt auf, sie sind auf ihre Seinssphäre beschränkt. Die männliche Figur, Heinrich befindet sich am Romananfang in einer Schwellensituation des körperlich-seelisch-geistigen Reifeprozesses: Er ist weder ein Kind mehr, noch ein Erwachsener. Die Möglichkeit der Vervollkommnung bietet sich ihm durch die Vereinigung mit dem Weiblichen an, das schon immer in seinem Unbewussten vorhanden war. Erst durch die Erzählungen des Fremden über die blaue Blume wird ihm seine Mangelsituation bewusst. Die Blume als Repräsentantin der lebendigen Natur weist auf den Dynamismus des Lebens hin: Sie wächst aus der Erde (weibliches Element) heraus, strebt nach oben, in Richtung Sonne (männliches Element), verbindet (durch die Liebe) die verschiedenen Sphären, die Polaritäten miteinander und bildet einen Übergang zwischen ihnen. Somit bewirkt sie die Erneuerung des Lebens. Die Blumensymbolik ist mit der Liebe verbunden, die für Novalis als eine synthetische Kraft erscheint und somit auf die Sexualität bezogen werden kann. Auernhammer, der das Androgynie-Motiv in der europäischen Literatur untersucht hat, stellt fest, dass "Goethes Dichtung (…) an Winckelmanns Auslegung androgyner Schönheit" (Aurnhammer 1986, 164) anknüpft und sie poetisch in solchen Figuren, wie z. B. in Mignon oder im Homunculus, verwirklicht. In seiner Morphologie skizziert Goethe eine botanische Androgynie-Konzeption,[1] die insofern dynamisch erscheint, als "der Zustand der Wiedervereinigung eine qualitative Steigerung gegenüber der ursprünglichen Einheit darstellt." (Aurn-

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[1]   "…Das vertikal- sowie das spiralstrebende System sei in der lebendigen Pflanze aufs innigste verbunden; sehen wir nun hier jenes als entschieden männlich, dieses als entschieden weiblich sich erweisen: so können wir uns die ganze Vegetation von der Wurzel auf androgynisch ingeheim verbunden vostellen; worauf denn in Verfolg der Wandlungen des Wachstums die beiden Systeme sich im offenbaren Gegensatz auseinander sondern, und sich entschieden gegen einander über stellen, um sich in einem höhern Sinne wieder zu vereinigen." (Goethe 1998, 13, 148)

hammer 1986, 182) Mignon kann aus dieser Sicht als "die Gestaltung des leibgewordenen Blu-menkindes" (Aurnhammer 1986, 182) betrachtet werden.

In seiner Untersuchung des Ofterdingen-Romans hat Géza von Molnár bewiesen (Molnár 1986, 424–449), dass die Farbensymbolik des Romanfragments auf der Polarität der Farben blau – gelb beruht, die Goethe schon 1791–92 in seinen *Beiträgen zur Optik* ausgearbeitet hatte.[2] Blau ist nach Goethe eine dunkle, nächtliche, empfängliche, weibliche Farbe.[3] Als Gegenpol erscheint bei ihm die gelbe Farbe, die im Romantext mit dem wertvollsten Metall, mit dem Gold veknüpft ist. Gelb/gold ist die Farbe des Lichts, der Sonne, der Männlichkeit. Nach Goethes Vorstellung weist eine jede Polarität eine Steigerung auf. In Goethes Farbensystem streben das Blau und das Gelb zueinander und vereinen sich in der dritten reinen Farbe, im Rot. Das bedeutet eine ideelle Synthese, eine echte Beruhigung. In Novalis' Romanwelt entspricht dieser Stufe das Karfunkel-Symbol, das Florian Roder in seiner Interpretation -- als höherführende Synthese -- mit dem Motiv des Kindes verbindet. (Roder 1992, 768–770) Wir können aber zugleich hinzufügen, dass man die Kindheit als androgyne Entwicklungsphase auffassen kann, da von einem Kleinkind we-der die männlichen noch die weiblichen Wesensheiten einseitig vertreten werden.

Da manche Pflanzen ebenfalls Androgynität aufweisen,[4] sind Kinder und Pflanzen (bei No-valis Kinder und Blumen, bzw. Blüten) in ein und denselben Symbolbereich einbezogen. Im zweiten Teil des Romans finden wir folgende Formulierung:

> ...Die eigentliche Offenbarung der Kindheit (ist) die unschuldige Blumenwelt. [...] Blumen [sind] die Ebenbilder der Kinder [...] Den vollen Reichthum des unendlichen Lebens, die gewaltigen Mächte der spätern Zeit, die Herrlichkeit des Weltendes und die goldne Zukunft aller Dinge sehn wir hier noch innig in einander verschlungen, aber doch auf das deutlichste und klarste in zarter Verjüngung. Schon treibt die allmächtige Liebe, aber sie zündet noch nicht. Es ist keine verzehrende Flamme; es ist ein zerrinnender Duft und so innig die Vereinigung der zärtlichen Seelen auch ist, so ist sie doch von keiner Heftigen Bewegung und [k]einer fressenden Wuth begleitet, wie bey den Thieren. So ist die Kindheit in der Tiefe zunächst an der Erde, da hingegen die Wolken vielleicht die Erscheinungen der zweyten, höhern Kindheit, des wiedergefundenen Paradieses sind, und da-rum so wohltätig auf die Erstere herunterthauen. (Novalis 1978, 1, 377–378)

Das Element des Weiblichen, das Wasser, das im Romantext meistens als 'Flüssigkeit' vor-kommt, weist eine physische Bedeutungebene auf, wo das Bad als Reinigung, als Einweihungs-ritual, aber auch als erotisches Erlebnis erscheint. Zugleich bekommt die Flüssigkeit – der mys-tischen Tradition gemäß – eine die göttliche Weisheit vermittelnde Funktion in Form des Ge-tränks, wodurch eine geistige Erneuerung im Genießenden zustande kommt. Eine ähnliche Be-deutung kommt in der Variante vor, wo die Asche der auf dem Scheiterhaufen verbrannten Mut-ter in Sophiens Flüssigkeit aufgelöst getrunken wird, wodurch eine geistige Vereinigung mit der durch den Tod geläuterten Menschlichkeit erfolgt. So wird sowohl eine Verbindung mit der Vergangenheit hergestellt, als auch eine neue Zukunftsperspektive ermöglicht. Liebe bedeutet also nicht nur Ergänzungsbedürftigkeit durch das andere Geschlecht, sondern auch Opferbe-reitschaft. In diesem Sinne kann die Liebe mit der Religion in Verbindung gebracht werden, wie Novalis in den *Teplitzer Fragmente*n (1798) formuliert: "Ist die Umarmung nicht etwas dem Abendmahl Ähnliches"? (Novalis 1978, 2, 385).

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[2]   Goethes Farbenlehre ist erst 1810 erschienen. Novalis, der im Jahre 1801 starb, konnte sie daher nicht gelesen haben.

[3]   Goethe verleiht den Farben eine sinnlich-sittliche, aber auch eine mystische Bedeutung, indem er sie als Ausdruck der geistigen Urverhältnisse versteht. .

[4]   Aurnhammer untersucht das Androgynie-Motiv der Goethe-Zeit unter dem Aspekt der "botanischen Beglaubigung". (Aurnhammer 1986, 177– 200)

Die unterschiedlichen Ebenen der Vereinigung durch Liebe werden zum Teil im 797. Brouillon-Fragment dargestellt, in dem der Autor die gegenseitige Durchdringung der Bedeutungen stark betont:

> *Amor* ist es, der uns zusammendrückt. In allen obgedachten Functionen liegt Wollust *(Sym/pathie/)* zum Grunde. Die eigentlich wollüstige Function ist die am Meisten Mystische – die beynah Absolute oder auf *Totalitaet* d/er/ Vereinigung (Mischung) dringende – die *chymische*. (Novalis 1978, 2, 666)

Demnach können wir feststellen,
   1. dass das Körperliche/Leibliche ("wollüstige Function") von Novalis gar nicht abgelehnt, im Gegenteil, als Ausganspunkt der mystischen Erfahrung verstanden wird,
   2. dass die mystische Vereinigung mit dem Göttlichen, die *unio mystica*, die mystische oder Heilige Hochzeit – mit Roder gesprochen – "zur Erlösung des eigenen Selbst" führt (Roder 1992, 758),
   3. dass die 'chymische' Vereinigung nicht nur das Selbst, sondern auch die Welt, in der es völlig aufgeht, erlöst.[5]

Eine mystische Hochzeit begeht der Jüngling des Atlantis-Mythos sowie in der Erzählgegenwart des Romans Heinrich, der in Mathilde die Offenbarung des Göttlichen und die Vermittlung zum Transzendenten entdeckt und durch sie seine eigene Erlösung erlebt:

> Du bist die Heilige, die meine Wünsche zu Gott bringt, durch die er sich mir offenbart, durch die er mir die Fülle der Liebe kund thut. (Novalis 1978, 1, 336)

Die eigentlich mystische Begegnung geschieht in dem Menschen selbst in einer entscheidenden Phase seines Initiations- und Individuationsweges. Novalis berichtet über sein persönliches Erlebnis im Tagebuch nach dem Tod seiner Braut Folgendes:

> Indem ich glaube, daß Söffchen um mich ist, und erscheinen kann, und diesem Glauben gemäß handle, so ist sie auch um mich – und erscheint mir gewiß – gerade da, wo ich nicht vermuthe – In mir, als meine Seele vielleicht etc…und gerade dadurch wahrhaft außer mir – denn das Wahrhaft Äußre kann nur durch mich – in mir – auf mich wirken – und im entzückendsten Verhältnisse. (Novalis 1978, 1, 478)

Söffchen, Novalis' Geliebte, die als Sophia die weibliche Personifikation der göttlichen Weisheit ist, die schon im Alten Testament, in den gnostischen Lehren, sowie bei den Mystikern, besonders bei Jacob Böhme eine wesentliche Rolle spielt, erscheint auch in dem Roman *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* als eine der zentralen Figuren des Schlussmärchens des ersten Teiles. Sie kann nach Böhme als 'Natur angenommener Geist' verstanden werden. Diese weibliche Figur mit ihrem "Geist-Wässerlein" als geistiger "Ausfluß" (Böhme 1957, 4, 187) versucht im Roman nicht nur sich selbst, sowie ihre erstarrte Welt zu erlösen, sondern auch Himmel und Erde miteinander zu vermählen. Im Mondreich aber wird ihr "Geist-Wässerlein" in den Händen von Ginnistan zum Mittel der Verführung, indem sie es für den Jüngling Eros als Rauschmittel verwendet. Das ist ein Irrweg für Eros, er sucht nämlich nach dem Bad nicht mehr seine himmlische Geliebte, sondern befriedigt seine erotische Begierde. Als Frucht dieser Liebe kommt nicht das höhere

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[5]   Vgl.: "Alle Wirckung ist Übergang. Bey der Chymie geht beydes in einander verändernd über." (Novalis 1978, 2, 417) Es ist zu bemerken, dass Novalis – ähnlich wie Goethe – sich mit der alchemistischen Tradition auseinandergesetzt hat. Er hat z. B. das Werk von Andreae *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz* (1608) gelesen.
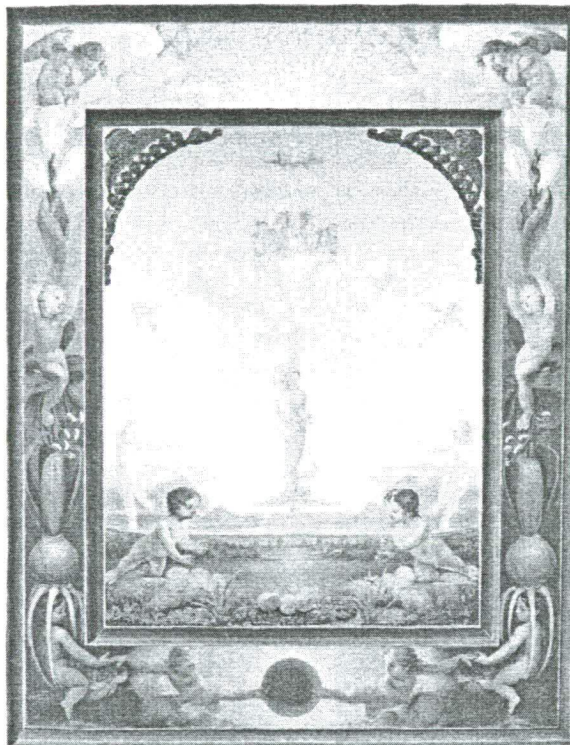
Ich, wie Astralis, zur Welt, das aus der Liebe von Heinrich und Mathilde entsteht, sondern zahlreiche beflügelte Kinder, die die Menschen quälen. Das Mondreich aber birgt nicht nur Gefahren in sich, sondern auch Möglichkeiten der Vervollkommnung werden in diesem Bereich angedeutet. Dementsprechend werden die chaotischen Szenen der Theateraufführung des traumähnlichen Schauspiels des alten Mondkönigs von einem Ordnung und Harmonie andeutenden Bild abgeschlossen, in dem Eros als Kind geschildert mit einem Mädchen in einem Blumenkelch vereint, als ein einziges androgynes Wesen seine mögliche Zukunft erblickt. Das ist eine Vorwegnahme des Hochzeitstableaus von Klingsohrs Märchen am Ende des ersten Romanteiles, wo nicht nur Eros und Freya, Süden und Norden, Erde und Himmel, sowie Sophia und Arctur sich wieder vereinigen, sondern auch die Verstorbenen (Mutter) an der Erneuerung des Lebens teilnehmen. Die neue Stufe des Lebens, sowie des Menschen und der Menschheit ist als chymische Hochzeit, als Vervollkommnung, als völlige Durchdringung der Polaritäten zu verstehen, was Vergeistigung des Leiblichen und zugleich Verleiblichung des Geistigen bedeutet. Nach dem Tode von Mathilde sollte Heinrich im zweiten Teil des Romans "von der mystischen zur chymischen Hochzeit geführt" (Roder 1992, 756) werden, indem er zuerst eine Vereinigung mit der Natur erlebt. Durch Liebes- und Todeserfahrung wird für ihn der Zugang zur Wirklichkeit der göttlichen Sophia ermöglicht. Die irdische Begegnung der Liebenden kann als Vorspiel in diesem Kontext gewertet werden, der leibliche Tod ist der Anfang, eine Möglichkeit für die Begegnung auf einer höheren Seinsebene.

Die wahre Ehe sollte nach Novalis mit Hilfe des ständigen Gebens und Nehmens, der "Hin- und Herdirection" zu der "Bildung eines Gemeinsamen, harmonischen Wesens" (Novalis 1978, 2, 488) führen. Dieses Bild des *einen* Wesens ruft die Androgynievorstellung von Novalis in Erinnerung, die in der Schlussszene der Theateraufführung im Mondreich zugleich Kennzeichen der selbst- und welterlösenden chymischen Hochzeit aufweist:

> Ein Lilienblatt bog sich über den Kelch der schwimmenden Blume. In dem Kelche lag Eros selbst, über ein schönes schlummerndes Mädchen hergebeugt, die ihn umschlungen hielt. Eine kleinere Blüthe schloß sich um beyde her, so daß sie von den Hüften an in Eine Blume verwandelt zu seyn schienen. (N 1978, 1, 348–349)

Philipp Otto Runge, der bedeutende Maler der deutschen Romantik, setzt sich intensiv mit der Kunsttheorie der romantischen Dichter auseinander. Sein Bild *Der kleine Morgen* (1806), wurde u.a. von der Symbolik des Romanfragments von Novalis stark beeinflusst.

Im Zentrum des Bildes befindet sich eine allegorische Figur der Tageszeit, die eine Symbol-pflanze des Morgens, eine weiße Lilie trägt. Die üppigen Glieder der zentralen Frauenfigur erin-nern uns an Venus, die betonte Körperlichkeit wird aber durch die verschwommenen Konturen, sowie durch die Pastellfarben zum Teil aufgehoben. Das Fleisch/die Marmorstatue wird aber durchgeistigt, die Schönheit der antiken Kunst dient als Grundlage für die Neugeburt des immer wieder eintretenden Tages. Erde und Himmel sind durch die weibliche Mittlerfigur, sowie durch die Blume miteinander verbunden, wobei die im Blumenkelch geschilderten Paare sowohl als Früchte der Liebe, als auch als Vertreter der höheren Menschlichkeit figurieren können, die die Androgyniestufe schon erreicht haben. Das Gemeinsame des himmlischen und des irdischen Bereichs ist die blaue Farbe, die das sich ständig erneuernde Leben, die Unendlichkeit in Raum und Zeit andeutet.

Die Arabesken des Rahmens haben die Funktion, eine weitere Ausführung der Idee des Bil-des zu geben. Wir können *Den kleinen Morgen* mit Günther Oesterles Begriff als "bildnerische Arabeske" bezeichnen, die aus einer "ornamentalen Randzone" und einer "bildhaften Mitte" besteht, wobei "nahtlose Übergänge zwischen diesen beiden Bildlogiken" (Oesterle 1995, 45) entstehen.

Das Arabeskenornament zeigt, wie die Polarität der Sonne und der Erde durch die Liebe, dargestellt durch die Berührung der Figuren, durch die lebenserneuernde synthetische Kraft, zu einer Einheit zusammengefügt wird. Die roten, bzw. die weißen Blüten, sowie die Wolken/En-gelfiguren stellen die Stufen der Kindheit dar, wobei eine Bewegung in Richtung 'Himmel' ange-deutet wird. Die Vertreter des himmlischen Bereichs bringen dagegen mit dem irdischen Bereich durch den nach unten gerichteten Blick eine Verbindung zustande, wobei das Kind im Zentrum des Hauptbildes nach oben blickt. Die 'Hin- und Herdirection', die gegenseitige Annäherung ermöglicht es, den Morgen als Erlösung, als Erneuerung, als Höherführung zu verstehen. Die früher erwähnten Motive des Romantextes (u.a. Blume, Wasser, Kindheit/Androgynität) können wir in der Symbolik des Bildes wiedererkennen.

Zum Schluss möchten wir aus den *Geistlichen Liedern* (1799) von Novalis einige Zeilen zitie-ren, wo die Vereinigung durch Liebe – ähnlich wie im Roman, bzw. auf Runges Bild – nicht nur im menschlichen Bereich, sondern auch in der Gott-Mensch-Beziehung zu verstehen ist:

> Wer hat des irdischen Leibes
> Hohen Sinn errathen?
> Wer kann sagen,
> Daß er das Blut versteht?
> Einst ist alles Leib,
> Ein Leib,
> In himmlischem Blute
> Schwimmt das selige Paar. (Novalis 1978, 1, 189)

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Tatjana Jukić

DANGERS OF GENDERING:
THE CASE OF PRE-RAPHAELITISM

Issues of gender and sexuality – alongside economy, politics, history and psychoanalysis (or, indeed, as their reciprocating metaphors) – have for the past several decades dominated the discourse of critical theory. When I say dominated, it entails a similar reciprocity: domination here implies that critical theory focuses on gender and sexuality, that gender and sexuality are its subjects, but it also implies that gender and sexuality bear upon the very critical discourse that aims at their representation and analysis.

Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* has provided a grand narrative supporting this structuring operation of gender and sexuality. Its three volumes have offered a critically profitable conjunction of gender, sexuality, knowledge, history, power, economy, and have, in many ways, generated a position from which to theorize the reciprocity of subject and subjection in the production of knowledge. This position, however, depends on a proposition that Foucault introduces at the very outset of his history, as its symbolic birthplace: the proposition that we, the author as well as his readers, are the "Other Victorians" (1998, 1). According to Foucault, our knowledge of sexuality and our practices of its representation derive from sexuality as known and represented by the Victorians, as its critique, negation, counterpositioning, displacement. In his words, in the Victorian era "repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know" (1998, 4). As a result, the Victorians have produced an entire system of elaborate practices having to do with sexuality – and, consequently, with gendering – that the twentieth century has inherited as its genealogy.

What is more, these Victorian practices entail a will to knowledge that produces sexuality as its subject, and is in turn subjected by it, in a profitable cycle of production, cognition and re-pression of desire. Foucault emphasizes that "the learned discourse on sex that was pronounced in the nineteenth century was imbued with age-old delusions, but also with systematic blind-nesses: a refusal to see and to understand; but further – and this is the crucial point – a refusal concerning the very thing that was brought to light and whose formulation was urgently so-licited" (1998, 55). While this seems to be the central interest of Foucault's first chapter and his first volume – indeed, the title of the first volume is *The Will to Knowledge* – it takes but one step further in the same direction to conclude that the Victorian will to knowledge, with its urgencies and blindnesses, constitutes, by implication, symbolic sediments informing the analytical pro-tocols of contemporary critical discourses, Foucault included, even in the spectacles of its ac-knowledgement, analysis or critique.[1]

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[1]   An analogous positioning – and use – of the Victorians surfaces in the fourth volume of *A History of Private Life,* a series edited by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby. Michelle Perrot, the editor of the volume, uses the Victorians as a trope of frustrated cognition, which enables her to delineate the insecure position of historiography as a discipline, entailing the institutional knowledge of the past, in an endeavor to produce a history of private life. Like Foucault, at the very outset of her history (in its symbolic birthplace), Perrot

This in turn implies that, when it comes to gender and sexuality, Victorian practices of representation aim to figure away, so to speak, interpretive procedures of their own making, and that this movement of tropes constitutes in part the genealogy of contemporary critical theory of gender and sexuality, with its obligatory slippages and transferences. In other words, analyzing the Victorians necessitates an analysis of one's own speaking position, specifically as this position refuses any stable mapping or location, and produces but another desire, blindness and urgency demanding analysis.

If the Victorian representations of gender and sexuality are thus very much theoretical, informing our own regimes of power-knowledge-pleasure, the visual and the literary production of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood has the value of their synecdoche. Conveniently, synecdoche is a trope particularly susceptible to the critical discourse that focuses on the issues of capital, profit and value on the one hand, and on the performance of repression on the other. Defined by its focus on a part of the whole that it aims to represent, while the rest of it gets repressed in its containment within the trope, synecdoche works as a repression of the represented material, in favour of the surplus value of the detail in focus. As such, synecdoche surfaces as a trope highly operable in discussions of contemporary critical theory, with its emphasis on symbolic capital and repression, but also in discussions of Victorian culture, with its own interest in profit and repression. With its obsessive interest in gender and sexuality, Pre-Raphaelitism works precisely as one such synecdoche of Victorian culture and its knowledges, specifically the ones that Foucault analyzes as sexuality-related. What is more, as a synecdoche, Pre-Raphaelitism traces not only the dilemma of sexuality and the practices of gendering that Victorian culture otherwise suppressed to the positions of invisibility, but also the symbolic profit of these procedures.[2]

THE INCEPTION

Ever since the formation of the Brotherhood, in 1848, the Pre-Raphaelites have been canvassed as painters and poets to be defined against – yet within – the prevailing notions of gender and sexuality. The practice of acute gendering, to start with, determined the act of their very naming and founding: when founded in 1848 as a community of young painters and poets, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was conceived as a community of symbolic *brethren*, therefore as an exclusively *male* society. A symbolism of maleness thus participates in the very act of conception of Pre-Raphaelitism, introducing maleness as a constituent feature of its politics and its poetics. The production of this symbolism, which organizes the conception of the Brotherhood, depends however on the reciprocal exclusion of femininity; as a result, the foregrounding of maleness underscores in fact the procedures of its production, and, therefore, its negotiability. The act of naming organizes all the subsequent Pre-Raphaelite discourses as pointedly gendered and therefore volatile and negotiable, foregrounding the issues of boundary-drawing and its instability as one of the principal interpretive interests in later analyses of Pre-Raphaelite works. Especially so since much of what is today recognized as Pre-Raphaelite was produced by women writers, painters or weavers: Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddal, Jane and May Morris. Furthermore, the boundary-drawing and the exclusion productive of gender as of an unstable category

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says that "[f]or a long time historians, like bourgeois Victorians, hesitated on the threshold of private life, held back by modesty, incompetence, and respect for a system of values according to which public figures were the heroes and makers of the only history worth recounting: the grand history of states, economies and societies" 1990, 1.

[2]   See also Jukić 2001, 995, 1002–3.

were reproduced in most other symbolic acts crucial for the establishment of the Brethren. In the act of the founding of the Brotherhood, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the founding *brother*, as it were, effectively blurred the boundary between his real and his symbolic families, by including his brother William Michael Rossetti in the Pre-Raphaelite fraternity. What was, however, fortified by this blurring of the boundary between the real and the symbolic brotherhoods was once again the exclusion of sisterhood, since Christina and Maria Rossetti, the sisters of the two Rossetti brothers, were not admitted to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, though both were writers and though both participated in the intellectual fervor of the family. The very notion of brotherhood, that is, was allowed symbolic grafts and a space of redefinition only at the expense of reinforcing the exclusion that produced it in the first place – only at the expense of defining itself against sisterhood. The exclusion of the sisters has in turn structured the paradox fundamental for any analysis of the poetry of Christina Rossetti: her poetry cannot be analytically approached without taking into account the logic of this and other subsequent exclusions, because it was produced within yet outside Pre-Raphaelitism – within yet outside a male regime of representation, or else within yet outside a social practice of structuring maleness.

The same is true of the early Pre-Raphaelite publications: as early as 1850 women writers – Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal – published their poems in *Germ*, the short-lived journal of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which in turn positioned their writing on the very boundary constituent of both the Brotherhood and its feminine outside. This, however, dynamized the boundary defining the Brotherhood in the first place, since the women writers admitted to its perimeter were, by implication, perceived as different, because women, yet – because different – as the very condition of the unifying fraternal identity of the Brethren. The constituent function of this exclusion surfaces in many an observer's comment at the time; Carolyn Hares-Stryker quotes an observer who in 1851 wrote that "[g]irls had now entered the Pre-Raphaelite circle, and the close group of young men was breaking up" (1997, 323).

This foregrounding of gender in the inception of Pre-Raphaelitism echoes finally in the critical discourses aiming at its critique, in the same way that the Foucauldian Victorians work as a genealogy of contemporary critical theory. In contemporary surveys of Pre-Raphaelitism there surfaces an anxiety to address the exclusion of women from the Brotherhood and their uneasy position on the borderline, usually either by overemphasizing the exclusion, or by a forced inclusion of the women authors in the male artistic community. Thus Jan Marsh, the author of a number of biographies and monographs of the Pre-Raphaelites, including the recent biographies of Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal, wrote, with Pamela Gerrish Nunn, a book-length study entitled *Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement*, specifying the contributions of women writers and painters to the production of Pre-Raphaelitism. Yet, though legitimizing the import of the women artists to the legacy of Pre-Raphaelitism, this book has actually reinforced the gendering at heart of Pre-Raphaelitism, because it has – instead of collapsing – reproduced the position of women as difference, against which a fantasy of a male identity and a male practice can take place.[3]

The same is true of Herbert Sussman's study of masculine poetics in early Victorian literature and art: Sussman's analysis of manhood and masculinity in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, though aiming at a deconstruction of the Pre-Raphaelite positions, actually reinstates the exclusion it addresses. Sussman maintains that at the time of its founding and into the early 1850s the Brotherhood forged "within the gendered field of early Victorian aesthetics a specifically

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[3]   Aware of the risk, Griselda Pollock, in her analysis of Elizabeth Siddal's participation in Pre-Raphaelitism, warns that "[t]he attempt ... simply to annex a woman artist to the existing canon of art history does not, indeed cannot, shift its masculinist paradigm" 1988, 97.

masculine aesthetic, creating or, in their historicist terms, re-creating a manly visual art that dif-
ferentiated manly practice from the feminine by associating art production with the work of the
male sphere, that took as its subject and its goal the regulation of male desire, and that was ener-
gized in its practice by male-male bonding" (Sussman 1995, 111). Once again, femininity gets
constructed as a difference, against which a Pre-Raphaelite fantasy of a positively male identity
and a male practice can take place, in an argument that reproduces the aggressive overstatement
of masculinity of "Brotherhood" in its own rhetorical accumulation of maleness ("masculine
aesthetic", "manly visual art", "manly practice", "male sphere", "male desire", "male-male bond-
ing").

Sensing the inadequacy of such a positioning of gender in Pre-Raphaelitism (with the Broth-
ers' too aggressive – and therefore evidently angst-ridden – foregrounding of Brotherhood),
Sussman hastens to revise it, but fails to perceive the problem in the process of gendering, locat-
ing it instead in the notion of monasticism, as a threat to the Victorian economy of male
sexuality. According to Sussman, "the name of the all-male band evoked in Dickens and other
critics another set of associations in which monastic discourse evokes not the manly, but the
unmanly" (1995: 129). While "Pre-Raphaelite", in Sussman's line of reasoning, suggests Cathol-
icism, "Brotherhood" implies "Romanist monasticism and, with a fear heightened by the revival
of Tractarian religious communities both male and female at mid-century, suggests the dangers
of *male* celibacy and *male* sexual repression in general" (1995, 129, *my emphasis*). This intrusion of
monasticism into the argument, however, itself implies a kind of analytical repression, in view
of the fact that Rossetti and other Brethren were in the late 1840s and the early 1850s teenage
painters negotiating their passage to maturity (and masculinity), and were therefore hardly in a
position to threaten the Victorian economy of male sexuality with celibacy; quite the contrary,
their early paintings were considered Romanist *and* – if anything – oversexed.[4] Sussman's own
argument thus seems to be reproducing the very repression that it seeks to analyze, because the
conceptual purity of the monastic argument that he sustains throughout his discussion of Pre-
Raphaelitism implies a repression of other positionalities on the subject. What is more, even if
one were to take into account the religious tropes of the Victorian art critics' diatribes against
early Pre-Raphaelitism as a possible thoroughfare to the rhetoric of what Sussman terms monas-
ticism, this rhetoric worked alongside an overvaluation of sexuality in the Pre-Raphaelite work,
resulting eventually in a questioning of both positions, rather than in a privileging of either. The
issues of Victorian sexual economy and the representation of sexuality, that is, call for a more
self-conscious analysis of gender and engendering which would not yield that readily to the
reproduction of various exclusions and binary oppositions that it seeks to deconstruct.

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

The bio-critical information on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is therefore only an indication
of a more complex operation of gendering at work within this specific Victorian field of vision.
Its complexity emerges most visibly in the often noted but seldom analyzed coincidence that a
Brotherhood produced a most conspicuous Victorian repository of the images of *women*. The paint-

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[4]   In 1849 William Michael Rossetti, himself a Brother and a productive art critic, comments on Dante
Gabriel Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)*, evidently anxious about the Virgin's relative nudity
and the possible sexual scandal: "[t]he Virgin is to be in bed, but without any bedclothes on" (Surtees 1971,
13). The anxiety requires an immediate – albeit inadequate – explanation: such a scandalous iconography
is, according to William Michael Rossetti, "an arrangement which may be justified in consideration of the
hot climate" of the Holy Land (Surtees 1971, 13).

ings and the poetry of the Brethren focused on female figures so consistently that women as represented by the Pre-Raphaelites soon became their trademark, a synecdoche of their poetics, entailing – within the Brotherhood – the same rhetoric of simultaneous added value and repression. One could say that, since the inception of Pre-Raphaelitism was characterized by a structuring of maleness which depended on an exclusion of women, this initial border-setting reenters the very project it defined, as an obsession with a representation of excluded / exclusive female figures. In other words, in its hyperproduction of exclusive female figures, the Brotherhood reproduced actually the very condition of its founding.

This specific configuration of the Pre-Raphaelite rhetoric too gets reproduced in the modern-day readings of Pre-Raphaelitism, this time as a conspicuous overfascination with "the Pre-Raphaelite woman", which stops short of addressing the effect of the analyst's fascination on the analytical process – in much the same way as Sussman's accumulated appellatives of maleness fold back on the aggressive maleness of the inception of the Brotherhood that the author is trying to analyze. The most evident symptom of this fascination is certainly the aggressive visibility of the Pre-Raphaelite woman in recent discussions of Pre-Raphaelitism and of Victorian culture in general. Most recent monographs on Pre-Raphaelitism feature on their covers the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of women; they thus position the Pre-Raphaelite woman as the place of access to Pre-Raphaelite visuality, further promoting her/it as the most representative sample of Pre-Raphaelitism (its synecdoche), and further adding to the operation of value-accumulation and repression within the figure. The sheer extent of this practice is symptomatic both of the overvaluation of the woman figure and of the ensuing repression of other Pre-Raphaelite visual products. Though what follows are but a few examples, the space of the argument that they fill up illustrates vividly the above performance: the cover of Alicia Craig Faxon's 1994 book on Dante Gabriel Rossetti shows his _Proserpine_ (1877), as does the cover of his 1999 biography by Jan Marsh; the cover of Ian Whiteley's 1989 _Oxford and the Pre-Raphaelites_ features the 1871 preparatory study for the same painting. The cover of Tim Barringer's 1998 _Reading the Pre-Raphaelites_ advertises Rossetti's _Beata Beatrix_ (1867–70), while the cover of Lindsay Smith's 1995 _Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry (The Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites)_ displays a photographic reworking Pre-Raphaelitism – Henry Peach Robinson's combination photograph of _The Lady of Shalott_ (1860–1). The same synecdoche provides a passageway to the modern-day processing of the rest of Victorian cultural production. Thus Millais's _Ophelia_ prefaces Isobel Armstrong's 1993 _Victorian Poetry (Poetry, Poetics and Politics)_; Millais' _The Bridesmaid_ (1851) appears on the cover of _Victorian Britain_ (1992, _The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain)_, while Arthur Hughes's girl in a purple dress of _April Love_ (1855) gets reproduced on the cover of a still wider realm – Catherine Belsey's 1994 _Desire (Love Stories in Western Culture)_. The same procedure applies to the high-profile historiographic metafiction of the past decade: A.S. Byatt's 1990 _Possession (A Romance)_ features Burne-Jones's domineering Vivien of _The Beguiling of Merlin_ (1874), the cover of Margaret Atwood's _Alias Grace_ (1996) reproduces Rossetti's 1850–65 _Head of a Girl in a Green Dress (Elizabeth Siddal)_.[5]

Many recent studies of Pre-Raphaelitism seem unable to avoid the folding over of the same rhetoric. They too work with the oversaturated visibility of the Pre-Raphaelite woman, seldom

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[5]   One should, of course, take into account the figural potential of the very concept of cover: whatever is displayed on the cover introduces and illustrates the matter that it simultaneously _covers_. A telling example here is the procedure employed by the editors of _A History of Private Life_: "a solitary woman [...] standing in a doorway leading to an English garden" of Walter Deverell's Pre-Raphaelite _A Pet_ prefaces the first section of the nineteenth-century volume of Ariès's and Duby's history, entitled – "The Curtain Rises" (Perrot 1990, 8–9).

addressing the effect of their own fascination with and capitalization of it on their analyzing.[6] When describing the work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, for instance, Camille Paglia says that "[a]s his career progressed or, some said, degenerated, Rossetti's paintings obsessively returned to a single subject, a woman of somnambulistic languor" (1991, 491). Analyzing the Rossetti woman as a case of obsessive return Paglia, however, fails to perceive – in her own history of the subject – the reproduction and the obsessive return of both the female figure and its appraisal, in which the description of the Rossetti woman operates as but a trope of Paglia's own narrative structure. J. B. Bullen's book entitled *The Pre-Raphaelite Body* traces a similar reproduction in the very organization of the analyzed material. The two central chapters (framed by the chapters on the ugly bodies of early Pre-Raphaelitism and the androgynous of Pre-Raphaelitism in the 1870s and the 1880s) focus on Rossetti's paintings of women, as if the Rossetti woman was a synecdoche of Pre-Raphaelitism, its *part pro toto*, obscuring other Pre-Raphaelite bodies. Bullen's titles and subtitles are equally oversaturated with this secondary hyperproduction of the Rossetti woman, pushing her radically to the foreground as "The Fallen Woman", "The Passionate Woman", "The Sexualized Woman", "The Woman in the Mirror". This generates a blind spot in Bullen's rhetoric, because Bullen reproduces – within his own *analysis* of the subject – his statement that "[t]he eruption of the sexualized woman into the culture of 1850s was extremely violent, and the discourses in which she appeared were always excited, or heated, and confused" (1998, 49).

The works of Griselda Pollock and Elisabeth Bronfen use the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of women as a semiotic network to enter more general regimes of gendering and of regulating sexuality, Pollock's in order to redefine art history from a feminist perspective, Bronfen's so as to theorize representations of woman's death from the point of view of feminism and psychoanalysis. Still, for all their insight, these two studies too reproduce to an extent the practice of representation under scrutiny. In Pollock's *Vision and Difference* "Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: the representation of Elizabeth Siddall", written in collaboration with Deborah Cherry, is the only chapter structured around a particular practice of representation inviting analysis, while all the other chapters focus on the way in which feminist art history structures its subjects. As a result, the Pre-Raphaelite woman emerges in Pollock as analogous to the analytical process itself – a site of a continuous folding of a subject across its analytical subjection. In Bronfen, the Pre-Raphaelite woman (once again synecdochised into Rossetti's representations of Elizabeth Siddal) gets foregrounded as a case study intended to illustrate most succinctly the author's chapter on aesthetization of woman's death, because it "serves as an example of how cultural representation discussed up to now could *literally* inform the lives of a painter-poet couple" (Bronfen 1992, 168, *my emphasis*). In other words, the Pre-Raphaelite woman is seen as exemplary for the practices that Bronfen analyses; as such, she/it transcends not only the practices of representation that the analysis focuses on but also, in a way, the analysis itself, since she/ it occasions an otherwise inaccessible folding of the subject across its (analytical) subjection.

The Pre-Raphaelite woman, however, surfaces this visibly not only in recent feminist or gender-conscious readings of Victorian art. Feminist art historians actually seem to be tracing a long history of the critical fascination with the Pre-Raphaelite woman, as a difficult genealogy of their own interpretive effort. In a review of "Aesthetic art" published in 1882 Walter Hamilton focuses on Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris as the heirs of Rossetti. According to Hamilton, the representation of women most visibly constitutes their legacy: "it is the portrayal

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6   Most symptomatic in this sense is Lynne Pearce's 1991 book entitled *Woman / Image / Text (Readings in Pre-Raphaelite Art and Literature)*. Pearce plays upon the title of the famous book by Roland Barthes – *Music / Image / Text*; her substitution, however, implies that the Pre-Raphaelite woman is analogous to the medium of its execution. This positions the Pre-Raphaelite woman outside the bounds of the thematic – a position that Pearce in her analysis finds difficult to sustain.

of female beauty that Aesthetic art is most peculiar, both in conception as to what constitutes female loveliness, and in the treatment of it" (Hares-Stryker 1997, 309). Moreover, by 1882 the Pre-Raphaelite woman evolved into a "type". "The type most usually found", says Hamilton,

> ...is that of a pale distraught lady with matted dark auburn hair falling in masses over the brow, and shading eyes full of love-lorn languor, or feverish despair; emaciated cheeks and somewhat heavy jaws; protruding upper lip, the lower lip being indrawn, long crane neck, flat breasts, and long thin nervous hands (Hares-Stryker 1997, 309).

The type survived well into the twentieth century and influenced greatly the way in which contemporary culture defines and uses Pre-Raphaelitism. One possible use is more than evident in recent feminist criticism of the woman as sign in Victorian arts and literature, paving the way to the study of women on film and tracing a genealogy of visual practices that dominate contemporary culture. It is worth noting that the Pre-Raphaelite woman survived in the realm of popular culture too, or, more precisely, on the unstable boundary separating yet bringing together popular culture and more elitist discourses. The Pre-Raphaelite woman overwhelms the narration of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), figured into a most effective sediment of British historiographic metafiction, and – consequently – of postmodernism. Her figure surfaces in a myriad of high-profile novels: from the academic fiction of David Lodge and A.S. Byatt to detective novels of P.D. James, from Angela Carter to Kate Atkinson. Blatantly evoking John Everett Millais's drowning Ophelia, she emerges as Kylie Minogue in a video clip for "Where the Wild Roses Grow", a song by Nick Cave.

Though this overflow of female figures in or resulting from Pre-Raphaelitism might suggest a kind of counterbalance to excessive maleness of the acts constitutive of the Brotherhood – the acts of its founding and naming – I would like to argue that it is but a trace of the conceptual boundary unable to sustain the project it had delimited. Instead, the boundary folds back to the project it initially demarcated, tracing with it the excess of gendering that it took to produce the excessive maleness of the act of the founding. In other words, instead of balancing out, the Pre-Raphaelite woman merely reinstates the conditions of the founding. The conditions of the founding, on the other hand, propose a further set of uneasy boundaries and foldovers. Since the founding of the Brotherhood entails a communal identity – that of a Brotherhood – rather than individuation, it implies another unresolved border-setting: it positions the Brethren between individuation (already implicit in the contingencies of their life-histories, their artistic genealogies and their cultural interests) and the dis-contingencizing provisos of the communal. This unresolved positioning, however, gets resolved once contained within gender, because the masculinity of the Brotherhood (if and when defined in opposition to a Sisterhood) seems to cancel the more threatening muddle of communality, defined against individuation, and is therefore extremely functional. The relative success of this cancellation is reinforced by another containment of the Brotherhood, within historicism, since Pre-Raphaelitism of the Brotherhood implies a long history of similar cancellations and resolutions, and – consequently – their functionality.

THE SCANDAL OF ANDROGYNY

This folding back of the boundary in the case of Pre-Raphaelitism leaves in return little space for the symbolic labor of representation unaffected by gendering or historicism. Moreover, the excess of gendering that constitutes the boundary – both in the maleness of the founding and the femaleness of its folding back – suggests that the labor of gendering is unresolved, and is

likely to reproduce as more bordering and folding. As a result, it folds back within the very Pre-Raphaelite woman, itself the fold of the boundary. In the readings of the Pre-Raphaelite art this usually shows as a scandal of *androgyny*: the female figures oversatiating Pre-Raphaelite art and literature, that is, are eventually recognized as containers of androgyny. Camille Paglia, for instance, says that "all of Rossetti's women are hermaphrodites" (1991, 494). Also, Paglia recognizes this "perversity", as she calls it, as the central Pre-Raphaelite legacy of the art of Edward Burne-Jones, and, consequently, of Symbolism:

> In *Perseus and the Graiae* (1892) the girlish hero is less masculine than the archetypal women he boldly deceives. The youth of Pygmalion has the same face as the girl of *Danaë*. The lovers of *Cupid and Psyche* are mirror images. Octave Mirbeau said of Burne-Jones' faces: "The rings under the eyes [...] are unique in the whole history of art; it is impossible to tell whether they are the result of masturbation, lesbianism, normal love-making or tuberculosis" (1991, 495–6).
> After which Paglia concludes that "Burne-Jones's transsexual world is populated by one incestuously self-propagating being" (1991, 496).

Tim Barringer traces the same argument in his discussion of the paintings of Simeon Solomon. Barringer says that Solomon adapted "the Rossettian image of the sensual and highly sexualized female figure" – "the Rossetti type" – "in the light of his homosexual identity to the representation of the eroticised male or androgynous figure" (1999, 157). The same proposition is central to Colin Cruise's analysis of Solomon's male figures. In his argument Cruise seems unwilling – or unable – to answer the question if the faces in Solomon's paintings are "the faces of men or women, or do they represent an attempt to combine the features of both sexes?" (1996, 197). Cruise, however, traces the genealogy of this inability back to Arthur Symons's 1906 appraisal of Solomon's art. According to Symons,

> The same face, varied a little in mood, scarcely in feature, serves for Christ and two Marys, for sleep and for lust. The lips are scarcely roughened to indicate a man, the throats scarcely lengthened to indicate a woman. These faces are without sex ... (Cruise 1996, 198)

The sheer accumulation of analogous references to androgyny in discussions of Pre-Raphaelitism adds value to the above argument, in the same way that androgyny itself seems to acquire visibility thanks to the sheer reproduction of the androgynous (female?) figures in the Pre-Raphaelite paintings and writings; the structure of the argument, in other words, seems once again to be tracing the structure of the material it addresses. It is as symptomatic that repeated references, within the modern-day discussions, to similar arguments in various nineteenth-century appraisals of Pre-Raphaelitism seem to be tracing repeated references to the past that characterize the Pre-Raphaelite poetics, implying – from within analysis – a long history of cognitively functional regressions and reproductions. As a result, the act of analyzing the Brotherhood reproduces within itself a structuring of communality and a yearning to discontigencize that it addresses as its subject.

This looping of the argument and its structure is fundamental to any consideration of Pre-Raphaelitism. While it is important that the labor of gendering organizes eventually the Pre-Raphaelite woman as a synecdoche of a more dispersed and therefore less visible operation of Victorian culture in general, which tended to generate woman as sign within which to contain the controversies of literary and artistic production, it is as important that the above proposition works within the foldover which contains the controversy of its own production. Thus is a back-bearing of the many feminist surveys of Victorian culture which maintain that female figures and positions operate mainly as tropes of male authorship and its various paradoxes. Most representative in this sense is Griselda Pollock's influential study, that defines Elizabeth Siddal, Rossetti's

wife and model, "as a sign" which "does not simply refer to a woman, or even Woman", since "[i]ts signified is masculine creativity" (1988, 95). Feminist literary historians have traced an analogous interest in femininity mostly to Tennyson and his personae and positions, none perhaps as persuasively as Catherine Maxwell. Maxwell argues that female position harbors even the modes of thought such as self-consciousness and self-interrogation, so that "the man who considers his masculinity has already put himself in a feminine-identified position" (1997, 85).

While this procedure certainly applies to Pre-Raphaelitism, the special symbolic value of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood lies in the fact that gendering bounds – and cuts across – all its practices, so that gendering acquires the position of near-absolute visibility, lacking in most other Victorian discourses. In other words, Pre-Raphaelitism radically foregrounds maleness and femaleness as positionalities and performances, rather than as a binary opposition, until their assumed difference collapses into a hyperactive labor of reciprocating tropes and figures. It is precisely the foregrounding and the visibility of the practices typical of Victorianism – but usually denied the position of visibility – that constitutes the surplus value of Pre-Raphaelitism in the study of Victorian culture and, consequently, in the genealogy of our own visions and cognitions.

COUPLES

This seemingly provides not only a fitting conclusion to my initial argument, but also a framework within which to analyze a plethora of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Still, I cannot help noticing that my argument seems structured around an oversight. In my reading so far, that is, I kept associating the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Rossetti's art and literature with the Pre-Raphaelite legacy of Edward Burne-Jones and Symbolism, seldom referring to John Everett Millais or William Holman Hunt. In other words, in my own argument I have been working within the economy of synecdoche, in that I have capitalized on the pre-eminence of Rossetti's and Burne-Jones's paintings in similar discussions of the subject, repressing other visual products of Pre-Raphaelitism into invisibility. One could, of course, argue that the cognitive economy of synecdoche is a precondition of the process of reading and analyzing as such; also, Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelitism seems to surface more readily in the studies of Victorian culture than other Pre-Raphaelite products. While it is true that Rossetti is the founding brother of Pre-Raphaelitism, and that Rossetti's woman has long been considered a central stage of excessive Victorian gendering, I would like to argue that the Pre-Raphaelite paintings by Millais and Holman Hunt labor within the same procedure. What is more, I would like to argue that their paintings of *couples* – focusing on the figures of man and woman next to one another – work as tropes of the very practice of representation that foregrounds gendering as its organizing principle, tracing the elusive boundary between what is represented and the very act of representation. As such, they trace overtly the very movement of the loop or the fold that is usually overlooked in more "central" discussions of Pre-Raphaelite gendering. In thus tracing the movement of the folding and the looping of one onto the other, they facilitate a discussion of the plurality of Pre-Raphaelitisms[7] constructed over the decades in order to meet different analytical needs, and lay bare the procedures of border-setting, repressing and capitalizing.

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[7]   In his review of a 1996 collection of papers on Pre-Raphaelitism Tim Barringer calls for "a thorough historiographic examination of the developing meanings and associations of the term 'Pre-Raphaelite', and the related construction of personal and national identites" (1998), 389.

Fig. 1.

One such painting, usually absent from discussions of Pre-Raphaelite gendering – though frequently used in the critiques of the Victorian handling of sexuality – is *The Awakening Conscience* (1853) by William Holman Hunt *(fig. 1)*.

The painting focuses on a couple, a kept woman and her lover, at the moment when a barely visible ray of light – itself *conditio sine qua non* of painting – inspires the woman to break away from the man, in a sudden realization of her condition. Kate Flint reviews the history of its inception and its subsequent interpretations as a history of the sexual scandal its visual discourse has produced, and focuses on the study of a fallen woman whose position endangers the (sexual) economy of the Victorian family; also, Flint makes sure that her review follows closely the narrative structure of the arguments of the Victorian commentators (1989, 45). As a result, her analysis appears to be coupling yet breaking away from the painting's Victorianism in the same way in which Hunt's two heavily gendered figures pair yet break away one from the other.

The Victorian model that Flint uses as the structural backbone of her study is the "reading" of *The Awakening Conscience* by John Ruskin. His detailed review of the painting, published in *The Times* on 5 May 1854, indicates that the painting, for all its straightforwardness, resisted interpretation. "I am at a loss to know how its meaning could be rendered more distinctly, but assuredly it is not understood", says Ruskin, and continues, "People stare at it in a blank wonder, and leave it hopelessly" (Flint 1989, 45). In order to clarify and emphasize the fact that the painting focuses on the woman's sexual transgression – in order to reproduce, in his own text, the illuminating ray of light of the text's subject – Ruskin, however, focuses not on the representation of the woman, but rather on her surroundings, suggesting that the representation of the woman merely anchors an array of tropes figuring *out*, as it were, the condition of the fall. Ruskin thus produces a detailed record of the tropes reproducing the woman's position: the conspicuously new, flashy furniture of a *maison de convenance*, a dying bird on the floor, the tapestry with birds feeding on the ripened corn, the picture above the fireplace with the figure of a woman taken in adultery… (Flint 1989, 46).

Flint, however, fails to perceive that Ruskin's record of the tropes decenters the female figure in favor of the general condition of the fall and of transgression, until the female figure too is reduced to the movement of the trope. In Ruskin's analysis, that is, the female figure is but one trope of the fall reproduced in its many reciprocating metaphors and symbols, until the fall is seen as both the theme and the structural requirement of the painting (as in slippage, movement, transgression).

One such movement is the very movement of the woman away from the man, itself the central – thematic – interest of the painting. The breaking away, that is to say, illuminates a possibility that the woman's movement is but a movement of the trope, that the woman is but a gendering away of – or towards to – the man, since the two are almost identical: note the near-identical shape and color of their eyes, faces, hair. Besides, the breaking away is reproduced in its mirror-image in the back, suggesting that the figures cannot be contained within the space of their reciprocating foreground selves either, which once again highlights the structural value of figural *movement* (opening up aggressively to include the position of the viewer). The figures of the woman and the man enact consequently the process of their own precarious construction – of their precarious engendering, of which the (sexual) fall is but a thematic derivative. The contemporary responses to the painting testify to this unease of (en)gendering resistant to an easy translation into the scandal of sexuality: many Victorian accounts of the painting interpreted its subject as a tiff between a brother and a sister.[8] Though most modern-day studies waive this Victorian interpretation of the painting's subject matter as Victorian hypocrisy in face of "unsanctionable sexuality" (Flint 1989, 60), the Victorian reviewers acknowledge actually the irreducible generic reciprocation of the two figures, the woman as the trope of the man, and vice versa.

This irreducible figural movement within the painting modifies necessarily assumptions about its representation of sexual excess. While the sexual excess implies by the figures of a kept woman and her lover is undoubtedly the focal thematic interest of the painting, the force of the figural movement renders the theme as its own spin-off and subverts the theme's centrality. As a result, Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* seems unable to sustain a thematic containment either. This position is implied in Linda Nochlin's seminal study of Rossetti's sexualized women. Nochlin analyzes Hunt's painting as a pendant to Rossetti's *Found* – another painting of an at-tempted salvation of a fallen woman – implying that *The Awakening Conscience* is but a figural movement of the subject, propelled by a variety of similar treatments, including "a creative misunderstanding of Hogarth" and of Rossetti's earlier *Hesterna Rosa* (1978, 145, 147).[9] The in-ability to sustain the thematic containment in the case of Hunt's painting resurfaces eventually as a sedimentation within the cinematic image, when the woman figure of *The Awakening Con-science* (modeled upon Annie Miller, an important sexual persona of the Pre-Raphaelite Broth-erhood) is used as a model for the figure of the ungraspable Sarah Woodruff (Meryl Streep) in the Exeter hotel episode, in Karel Reisz's film based on John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

Of course, a disproportionate interest of modern-day readers in Hunt's treatment of sexuality seems an indication in itself, opening up a possibility that reiterating the statements on the thematization of sexuality helps obscure its genealogy within a more systemic interest in (en)gendering. A symptom of these more systemic interests emerges once again in the condi-tions of the painting's first exhibition – the conditions often described and referred to, yet sel-dom taken analytically. *The Awakening Conscience* was first exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1854, with *The Light of the World*, Hunt's most famous religious painting and by far the most fa-

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[8]   For a catalogue of Victorian reviewers who interpreted the painting as a quarrel between a brother and a sister, see Flint 1989, 60.

[9]   "In *Hesterna Rosa*, too, the conscience-stricken woman is, like Hunt's, entangled with an uncaring, shallow male companion, who, continuing his play, provides a foil for her suddent change of heart. The contrast of inside and outside, the crowded, body-packed realm of sin opposed to the pure realm of nature outside the windows, is present in both works, although much further developed in Hunt's, as is the symbolic significance of animals – the ape in Rossetti's picture, the cat in Hunt's" (Nochlin 1978, 147).

Fig. 2.

mous Victorian painting of Christ[10] *(fig. 2)*. Though many discussions of *The Awakening Conscience* do draw attention to the fact that both paintings thematize redemption and could therefore be interpreted as a kind of diptych,[11] they fail to perceive that this co-positioning of the two implies that neither is complete without the other – that the two actually perform as reciprocating tropes.

The two paintings engender the same kind of indeterminacy. Hunt's Christ of *The Light of the World* is deliberately constructed as unable to sustain individuality, even in terms of gender; his figure is perhaps best described by Marcia Pointon as "an ungendered presence" (1989, 34). The available biographical information make frequent mention of the fact that, in order to transcend the limits of individuality, Hunt used several models for the figure of Christ, including Christina Rossetti. Victorian criticisms of the figure's effeminacy drove Hunt to refigure his Christ in his later paintings, specifically in *The Shadow of Death* (1869–72). Yet, though Pointon contrasts Christ's ungendered presence with "the specifically gendered figures in *The Awakening Conscience*" (1989, 34), the difference collapses if the figure of Christ is positioned alongside the figure of the kept woman: note, once again, the near-identical shape and color of their eyes, faces, hair. Note also the near-identical structuring of their bodies and of the way in which their bodies are covered with the layers of cloth (the white gown a trope away of the white robe, the shawl a trope away of the cape, and vice versa). The representation of the figures' clothes is particularly relevant here, since the represented clothes screen the figures' bodies as the site of their gendering and thus actually reproduce the condition of the pictorial representation (of body, of gendering) in the first place, as a looping thematic trope of canvas itself.[12]

Note, finally, the looping thematic tropes of light, structuring both paintings as the studies of illumination. The ray of light, visible in the lower right corner of *The Awakening Conscience*, stimulates the woman to move away from the man. Without the represented light there would be no theme that the painting renders, no awakening of conscience; yet light as such precedes pictorial representation itself, as the axiom of visuality, so that the ray of light within Hunt's painting traces the loop of the painting's thematic stipulation towards the axiom of its very construction, and back, until the painting is shown to be but a symptom of the irreducible reciprocity of the two. *The Light of the World* reciprocates the reciprocation: the lantern, illuminating the lower right part of Christ's ungendered presence, is the subject matter of the painting – the light

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[10]   Concerning the painting's religious and cultural value, see Barringer 1999, 118.

[11]   See Pointon 1989, 34. Kate Flint warns though that "[s]uch a dialogue... was hard for the exhibition visitor to appreciate, since *The Awakening Conscience* was hung in the Middle Room, *The Light of the World* in the West Room" (1989, 52).

[12]   On the subject of looping thematic tropes of clothes in Pre-Raphaelitism, see Jukić 2002, 39.

of the world – strained between excessive realism and excessive symbolism typical of Hunt. Although the lantern is but a trope of the already excessively tropical Christ, one cannot ignore the fact that without the represented light, within the painting, there would be no visible Christ figure, just as light precedes pictorial representation itself. So once again Hunt's painting traces the loop of the painting's theme towards the act of its very construction, and back, until the painting is shown to be but a symptom of the irreducible reciprocity of the two.

Implicated in the space of the paintings within the position of light, the viewer (and the critic) can do little to resist the labor of figuration. Reciprocating, within *his-or-her* field of vision, a further movement of the trope and of the loop, yet with a responsibility to – see.

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Ágnes Zsófia Kovács

GENDER AS PERFORMANCE IN HENRY JAMES: THE ROLE OF PORTRAITS IN *THE AMERICAN*

In the novels of Henry James descriptions of pictures and portraits occur frequently and the art of portraiture is parallel to that of the storyteller. Questions of gender identity are pivotal in James, too, judging from the number of contemporary accounts one comes accross in scholarly journals. However, in what way these two aspects can be joined still proves to be an open question, since issues of iconography and gender are usually handled separately in criticism, as if the two problems excluded each other in the minds of Jamesians. The problem at hand, then, is how to join the two aspects and in what way a gendered discussion of the pictures in the novels can complement canonized iconographical readings of them. Naturally, the investigation involves the analysis of actual images in James's *The American*.

I.

Let me indicate briefly the relevance of iconography and gender as two separate aspects of study to James today to legitimate this project. Iconography, for one, or to be more precise: not iconography *per se* but the discussion of the role of pictures in James has been an important element of James reception and is still on the critical agenda today. The most commonly cited study on the role of pictures in James's work was Viola Hopkins Winner's study *Henry James and the Visual Arts* from 1970. Winner discusses the presence of the visual arts in James's writings and the pervasive analogies between the art of the writer and the art of the painter in Jamesian theory and practice (Winner 1970, 59, 71). In her *The Museum World of Henry James* Adeline Tintner concentrated on James's fictional use of the visual and plastic arts and the artifacts of material culture (Tintner 1986, 3). Both readings are integrate images into their explication to some point: sometimes they seem to be mere catalogues of images in the novels, but in some cases also refer to art objects in their interpretations.

I believe it is worth mentioning here that the visual aspect of Jamesian writing is a critical area in its own right within James studies. These accounts of James' use of images are not neccesarily executed from the perspective of iconography, but rather target textual accounts of imagistic visual impressions that are the products of a center of consciousness. The narrator is using the perspective of a character and through his or her eyes, the reader is presented accounts of moments in such detail that they pass for verbal images (Griffin 1991, 5). Critics reflect on such instances by reminding the reader of James's idea in "The Art of Fiction" that writing and portraiture are not very far from each other, as they are both ways of representation (James 1984, 46). This direction of James criticism is also left uninfluenced by the gender issue.

As to the other aspect, problems of gender identity and performance in James have been discussed widely only recently; because, I suppose, they have been in all areas of the humanities influenced by the cultural turn. Today we have a new, powerful image of James influenced by gendered readings of his texts. In James's letters we glimpse the image of the young man with tropes of homoerotic panic lurking among the lines. In the biographies, we find the image of

the consciously feminized bachelor artist who has taken a conscious decision not to be a productive member of society in any material sense of the word. In his Notebooks, we get acquainted with the image of the homoerotic ageing man.

The issues discussed in recent important monographs on James often relate to the problem of gender. As a case in point, James's relation to women in general was studied by Alfred Habegger in his *James and the Woman Business* to show the falsity of the account of James' relation to his cousin, Minny Temple, which is revealed to be mostly James' own creation (Habegger 1989, 231). Also, in her *The Epistemology of the Closet* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has discussed post-Romantic male homosexual panic in James' texts, letters (Sedgwick 1990, 208) and Prefaces (Sedgwick 1995, 233). Even the acclaimed Americanist, John Carlos Rowe published his latest book on James titled *The Other Henry James* about homosexual implications in noncanonized short stories (Rowe 1998, 3). Perhaps as a companion piece to Rowe's book, Donatella Izzo analyzed technologies of gender in stories about women in 2001 (Izzo 2001, 2).

To make sense of the gender upsurge, Richard Henke goes so far as to say that gender has a lot to do with the rehabilitation of James' reputation in the 1980s and 90s: I have to quote him extensively:

> As the well-known story goes, a group of devoted critics in the late 1930s and early 40s transformed an eccentric and increasingly unread author into one of the most important writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. James may have earned his place in the revised canons of British and especially American literature because of shifting literary priorities that resulted in a new understanding and respect for modernism that his experimental late narratives seemed to prefigure. What has not been so often noted about the rise of James's literary fortunes is how pivotally issues of gender played in his redemption. (Henke 1995, 227)

In other words, Henke claims that a discussion of issues of gender was central to the critical rehabilitation of James today, after his formal reception whereby New Critics assigned him his canonized position as a pre-Modernist author, a canonic figure of American national literature. To put it bluntly, his homoerotic interest is no longer a shame but an attraction for us.

So far I have tried to show the relevance of our topic "Iconography and Gender" to James in the context of the revived critical interest in him, in which issues of gender prove vital whilst iconography seems to be losing ground in consequence. At stake is the possibility of reinvigorating visual analysis through gender; so in what follows, I propose to carry out a small test. However, since it is impossible to give you a survey of the role of the gender aspect of the pictures used in James in general, I am to focus on one novel, *The American* 1877.

Before plunging into a discussion of *The American* though, let me digress a little and make some final introductory remarks about terminology. Firstly, when talking about iconography, I am not after the third-level meaning of an image described by Panofsky, where the *deepest level,* the intrinsic meaning or content of the work is apprehended (Panofsky 1974, 30), because I have problems with the notion of this 'deepest level.' Instead, I accept Ernst Gombrich's use of the term in the broad sense as an interpretative study of images (Gombrich 1972, 32). Secondly, as for the term gender, I am to use the concept of gender as performance, as an act—the way it is shown to function in Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. As we all very well know, for Butler gender is an apparatus of cultural construction that establishes sex as prediscursive, as a given (Butler 1990, 5). However, gender is at the same time open to splittings that reveal its phantasmatic status. In other words, gender can be shown in operation, in performance, if you like (Butler 1990, 9). In this sense, talking about gender is talking about the act wherby our notions of sex are *acted out,* are performed. Thirdly, the relation between picture and text here refers to a relation between pictures seen by characters within the text of the novel. The reason for this is

that the other type, illustration, where the picture is actually beside the text was not liked by James (Bogardus 1974, 117) and the only place where photoes can be found in his novels are the volumes of his New York Edition. Morover, these photoes are not illustrative of the novels in the sense of showing a specific setting or a character but are only generally related to the themes and settings of the novels, so I will not discuss them. Instead, I shall analyze three scenes of the novel that take place in the Louvre in Paris and in which pictures play a part as performances of gender and then I shall to recontextualize this reading within gendered interpretations of the novel.

II.

James's *The American* seems to call out for a joint production, for an analysis of the *iconography* of *gender*. The reasons are: you find several references to pictures in the novel that are relevant to the story, and as the story is about the failure of a marriage plot, issues of gender identification are likely to occur in it, too. Actually, there are three scenes in the novel through which one can trace the performance of gender on the part of one character, Noémie Nioche. Noémie is a young woman who passes her time by copying pictures in the Louvre. Newmann, the protagonist, buys a picture from her and the story of her relation to Newman constitutes the subplot of the novel. We can trace the relation between Newman and Noémie through an analysis of their three meetings in the Louvre. The very first scene is the one where Noémie sells a picture to Newman, the second scene is when they select further originals for Noemie to copy -- for further money --, and the last one is the one where Noemie gives up her project to paint and decides to become a prostitute instead. So let us see how she decides to sell her body instead of her pictures.

The opening scene of the novel takes place in Paris, the salon Carre in the Louvre. Newman, the protagonist has just arrived from America and is intent on having a holiday. He wants to "live" a little after having earned a fortune back home. He is sitting in the salon Carre admiring Murillo's *Madonna* and also admiring a copyist who busies herself with reproducing Murillo's picture. Newman is admiring the copy by this young woman perhaps more than the original. He eventually decides to approach the woman and asks about the price of the painting. The copy itself is a tragically bad one, so the woman, Mmlle Noémie Nioche, is surprised to hear the offer. Nevertheless, she goes on painting, puts a rosy blotch to the Madonna's cheek, and asks for a ridiculously high price. Newman objects to the cheek being too red, but, not having an idea of the artistic merits or mistakes of the copy, he accepts to pay the ridiculous sum although he suspects he has agreed to pay too much for too little. The idea of pos-

Fig. 1. Bartolomé Estoban Murillo (1618–82) Madonna.

sessing a copy of the Madonna excites him more than the actual quality of the copy.

The bargain exposes the gender positions both participants act out. Newman is intent on purchasing a copy by all means, but there are additional aspects of his deciding not to ask for a lower price. Firstly, the little copyist is actually very pretty and has acted out the process of painting as if it involved a performance especially for Newman who has been watching her for a while. But making the Madonna lively with the rosy blotch is too much for Newman. For him it is more impressive that Noémie is also shown as a shrewd businesswoman who is willing to squeeze the highest price out of him. This is an ability Newman himself can appreciate, as he is a clever businessman himself. So what is going on in the salon is not simply the purchase of a picture but also a way to express Newman's appreciation of Noémie's ability to handle a commercial situation. The scene is more about the art of business than about a business of art.

Fig. 2. Rafaello Santi/Giulio Romano. (1483–1546) Portrait de Jeanne d'Aragon.

The second scene in the Louvre is when Noemie and Newman select five further pictures for Noemie to copy. The girl tests Newman's intentions with her through his selection of the subjects of the paintings. What subject is Newman after? He wants both profane and sacred subjects, which is not telling for Noemie. Prompted by the lack of affirmation in Newman's selections, Noémie asks him directly if he considers her a bad girl. To this Newman reflects only to himself and notes mentally that this girl has never parted with her innocence: she simply never had it because she had been "looking at the world since she was ten years old, and he would have been a wise man who could have told her any secrets" (52). Instead of a direct answer, they go on discussing that Noémie's father had complained to Newman about Noémie. The father thinks Noemie is a *coquette,* which Newman does not believe to be true. When Newman refuses to select a small Italian painting, the *Marriage of Saint Catherine,* because the woman in it is not pretty enough, the girl asks him if he is a connoseur of pretty women, which he in turn denies. Instead, he opts for a Veneian portrait of a lady as large as life with golden hair, purple satin, a pearl necklace. Newman wants a copy which is the size of the original. The last picture to be copied is Rubens's *Marriage of Marie de Médicis* to top the list up. Noémie then breaks down and con-

Fig. 3. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) Marriage de Marie de Médicis.

fesses that it is beyond her ability to paint the six most difficult pictures in he Louvre. Newman makes clear that he only intends to provide her with a modest dowry because of his respect for her father, the impoverished Frenchman. To this Noemie replies she has no desire to marry on as little monye as the copies would bring and looks expectantly at Newman, who says he does not understand any of this and leaves the premises speedily.

What is to be made of this scene in terms of the performance of gender? Again, it is a scene of identification performed in front of and by the help of the pictures. Noémie pretends to discuss the pictures depicting marriage scenes while it is the possibility of her own marriage that is being erased. She seems to throw away a lot of money by confessing her inability to copy the pictures Newman ordered for 2000 Francs each, but together with the confession she has another, underlying plot that might yield at least the same amount of money. If Newman considers her a *coquette* and a "bad girl", he should act in accordance with that and if he cannot buy the bad copies, then he should buy Noémie herself. But Newman refuses to take the hint and flees. So in terms of gender identities acted out, against the backdrop of the marraige scenes, Noémie performs her willingness to sell her body instead of her copies, while Newman performs his lack of interest in purchasing her. Although Newman understands Noémie's intentions perfectly, he claims not to have understood her motivations at all.

The third and most conspicious scene of Noemie's performance is the last one in the Louvre, when Newman meets her in the company of Valentin Bellegarde, the brother of Newman's fiancée. Newman comes to inspect the state of the picture Noémie is painting for him, while Valentin happens to be around and inspects the woman instead of her copy. They find Noemie in the room of the Italian masters looking intently at two ladies of high fashion instead of actually copying. Valentin agrees with Noémie that she should not paint, and flatters her by saying she can probably do some things better than paint:

> "All I say is that I suspect there are some things that you can do better than paint," said Valentin.
> "I know the truth—I know the truth" Mademoiselle Noémie repeated. And, dipping the brush into a clot of red paint, she drew a great horizontal daub across her unfinished picture.
> "What is that?" asked Newman.
> Without answering, she drew another long crimson daub, in a vertical direction, down the middle of her canvas, and so, in a moment, completed the rough indication of a cross. "it is the sign of the truth," she said at last.
> "You spoiled your picture," said Newman.
> … "I like it better that way than it was before," said Valentin. "Now it is more interesting. It tells a story. Is it for sale, Mademoiselle?"
> "Everything I have is for sale," said Mademoiselle Noémie. (133)

After this scene Valentin comments to Newman that Noémie has the material for a great adventuress, she is pretty enough for her purposes and she is intelligent, which is half of her charm.

In terms of gender identifications, the presence of a more willingly comprehensive male than Newman triggers Noémie's performance with the painting. She gives up making her bad copy and adds a detail of her own to her painting, as if a sign of her own presence. The rosy blotch of the first copy has transformed itself into a crimson cross that is now a definite marker of her intentions. Valentin is able to read this sign as one of many indicating her devillish talent for being an adventuress. Newman has only an inkling of what is going on, he makes note of Noémie's provocative manner, but sees nothing charming or mildly exciting in it. In other words, he retains his position to turn Noémie's offers down, but Valentin's presence enables Noémie to actually paint her mark on the canvas and thereby also mark her her willingness to produce a socially unacceptable but at least personally rewarding image and set of roles for herself.

The story of the three scenes constitutes a simple triangle of three characters. Newman, Noémie, and Valentin in *The American* can be described as the interpersonal space in which all three of them act out their gender identities in relation to each other. Noémie has been waiting for a rich man like Newman for years to make the most of her becoming a prostitute. Accordingly, she is trying to make Newman purchase her services rather than her copies, but she does not succeed in achieving this. The reason for the failure is Newman's unwillingness to react to her provocative speech acts. Newman is actually aware of Noémie's maneuvres but dislikes their purpose. To Valentin Newman says he is only interested in the case because he wants to see how Noémie's father handles the situation of his daughter, if immorality will be tolerated because of the flow of money it achieves. In other words, Newman seems to be interested in the case on an abstract or commercial plus a moral level only. However, the scenes in the Louvre indicate that he is practically unwilling or unable to perform the role of the active, virile male in the scenarios with Noémie. So in the first two scenes analyzed, it is only Newman's unwillingness to cooperate that prevents Noémie from performing more acts of identification. Indeed, when Valentin de Bellegarde appears to fill in the place of the other in Noémie's game, he fits the role of the active male perfectly and Noémie is free to paint the telling red blotches into her copy, blood red marks to indicate the truth, to indicate her decision to draw blood, to carry out her lucrative plan of becoming a first class harlot and cross out her existence as a copyist of madonnas: she begins to create her own life by selling her body which happens to be more marketable than her pictures.

III.

The quick glance at the scenes in the Louvre helped us to fathom the process of gender identification on Noemie's part. Still, Newman's reserve to perform in these scenes remains unexplained. If one considers Newman's other acts of gender identification, the reason may become clearer. Eric Haralson's article on *The American* characterizes the story as a 19th-century Freudian beating fantasy in which Newman is the little boy wishing to take the power of the father and is beaten in consequence. Newman plays the role of the vengeful male child who has to realize how little power he actually has over others. Haralson argues that this plot is an expression of James's awareness of the difference between the bachelor artist position and that of normative masculinity (Haralson 1992, 486). In another gendered reading of the novel Cheryl Torsney discusses homoerotic desire in the novel. She claims that homoerotic desire is played out within the very situations in which heterosexuality is ardently pursued. As an example, he analyzes Newman's gift to a fellow American traveller, Babcock, an ivory statuette of a monk, as a fetish, a vaccination against the desire of man, a sign of homosexual panic in the scenario of Newman intently looking for a wife (Torsney 1993, 173). So either as a beaten male child or as a repressed homosexual, Newman is interpreted as a male person unable to perform normative masculinity. His unwillingness to do so in his interaction with Noémie is another manifestation of this lack in him.

In sum, the little test of interposing iconography and gender aspects for an analysis of *The American* turned out to display one strand of the gender issue that fits in with other gendered readings of the novel: Noémie's story of liberation as complemented by Newman's story of repression. However, it remains to be noted that it would have been possible and perhaps even fruitful to interpose either iconography or gender or both with the role of the French cultural context in the novel. We should not forget that when Newman refuses to act out the part of the active male, he also fails to recognize that the patron of the art role he plays with Noémie is

already culturally coded in France: in the given situation, it has little else to indicate but his interest in the copyist-woman and not in the paintings. In that sense, Newman's acts are performing his gender identity in an ambiguous way for a French(wo)man. This indicates his general ignorance of the social-cultural context of Europe, and also his unwillingness to understand, too. So perhaps it is just to say that his unwillingness to act out normative masculinity is part of his unwillingness to act out a European contextualized social performance required of him in the main plot of the novel where Newman's marriage is prevented exactly by his cultural ignorance and unwillingness to conform socially.

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Mária Bajner

THE TROPE OF ANGELS IN WOMEN'S
SHORT STORY AND FICTION

To begin to think about what is involved when a woman writes her story we can start with what is embraced when a woman looks into the mirror: as nearly all of us do, quite frequently. We have an image, or images of ourselves. We have contradictory and changing responses to our bodies: most women feel, or have felt uncomfortable about how they look, as Laura Mulvey puts it: "the long love affair/despair between image and self-image" (Mulvey, 1975, 10). A woman writer has the double burden of this ambivalence: firstly, when she looks at herself in the looking glass, and secondly, when she passes it on to her characters. She takes over the privilege of the *gaze* and turns herself (her site) into the object of her own looking, thus becoming both viewer and viewed, desiring and desired, similarly to her female characters that are the projection of the writer's own self: objects of desire and of visual contemplation. Her heroines display considerable self-consciousness, an awareness of being looked at, of there being someone outside looking, gazing. A woman is a representation of the body with the air of passion around her while the (fewer) images of men are very different. This passion can be the reason for having more images of women than images of men. Yet semiotics has proved that the more often the image of the woman is used to substitute things or notions the more indistinguishable and mysterious it becomes.

Men are seldom presented as face and body; they are presented because of who they *are* or what they are *doing*. Men are agents while women are sites or screens: men are paradigmatic, they generate meaning, while women are syntagmatic; they are representations of heterosexual male desire. When a woman is speaking about her*self* than it is not her own point of view that breaks through the discourse, since there is an implied male gaze unconsciously working in the female subject. The difference between the female *subject* and the female *self* is that while the latter is autonomous, i.e., close to her biologically given body, the female subjectivity is defined by her opposite, by the male gaze. Men are either invested with authority, having power over persons, or seen as being active, autonomous, independent and in control. While men are *watching*, women are *exposing* themselves. Consequently, a man certainly has a plot, he has a cause for *emplotment*, which automatically raises the question: Does a woman have a plot? Careful investigation of the topic, supported by texts written by women suggests that feminist iconology would expose her *self*, and project images that are not defined by the male gaze, but by her own original self and body.

For a woman writer to expose herself is not only a female experience but the author's ambition to fight against the marginalization of women's voices by destroying the emblematic picture of feminine stereotypes. In all their plots referred to in the paper, stereotypical representations of the 'feminine' are reflected in a distorting mirror refusing to represent the iconic 'Other', the culturally accepted 'positive' images of sorts as the projections of the male gaze, the heterosexual male desire. What is demanded of the reader is a willingness to play along: to problematize and question these emblems in the act of reading.

In this paper I am going to investigate how the woman writer of romances refuses (male-created) icons of women, the transmitters of dominant cultural representations of gender, in addition to which I will attempt to suggest ways of looking at these portraits as they appear in

the gallery of feminist iconography. This will involve a consideration of the emblematic representations of gender in terms of bodies, activities, and social role, the gendered icon (monster, devil, angel), and the *fe*male writer/reader's ideological (feminist) standing.

I. VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN

Certain areas of cultural territory have been colonized by men. Professional artists were expected to paint female nudes, while their female counterparts produced delicate water-colours of landscapes and still lives; men composed symphonies, women songs; men wrote epics, women romances. They supposedly have less to express and therefore less can be represented through them. It is, perhaps, then, not entirely surprising that there have been so few really great portraits of women. The few that have entered the canon tie in with the conventions which dominate representations of women, that women are only valued in so far as they are focusing on the needs of others e.g. women as maids, mothers, lovers etc. On the other hand, numerous other paintings of women are paintings of the unnamed and, almost by definition, the beautiful—and, endlessly, paintings of the nude. Germaine Greer opened a new area of feminist debate by describing the process of how the woman was "emerging as the central emblem of western art" (Greer 1971, 283).

> For the Greeks the male and female body had the beauty of a human, not necessarily a sexual kind; indeed they may have marginally favoured the young male form as the most powerful and perfectly proportioned...In the Renaissance the female form began to predominate, not only as the mother in the predominant emblem of *madonna con bambino*, but as an aesthetic study in herself. At first naked female forms took their chances in crowd scenes of diptychs of Adam and Eve, but gradually Venus claims ascendancy, Mary Magdalene ceases to wizened and emaciated, and becomes nubile and ecstatic, portraits of anonymous young women, chosen only for their prettiness, begin to appear, are gradually disrobed, and re-named Flora and Primavera (283).

They are paintings addressed to the male viewer in which a large part of the appeal is the representation of the woman's search and need for the absent man. Paintings or music can be described in words just as texts can evoke pictures. The line between paintings of women and writings by women is an especially thin one. As Virginia Woolf said, "You have only got to figure yourself a girl in a bedroom with a pen in her hand. She has only to move that pen from left to right—from ten o'clock to one" (Woolf 1942, 265). Woolf made Lily Brisco in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) a painter rather than a novelist, painting being probably the most popular of the mysteries that female novelists have always used as substitutes for their own. Anne Bronte's heroine in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) is posed before her easel, with brush and smock, for other characters to marvel at. Charlotte Bronte makes a serious claim for the imaginative genius of Jane Eyre, and clearly for her own, when Jane spreads out her portfolio of watercolors to Rochester. These women paint because they want to attract (male) attention (gaze) and to be seen as artists (which is an emblem of traditionally male creativity) and women at the same time. Female stories of and about women project the same icon (i.e. the female artist) with the same message: women are aware of being looked at, they are the objects of the look, and the look is essentially male.

In romantic fiction, men's physical appearance is often fetishised and objectified, as female appearance conventionally is the center of the male-centered, male-focused texts. This objectification of the male is often read as an articulation of female desire, and it probably is, but it is important to know to what extent this female desire is constructed by patriarchal ideology.

The specificity of a "gendered look" and the possibility of a female gaze is explored in the collection entitled *The Female Gaze* (Gamman and Marshment 1988). As it comes through in the essays, men still have the greater power to look, their gaze is more controlling, not least in the highly practical way that the 'looks' relayed to us are still more likely to have been framed and chosen by and for the male eye. Anne Cranny Frances sees it in her evaluation of feminist romances:

> It might then be argued, that even romantic fiction does have this role [of accepting patriarchal ideology], it nevertheless continues to challenge patriarchal assumptions, by stating female sexual desire as a reality reconstituting women as sexual beings. Romantic fiction might then be read as part of the process of negotiating new social meanings, a new understanding of female social roles
> <div align="right">(Anne Crany-Francis 1990, 187).</div>

2. ARTISTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN

The implications of the representations of women have been much discussed by feminist critics who claim that women writers often use their texts, particularly those focused on female heroes, as part of a self-defining process involving empathetic identifications with those characters. (Particularly relevant in this context is work by Abel (1983), Gardiner (1982) and Brownstein (1982). Female narcissism can be rooted in the biologic evidence that a woman gives birth to men and women alike. Whenever a woman is looking at anyone, irrespective of sex, she can picture herself in the other. Thus, the woman's look is a kind of reflection of her own self, which is a unique, female experience. The level of consciousness is crucial to the concept of *iconoclasm*, considering that the female writer can completely place herself in the picture of someone else, while for the male writer it can only be a projection of himself as being only part of the picture. Having created the character as a narcissistic, idealized projection of her*self*, the female writer must somehow shape it in accordance with literary and social conventions. For a woman a text is only a cover of the body/subject.

To start with, a woman writer – who otherwise experiences the classic 'anxiety of authorship' – takes the pen, the emblem of the dominant male culture, and chooses an old frame to the icon to be reconstructed. The frames to fit the old-new discourse seem to be the novels and the short story. Novels and especially 'romance' novels have tended to focus on the domestic sphere: a suitably 'feminine' topic for women writers. They may deserve attention, not so much for innovation in style, but rather for rejecting, or ignoring the 'received' icons, thus picturing new ones. Images which represent women in different ways and offer different subject positions to women (and thus to men), find a space in dominant culture in marginalized or stereotyped, and often ridiculed forms (such as the Angel, the Virago, the Devil) that take meaning by the implicit contrast they offer to the dominant image of Woman. What a woman writer does is nothing other than offering an alternative, a *female* alternative versus *male,* thus complementing man+kind. Adrienne Rich in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (1979) is analysing women's unique, internal set of symbols, that can only be used and understood by women. Therefore the assumption that women's iconography can be regarded as internal only in respect to men does not seem to be far-fetched.

Romance fiction, most of them written by women, allows both author and reader an imaginative participation in a different version of heterosexuality. In the conventional world of romance, where whatever happens in the course of events eventually everything will take a happy turn, women take the foremost place, and the values of femininity (e.g. female submissiveness,

or the ability to compromise) are seen to confront and in part to defeat those of a masculine society.[1] [2]

The short story-that has a limited plot due to its time-consuming values-lines up characters who have no time to perform real changes. It offers little space for *doing*, for developing male ambitions like heroism, competition, or courage, whereas it opens possibilities for *showing* emblematic pictures. While stories may be separated from casual chains of events in terms of content, their intent-to expose-will inform the value of any given story in any given culture, at the time of reading.

In her anthology *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women* (1986), Angela Carter collected stories about women who are considered 'wayward' or 'wicked' by the standards of cultural norms of 'what women should be'. Refusing to give images of the 'Angel,' Carter asserts:

> Very few of the women in these short stories are guilty of criminal acts, although all of them have spirit and one or two of them, to my mind, are, or have the potential to be, really evil...Most of the variously characterized girls and women who inhabit these stories, however, would seem much, much worse if men had invented them.
>
> (Carter 1986, ix)

Moreover, it is most unlikely that male writers would have invented them, or presented them in the same way. The female creators project themselves into the stories, they show women as female selves, as autonomous beings of spirit and body, while male writers would watch them differently, as products and victims of the male dominated system.

Female 'creations' or 'characters' are seldom self-sufficiently alone, independent or autonomous, similarly to their creator. Like a daughter, a character thus acquires a life of her own, as the writer requires a 'room of her own', the emblematic sphere of the woman writer.

Once the woman writer occupies her room, according to Virginia Woolf she has to "do battle with a certain phantom. And the phantom was a woman...[3] The Angel in the House. It was she who used to come between me and my paper...And she made as if to guide my pen." Woolf goes on with the explanation: 'You who come from a younger and happier generation may not have heard of her – you may not know what I mean by the Angel in the House.' In her description the 'Angel' is "intensely sympathetic", "immensely charming", "utterly unselfish", who "excelled in the difficult arts of family life", and "sacrificed herself daily". The Angel in the House is the icon of the age: "In those days – the last of Queen Victoria – every house had its 'Angels whom the woman writer had to kill once she wanted to make use of her own room and show that she had a mind of her own" (Woolf 1928, 265). Finally, the Angel was dead. The room is her own, but she has to "furnish it", and "decorate it" according to her own taste, thus creating a cozy place with a new picture gallery. The stories of the new pictures will reveal the truth about "her own experiences as a body"...and "the passion which was unfitting for her as a woman to say".

Angela Carter's story *The Loves of Lady Purple* reads like a grotesque fairy tale with an implicit warning for men, rather than for women. The story has several overlapping themes, all of which are informed by Carter's self-proclaimed interest in redefining the criteria by which "wicked women" may be recognized and judged. Lady Purple is the product of the male imagination

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[1]   The genre of romance as it was defined by Northrop Frye in *The Secular Scripture* (1976).

[2]   Marriage, as being more of an avowal of phallocentric society, would not comply with 'defeat'.

[3]   Phantom is indefinite, and can serve as the starting point to construct an anti-iconology, which is, politically, the feminist iconology since ICONO*LOGY*, otherwise, is necessary against women serving the male gaze.

superimposed on a woman's self. The title character is a puppet that embodies the physical attributes of 'desirability' valued by the puppet maker. The female character seeks revenge on the male creator of the image she embodies, embraces and despises. She finally subverts the power relations between herself and her male creator; becoming a powerful figure who is 'monstrous' in her unfeminine behaviour, and whose power is achieved through her 'monstrous' 'lack' of femininity. In this way Carter enlarges the whole subject-object position of the iconic 'Self' and the 'Other'. For the creator, the object of desire is an image of a female body that manifests itself through the body of a puppet, and thus the objectification of the 'Other' is doubled. The puppet is an emblem of male possession, the projection of male gaze, 'both socially and sexually the 'Other'. Lady Purple can have power over her master once she can benefit from lack of 'rewarded' sexuality, from being asexual.

In her novel *Lady Oracle* (1982), Margaret Atwood deals with the female image in another way, by placing the conventional romance narrative in a metatext which reveals its patriarchal practice. Her main character, Joan Foster, is the writer of a best seller called *Lady Oracle* which is an interrogation of the Angel, the gendered icon.

Foster actually wrote the book during experiments in automatic writing, when she hypnotized herself, and then allowed her subconscious to dictate her writing. Throughout the book Atwood has Foster experiement with the development of her latest novel *Stalked by Love*. Tiring of her traditionally virtuous heroine, Charlotte, Foster decides to favour her tempestuous villainess, Felicia (faith), who, like herself, has long red hair (red is the symbol of the devil). But Foster's own life begins to intrude into the text and Felicia feels herself abandoned not by Redmond (red moon –when the Moon dominates the Earth and the Sun, and when the female principle has taken over power from the male), her fictional husband, but by Foster's own husband, Arthur. Then Foster has Felicia attempt to murder Charlotte, only to have her saved by Redmond in typical male hero fashion. Redmond is revealed as a composite of all the men in Foster's life, her husband, her lover and the fictional men who sustain the behaviour of the real ones. In deconstructing Redmond Atwood reveals the true nature of this character, the icon of the patriarchal male who appears in one guise as a fictional hero, in another as an eccentric artist, in yet another as an academic and husband. All are emblems of the same icon. All are lethal to women in wanting to make them passive objects of their affection, abuse, and gaze.

Fay Weldon goes further in her novel *Life and Loves of a She-Devil* (1984), in which she created a subverted image of the 'Angelic Other', when she seeks revenge on the man who is the hero and focus of that story. The She-Devil, whose name is Ruth (in the *Bible* Ruth is another emblem of faith and female solidarity), is caught up in the conflicting expectations of patriarchal conceptions of 'femininity' and 'beauty'. She is a very plain woman: tall, awkward, unprepossessing. Her husband Bobbo married her for economic grain, but later despises her for her lack of femininity. When she questions his emotional cruelty, he continues it by describing her as a 'she-devil': "In fact I don't think you are a woman at all. I think what you are is a she-devil" (42). This accusation has the opposite effect to that intended by Bobbo. Instead of reinforcing Ruth's passivity it alerts her to the only kind of power she has – as the transgressive woman, a she-devil, who takes her destiny into her own hands and becomes an active, oppositional subject: a new icon in gender-relations.

This cultural image, the emblem of the feminine ideal is encapsulated in the character of Ruth's rival, Mary Fisher, a writer of pulp romance. Ruth destroys the romantic idyll of Bobbo and Mary Fisher after much plotting and shrewd action. However, the final step of her revenge is very strange. She undergoes months of painful plastic surgery in order to transform herself physically into Mary Fisher – the female patriarchal subject, the old icon of femininity.

She even writes a successful romance novel. Only once, when the 'she-devil' proves herself capable of being (or appearing to be) both 'feminine' and a successful romance writer does she feel to let go the idealized image and allows her own voice to come through. It is of utmost importance, since for most of the story the voice is that of a woman trying to be like someone else. In the end, Ruth decides to see, and be herself. She says:

> I tried my hand at writing a novel, and sent it to Mary Fisher's publishers. They wanted to buy it and publish it, but I wouldn't let them. Enough to know I can do it, if I want. It was not so difficult after all; nor she so special. I am a lady of six foot two, who had tucks taken in her legs. A comic turn, turned serious. (Weldon 1984, 240)

A 'comic turn' which is not very funny and all too real; or rather, which has very real implications in terms of the pressure on women to conform to culturally imposed emblems of femininity and beauty.

Elizabeth Jolley's short story, *The Last Crop* (1986), offers new perspectives to the emblem of the 'feminine' by placing her main character into a most conventional social role; the role of mother, caretaker and provider. In her story a working-class mother is trying to provide for her children. She works as a cleaner in luxury apartment buildings and she invites working-class friends in when the wealthy owners are out so that they may share, temporarily, the taste of the rich life. The mother can be seen as a 'conwoman' in the sense that she subverts the system by using her privilege for other ends. The mother-daughter line is central to this story, and the narrative unfolds through the daughter's first-person voice. The relationship between mother and daughter is revealed more through actions than through words, more through implications than statement. The reader is (implicitly) asked to identify with both the daughter and the mother; to see the story through the eyes of the daughter in order to understand the mother.

While the mother is aware of cultural representations of women (of what a woman should be), she is not limited by them, but capable of subverting them. Told that she and her family may live in her deceased father's house long enough to see the last crop in the adjacent fields, the mother searches through agricultural catalogues before choosing her crop. She sends off for the seedlings and when they arrive they are a surprise to the children.

> 'What are they?'
> 'They're our crop. The last crop.'
> 'Yes I know but what are they?'
> 'Them? Oh they're a jarrah forest,' Mother said.
> We looked at her.
> 'But that will take years and years to mature,' my brother said.
> 'I know,'...
>
> (Jolley 1986, 21)

The mother's ability to turn the 'gentleman's agreement to her children's advantage can be seen as opportunistic, 'unfeminine' or even 'wicked'. In order to be a 'good mother', Jolley's character acts as a 'bad woman'. But the power of the character lends such strength to her actions that she cannot possibly be seen as 'bad' in the same way as Carter's *Lady Purple* (1986). The phrase 'I know' is expression of the triumph of the mother as well as the author. In the end Jolley effectively steps out of the narrative and becomes visible: a woman writing about subversive stereotypes of women. What this opens up is the possibility that the author no longer offers the readers a particular spectator/viewer position, but invites them to explore the diversity of ideologies that make use of the icon associated with a particular gender role.

All of the stories can be viewed through the lens of a feminist perspective. But that is not to say that all stories written by women claim a unified viewpoint. The positions of these writers are vastly different, and not necessarily feminist. If feminist artists create 'evil' women, the intention is likely to be ironic and the effect subversive. By depicting women caught up and influenced by society's double standards for women, female fiction writers have been able to subvert even the most extreme icons: the Angelic woman and mother (a Virgin Mary icon) and the slut (the version of Mary Magdalene), two of the oldest female archetypes.[4]

Moreover, different readers take different positions, according to their own particular political stance. Women form many different cultures, and each succeeding generation should have written stories about women who actively revolt against cultural expectations of 'what women should be' (mothers, wives, nurturers...) The norms, and the characters who deviate from the traditional gender icons, will tend to do so in different, culturally specific ways. However, there is one common bond: these old-new icons, the anti-Angels are all depicted by their authors as representatives of something more than individual characters; they are daughters and mothers, lovers and friends, prostitutes and wives. But they are not 'real women'. In this sense, the female characters are representatives, just like Mrs Ramsay, Virginia Woolf's character from *To the Lighthouse* (1927), who went without a first name in order to highlight that a woman lacking full representation is seen as 'the Other' in male-created fictions as well as in real life, where the lack of her identity (i.e. their own way of seeing and speaking) is expressed by trading her name for that of her husband.

In feminist literature a great deal of attention has been given to the idea of 'reading against the grain,' together with the notions of 'position' and 'perspectives'. If a woman (character) works against representation and discards images that have always been serving the male gaze, it shows that in feminist iconology *female* is what is *against* representation as such as it is discussed in Bonner and Goodman's introductory study on *'Cultural Representations and Gender'* (F. Bonner, et al., 1995, 13) The authors also claim that an individual may have a particular perspective of looking at things, and also, as argued by cultural critic Donna Haraway 'the individual may have different perspectives at different points in time, different stages of her life, and under different circumstances'. The concept of 'different perspectives' is inseparable from the cultural representations of and by women. Quoting Harraway: "Feminism is about the sciences of the multiple subject with (at least) double vision. Feminism is about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in unhomogeneous gendered social space" (Haraway 1988, 589).

The double vision is present in shift from created to creator, represented to representer, as we examine the category 'woman' of which we are part. The critical issue is to acknowledge a gendered position, that is to establish the standing of the fe/male gaze. It is actually not a choice between using two sets of symbols, or iconologies, but rather, a choice between two kinds of plots. Although for a man the woman's plot is life-less, it is certainly less than...

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[4]   Kristeva claimed in 'Stabat Mater' (1986) that the woman is the virgin (Virgin Mary) and also the whore (Mary Mgdalene) at the same time.

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Cristian Réka Mónika

ALBEE'S CHILD ICON

The figure of the child in Edward Albee's dramatic works is the one that entails the enigma of the plays in which *it appears*. The most problematic words of the previous sentence are 'it' and 'appears.' I have used the word *it* to highlight the shift in the gender of the child, who has mostly been depicted as male in the playwright's dramas. However, in *The Play About the Baby* (1998), Albee's most explicit text as what the dramatic child icon is concerned, the figure of the infant finally transcends gender borders and becomes a pre-symbolic, genderless entity. The second problematic word of my introductory sentence is *'appears.'* This concerns the problematic existence of the child, its iconic representation, and the ways in which *it* is perceived into the textual realm of a selection of dramas. In other words, this essay centers on a few textual strategies that visualize the figure of the child through character descriptions and textual allusions. This 'appearance' covers an iconographic, formal quest I will further map in relation with Albee's dramatic figure of the child, who is the kernel of the playwright's dramatic grammar. At the same time, as a complementary, iconological facet of my quest I will also identify a few autobiographical elements, present as fundamental attitude in the construction of the icon (Panovsky qtd. in Sebeok 330–31) which, at a given time and in a specific culture conditioned the American playwright to shape the figure and character of the child in his plays.

The child figure in Albee's dramas stands as the emblem for the name of the author. By emblem here I mean the written sign composed of one or more elements –as textual descriptions– which are taken to have symbolic value (Sebeok 220) and which make up the grammar of similitudes that connect all child characters of the playwright's dramatic world. This figure has a powerful autobiographical connotation because Albee's dramas are filled with cross-references from his life. "I'm there in all of my plays, in all of the characters," Albee claims (Albee qtd. in Gussow 16). He keeps "close watch over his cards of identity" by "disguising himself in his art and playfully watching and gauging himself" (Gussow 20) in an inverted dramatic journal.

The figure of the child in Albee's plays becomes an "imagetext" that isomorphically translates itself from one drama into the other. This structural homology (Mitchell 1986, 20–21) is part of Albee's dramatic masterplot, in which the child becomes –to paraphrase Wittgenstein– a "tableau vivant…a state of [Albee's] affairs" (*Tr.* 4.0311). The child is in this context, both a proposition and a "picture of reality," even "a model of reality as we imagine it". The textual child is a proposition, a "language," which proves to be a picture, "even in the ordinary sense" of what it represents (*Tr.* 4.01). The semiotics of reality (Pasolini qtd. in Sebeok 329) is another strategy that might explain the abundance of iconic signs depicting the child figure in Albee's plays directly or indirectly alluding to the author.

In the following I will analyze the iconic representation and the gender shift of Edward Albee's dramatic child in the following plays: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1965), *Finding the Sun* (1983), *The American Dream* (1961), *The Play About the Baby* (1998), *A Delicate Balance* (1966), and in *Three Tall Women* (1991).

1. *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?*
AND THE ICON OF THE FICTIVE CHILD

The most intriguing image of the child appears in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The child does not exist *per se* as a character, he is absent and it is this absence that makes him omnipotent and even partially visible. However, he is present as a young boy that his parents' desires have figured. The child is the fifth figure of the play and constitutes the dramatic blindspot and the enigma of the drama (Cristian 153–56). The figure of the fictional child is fore-echoed in (Nick and) Honey's lack of children, in George's riddle-answer to Nick and in George's subsequent assumption that biology and genetics –Nick's field of research– will in the near future bring forth a new human form, which he ironically depicts "test-tube-bred," "incubator-born" babies with prefect looks (Albee 45). The son of Martha and George is a "comparative stranger" (Porter 227) that binds the couple together in the realm of love and hate. When *it* is mentioned for the first time Martha talks about the son in the deictic terms of "it." She says that she is sorry she brought "it up." George promptly corrects her: "Him up... not it" (Albee 48). The figure of the made-up, fictional child is the taboo of George and Martha. They agreed, in an almost mystical way, not to mention him to anybody else. On the contrary, they know he would be lost. Mel Gussow draws a parallel between the child's situation in the play and a past event in the playwright's life: his parents "made up" their child by adopting him.

It could be suggested that Reed and Frances Albee "made up" Edward, although, of course, he was the equivalent of their real son. When he left home (just before his twenty-first birthday), he banished himself –and they banished him– from their lives. After Edward left, one wonders if they spoke about him, and if so, how often they spoke about him and in what circumstances. Perhaps, like George and Martha, they imposed a restriction against such conversation – or perhaps not. It is possible that some, or all, of these thoughts were going through Albee's mind, or his subconscious, as he invented the idea of an imaginary child. (Gussow 157)

This imaginary child is symbolized in the play by the color *blue,* the color of his eyes. "He has blue eyes, Martha... Blue, Martha" (Albee 50). He is also *blond* as the *sun.* In the labor scene, Martha describes him as a "healthy child, a red, bawling child with slippery, firm limbs... and a full head of black, fine, fine hair, which... later, became blond as the sun, our son" (127). Martha later reinforces the son's link with the symbolism of the sun. She claims that the child loved the sun, that he was "tan before and after everyone" and that "in the sun his hair became... fleece" (129). The "fleece" connotes the figure of the scapegoat in the drama and it is a synecdoche of the "Poor lamb," as Martha later calls him. His existence makes the couple happy because he is a "comfort" and a "bean bag" for his parents, an expression Nick does not understand nor does George want him to understand because it is an esoteric expression of the couple, one that bounds them to the tabooed subject. George is proud to show a similarity with the invented child, and that turns out to be his paternal/logical partnership with the son. "I am sure of my partnership, my chromoso*mological partnership* in the... creation... of our... blond-eyed, blue-haired... son." (49). The child is called in several ways; he is the "son," "our son," "sonny-boy," "bouncey boy," "the apple of our eye... the sprout... the little bugger" (55). He is also "Sunny-Jim" his parents 'expect' home for his twenty-first birthday.

In the last part of the play the icon of the (fictional) son's place is taken by a (fictional) telegram that announces his death. George –as a modern Chronos– says that he "ate" the telegram. This news is to substitute the child's allegedly awaited presence. The figure of the sacrificed son bears physical semblance with that of the playwright as described in the Gussow's biography (65). However, the telegram embodies another real fact from Albee's life: it is delivered by the enigmatic figure a man called Crazy-Billy. This figure is modeled after Albee's best critic and

long-term companion, the composer William Flanagan, whom Edward Albee used to call "Billy" and who also worked for Western Union delivering telegrams (87). The son's birthday –and his sacrifice/death– is on a "September night." September is the ninth month of the year, a time period that corresponds to the length of a pregnancy. The fictional child of Martha and George is born presumably a Virgo. The Virgo primarily symbolizes intelligence and connotes someone that had been born out of wisdom, similar to Athena Pallas/Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, who sprung fully-grown out of her father's head. "Sunny-boy" also resembles the witty figure of Oedipus; he is said to have broken his arm, which alludes to the 'swollen leg' of the witty mythical figure. The son in *Virginia Woolf* is, therefore, symbolically born as a 'product' of his parents' intelligence.

Martha and George unveil the enigma of their love (and the enigma of the drama) through verbal, textual and cultural production of images. The result is a fictional son, an imaginary, alternative form of love that comes into being/picture in an academically connoted New England campus. Through the verbal strategy that shifts the words to images, the son who is not real, is made visible. The plot of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* builds a structure that Kaja Silverman –by paraphrasing Jacques Lacan– calls the "textual production of imaginary forms" (80–81). This textual production is similar to that of specific cultural representations described by György E. Szönyi that are in "symbiotic relationship" (249) with the discursive undercurrents of –in this case, contemporary American– working ideologies.

2. FINDING THE SUN AND THE SYMBOL OF THE SON

Finding the Sun is a dramatic allegory about the function of a son. The figure of the child is here a boy, Fergus, who sacrifices himself in exchange for the sun's new appearance. The play follows the route of the sun's ascent towards zenith and at the same time it focuses on the youngest character of the play that vanishes at the end. The title of the drama alludes to the sun symbolizing the male principle. The highest peak of the solar route is achieved when the oldest man in the play, Henden, dies and the youngest boy, Fergus, ripens to knowledge and consciousness. In this context, the logic behind the words of *sun* and *son* links the meaning of the first in the second. The sun, according to C. E. Cirlot represents the *Sol in homine* or "the invisible essence of the celestial Sun that nourishes the inborn fire of *Man*" (319). In this context, it is the sun that symbolically calls for a visible icon that turns out to be Fergus, who represents the momentarily unrepresentable sun. The link between the idea of the *son* and the solar body, the *sun*, is already emphasized on the first page of the play. The drama opens with the expression "finding the sun," a wish and an invocation that is uttered nine times by each of the participating characters. Fergus, the protagonist of the play, is the blond, handsome, healthy kid with a swimmer's body, one that resembles young Albee's (Gussow 65). Fergus disappears at the end of the drama when "[t]he sun's returning" (Albee 39). Fergus's name is repeated nine times like the initial nine-fold wish to find the sun. This time, the 'sun' is the human body of the 'son' who is textually sacrificed to make possible the return of the sunrays. The relationship between Fergus, the son and the sun, as the source of life, is made obvious since the drama opens with the search for the celestial body turns back when Fergus disappears for ever.

3. *THE AMERICAN DREAM*
AND THE CHILD ICON AS THE INVISIBLE TWIN

In *The American Dream,* Albee's vision of the child is primarily that of the twins. He envisages a construction of identical twins, who mirror the playwright's obsessions with his adoption and with the idea of having had a brother or sister, "perhaps even an identical twin" (Gussow 22). The little boy in *The American Dream* is 'bought' by Mommy and Daddy from an adoption agency, who are then dissatisfied with their purchase. They, accordingly, torn him to pieces and then ask for a guarantee child from the adoption agency. While the domestic plot unfolds, it turns out that the dismembered child had a twin brother, who has become the iconic stereotype of the American Dream. He is called the Young Man because he has no proper name. The Young Man is a handsome person with cinematic looks, one that "ought to be in the movies" (51). The icon of the Young Man recalls the young playwright who had, according to the Gussow biography, a similar body to that of this character (41, 65). Grandma sees the Young Man as the impersonation and embodiment of the American Dream, one that only lives at the iconic level of appearance, and then invests him with the function of the "van man."

> YOUNG MAN. [...] I' almost as young as I look [...] Clean-cut, midwest farm boy type, almost insultingly good-looking in a typically American way. Good profile, straight nose, honest eyes, wonderful smile...
> GRANDMA. ... You're the American Dream, that's what you are. All those other people, they don't know what they're talking about. You... you are the American Dream. (51)

He is the visible site for the dramatic blindspot of the play. The invisible blindspot is the baby that had been once brought/adopted and then dismembered and killed by its foster parents. The baby is also described by Grandma, the omniscient character of the play. She roughly depicts the baby as a "bumble" and focuses less on its iconic, visible parts than on his behavioral patterns. Grandma's descriptions compare the twins: the Young Man has its good looks (a condition *sine qua non* for the consumerist society and for the guarantee replacement), but the baby is the one that had character and personality (that did not survive in the domestic market economy of his parents).

> GRANDMA. ...they bought something very much like a bumble, and they took it away with them [...] it turned out that the bumble didn't look like either of its parents [...] as it got bigger they found out all sorts of terrible things about it, like: it didn't have a head on its shoulders, it had no guts, it was spineless, its feet were made of clay... just dreadful things ...for the last straw, *it* finally up and died. (46–48)

The van man is a fictional construct of Mommy and Daddy, which is made flesh by Grandma's intelligent verbal games. The Young Man confesses that he lost his mother; he never knew his father and had an "identical" twin brother who was separated and taken away from him. "We were torn apart", the Yong Man says. His brother was, at his turn, torn apart by his new parents. The Young Man felt that his twin brother's life was over because once his heart "became numb" as if the mutilation was taking place in his own body. From that moment on he was never able to love; this was the moment when Mommy and Daddy actually dismembered his twin brother out of sheer mercantile strategy of getting a better child instead as a guarantee product. The "van man" is a fictive character similar to the son of Martha and George from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The reality of the van man's existence is confirmed by Mrs. Barker from the Bye-Bye Adoption Service, the agency that sold the little boy to Mommy and Daddy. As an excellent

opportunist, Mrs. Barker posits this van man as the guarantee-substitute for the wrong child, whom the parents destroyed.

> MRS.BARKER. The van man. The van man was here…
> MOMMY [*near tears*]. No, no that's impossible. No. There's no such thing as the van man. There is no van man. We… we made him up. (58)

The Young Man seems very familiar to Mommy and Daddy, but also to Grandma. He resembles the blindspot-child of the drama. Mommy says he is "more like *it*", "a great more deal like *it*". "*It*" is the dead child, which did not have a name. Grandma's recognition materializes in a threefold repetition of the phrase "you look familiar" (53). The newcomer "van man," bitterly and melancholically answers to the threefold recognition in terms of the Platonic doxa: "I am incomplete, and I must therefore… compensate" (55). This doxa promises an end that secures economic fulfillment for the American Dream couple (Mommy and Daddy) and for The Young Man, who has fulfilled in the meantime the American Dream function within the nuclear family (besides his American Dream looks).

4. *A DELICATE BALANCE*
AND THE ICON OF THE ABSENT CHILD

A Delicate Balance is the textual icon of Teddy, the dead son of Tobias and Agnes. The icon of the male child sublimates in the character of his sister, Julia, and in her ex-husband, Charlie, who was the most beloved of all of Julia's former spouses. Tobias and Agnes "pushed" Julia to marry Charlie because he was "so alike" Teddy and this similitude has affected all family members:

> JULIA. Do I pick 'em [husbands]? …
> TOBIAS [*grudging*]. Well, you may have been pushed on Charlie…
> JULIA. Poor Charlie.
> TOBIAS [*temper rising a little*]. Well, for Christ's sake, if you miss him so much…
> JULIA. I do not miss him! Well, yes, I do, but not that way. Because he seemed so alike what Teddy would have been.
> TOBIAS [*quiet anger and sorrow*]. Your brother would not have grown up to be a fag.
> JULIA. Who is to say? (49)

Teddy is the physically absent character, to whom the family and friends directly or indirectly relate. The reason of his death is not mentioned, but it might have been a "fright," the "plague," the "terror" of his recognition in being *other* than he was socially and culturally supposed to be. Claire, the sister of Agnes, introduces the deictic figure of Teddy, when the frightened Harry and Edna arrive at the house of Agnes and Tobias. Claire wonders when "*it*"would begin when "it" would start." Nobody seems to recognize the referent of her sentence. This referent is also labeled as "the fright," and "the terror" which are "the same" thing that the uninvited friend-couple brings in the house. Julia reacts and even over-reacts at the arrival of the uninvited guests and their unsaid and euphemized 'thing' they cannot name. Julia's hysterical symptoms (at the sight of the guests) refer back to a metaphoricized "skinning of her knees" that happened after Teddy's death when she found out the "cheating" of her father and his friend, Harry, both with the same woman. Her nervous reactions link the fright of the guests with the silenced, elegiac atmosphere of Teddy's lack. The repressed confrontation with the trauma of losing Teddy, the beloved son, is made real with the coming and the possible departure of the guests. As in *Who's*

Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, all the characters from this play are "afraid" that the "delicate balance" of the visible, superficial, iconic world will break with the mere mentioning of the "plague" that has come upon them. The "plague" might also involve Tobias and Harry, whose friendship is more than superficial; it also holds a delicate balance.

It is Julia's mediation through which the blindspot Teddy becomes visualized. For a long time after his death, Julia could not come in terms with herself. The death of the brother marked her life and she remained traumatically silent as she symbolically substituted him. This play depicts the icon of the missing male child made visible through that of its sister that fails all her marriages and comes home in order to be able to overcome the trauma of losing everyone she loves. Julia represents the iconic level and Teddy, as the dramatic blindspot, becomes the proairetic code that stands at the center of all action and diction in the drama.

5. *THREE TALL WOMEN*
AND THE PORTRAIT OF THE CHILD AS A YOUNG MAN

The figure of the child is in the autobiographical drama entitled *Three Tall Women* that of the gay son. He is the silent Young Man of the play, also called The Boy. In act two the character C describes him as "how nice, how handsome, how very…" (89) The sentence is not finished, nor the description finalized and the image of the Young Man ends in silence similar to his tacit mood. He is "23 or so" dressed in a "preppy dress, jacket, tie, shirt, jeans, loafers" (Cast). The female characters of A, B and C are hostile towards him because of his homosexuality, which they cannot accept, and, thus taboo the subject. The repressed figure of the Young Man is a self-portrait of Albee in the play. The young man does not talk, in fact he does not utter a sound. His presence is only physical, he acts on an iconic level.

The situation depicted in *Three Tall Women* is echoes that of Albee and his mother, as the Mel Gussow biography shows (28, 150). In act one the character A says, "he loves his boys, those boys he has… He doesn't love me and I don't know if I love him" (59). Similar to A, Frances Albee never accepted her son's homosexuality, who then ran away from home and came back only to pay formal visits, when Frances Albee was old and ill. However, in real life, the mother never forgave Edward. She never had a tender word for her son, disinherited him and died without any sign of affection towards the child who was longing for *it*.

6. *THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY*
AND THE CHILD AS THE BABY ICON

The Play About the Baby brings into the focus the figure of the child as questioned presence. The child is a baby around whom the entire play is built upon. Similar to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* the text is the child's mystery play and its (de)constructed image in the eyes of the Boy, Girl, Man and Woman, the four participants in the emotional terrorism of the drama. *The Play* is about a genderless baby does, in the pre-symbolic phase of its evolution and alludes, as *The American Dream* to the processes prior to a possible and probable adoption by Man and Woman, who seem to have kidnapped the child of Boy and Girl. Kidnapping is seen as Albee's personal way of reading the procedures of (his own) adoption (Gussow 15, 45). No proper names are given to the characters, nor are specific characterization given to them. The baby is invisible, "*we do not see the baby merely its blanket*" (6). *It* is called "baby-poo" (27) on one hand, and the "so-

called baby" (42) on the other. As its name is questioned so is its existence. The Girl and the Boy are told they do not really have a/the baby. The play starts with an offstage cry of an infant and then evolves into a linguistic labyrinthine search for the lost child

> GIRL. "WHERE IS THE BABY?! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE BABY?
> MAN. What baby? (Silence)
> WOMAN. Yes, what baby? *(Tableau)* (28)

While tension unfolds, the Man – who has come with the Woman to "take the baby" – defines what a child is in terms of being related to the world it inhabits:

> MAN. ... What is a baby?... What is a baby? A baby... *what*? A baby mouse?, a baby kangaroo?, a baby wolverine?, a baby ...*baby*. A human baby, an almost, not quite yet human baby – no larger than, well, somewhat larger than that "great divide." (36)

At the end of the verbal contour about the baby the reader expects the (re)appearance of the infant, that has been, presumably covered in the blanket, in *it*s second (s)kin. The Man, with the skill of a language magician dis*covers* the state of affairs, that is, the baby's absence and its iconic representation into "nothing":

> MAN. Ladies and Gentlemen! See what we have here! The baby bundle! The old bundle of baby! *(Throws it up in the air, catches it, Girl screams)* [...] *(To Boy and Girl)* I know what I 'm doing.... The old baby bundle treasure of treasures, light of our lives, purpose [...] well, all the everything. Now the really good part, the part we've all been waiting for! *(He takes the bundle, snaps it open, displays both sides, we see there is nothing there.)* [...] You see? Nothing! No baby! Nothing! *(Girl goes to blanket, Man gives it to her, she searches it, cuddles it, weeps. To Girl)* You see? Nothing. (48)

Asked about the existential uncertainty of this character, the playwright claims that the baby is "real even though we don't actually see *it*." (Albee qtd. in Gussow 398). However, what we see/read is a "blanket" that symbolizes the child, and which matches ideological and religious representation of children in Western iconology. The infant's real or fake nature is determined by subjective interpretive needs: while Girl and Boy "realize they cannot take the pain and loss of having a baby, so it ceases to be real" (Gussow 398). The child in this play is a reality created by Girl's and Boy's need for *it* and another one re-created by Man and Woman in *it*s absence as an echo structure of Albee's earlier play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Edward Albee's plays depict the child icon on the basis of an "isomorphic dramatic structure" (Cristian 253) that centers on the character of the child. The figure of the child is drawn as a textual picture that follows gendered frames ranging from that of the male child to that of the non-gendered infant. Albee's child iconography is, to a certain extent, a personal *mise en abîme*, which multiplicates in variant dramatic forms. In *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* the figure of child is created as a tabooed icon of a young boy, a son. He is not visible, we can only read/hear about him in his parents' verbal (re)presentations. In *Finding the Sun* the child icon is that of a sexually ambiguous young male that provides a continuation of the solar, element. While this *son* vanishes at the end, he is objectified; it is the male principle of the *sun* that will further represent him at a visible, iconic level. *The American Dream* creates a double image of the child: an icon of twin males: the iconic child is the Young Man or the American Dream itself, while the baby boy's figure is obscured. *A Delicate Balance* deals with the icon of a virtually absent gay child that governs the grammar of the play's plot through the body of his sister. In other words, *it* is a trans-gendered iconic body. *Three Tall Women*'s child icon is the gay male body of the Boy. *The Play About the Baby* brings into question the baby itself, a genderless infant who seems to

iconicize the very essence of all Albee's child figures. Albee's child icon makes thus a complex gender journey; it is one of the visual identity games of the playwright, who gives insights into out his real identity mostly through his plays (Gussow 16, 403). The dramatic icon of Albee's child figure starts from the masculine construction of the fictive son *(Who's Afraid...)*, to that of a baby boy substituted with a Young Man *(The American Dream)*. The all masculine icon changes then to a sexually ambiguous young boy, Fergus *(Finding the Sun)*, through a trans-gender process when a gay boy, Teddy, is represented by a feminine character, Julia *(A Delicate Balance)* or explicitly gay man (the boy in *Three Tall Women*). Finally, the icon of the child transgresses all gender borders and turns back as if closing a circle of development, to a pre-symbolic phase, that of the baby *(The Play About the Baby)*. All of Albee's dramas bear strong resemblance to the life and body of the playwright, as Gussow writes passim in the biography of the author. To paraphrase W. J. T. Mitchell, it is nature versus conventionally constructed images (1994, 75–94) that gives extra credits in the interpretation of given works. The construction of Albee's child icon recalls Saul Steiner's drawing of *The Spiral* (1964) –quoted from Harold Rosenberg's 1978 text for the Whitney Museum catalog by Mitchell (1994, 40–41)– in which a man draws a spiral line, which then draws the space that is visualized as "the life of the artist who lives by its own existence. [H]e becomes the line itself and finally, when the spiral is closed, he becomes nature".

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Gendered Imageries

of

Cultural Practices

Urszula Szulakowska

GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN ALCHEMICAL IMAGERY, RENAISSANCE AND POST-MODERN

The paper will focus on the iconography of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity when it is encountered as an image in a late Renaissance alchemical context.

The psychological content of the original Christian doctrine has been extensively analysed by C. G. Jung. His well-known argument discusses the effects of the dogma of Father-Son and Holy Spirit whose nature is described as being pure Spirit. Jung has argued that such a characterisation excludes from the Godhead the feminine gender whose nature is converse to that of the Holy Trinity in consisting of physical matter with negative connotations. Jung, in fact, argued that the very existence of evil in human behaviour resulted from this archetypal concept of a totally masculine, totally spiritual God (Jung: 1995, 49–71). Due to the exclusion of physical forces from the nature of God a severe psychological repression was created within the sub-sconscious European mind. As a result the suppressed femininised materiality transformed itself into the form of destructive forces as the 'shadow side' of human nature (Jung 1995, 95–97). Jung analysed the manner in which alchemical theory attempted to compensate for this absent feminine 'fourth' within God. In fact, Jung interpreted the references to alchemical 'matter' in Jung as being the human unconscious and by alchemical 'spirit' the conscious mind, or ego (Jung 1993, 280–316).

The present paper intends to use Jung's alchemised psychology as an entry-point into the discussion of symbols of repressed sexual desire in contemporary Western art practice, specifically male homosexual or bisexual iconographies. Analytical models drawn from Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic gender theory will also be used. Jungian analysis, however, contributes a unique method of addressing such explorations of gendering and desire in some contemporary art made by male artists who often employ alchemical, or other esoteric symbols.

Jung defined the essential aim of alchemy and its raison d'etre as being the reconciliation of the opposition of matter and spirit, represented respectively by female and male genders. Hence, the dominating image of the alchemists was that of the hermaphrodite, or androgyne, the product of the union of male and female as the philosopher's stone, the Rebis or dual-thing (Jung 1993, 228–41).

Occasionally in an alchemical, religious or artistic text, however, a gender imbalance appears in the androgynous Rebis. In place of the intended hieroglyph of harmony, of union in diversity, there manifests instead a half-conscious, male, homosexual text. This text in the late Renaissance is a regressive one, non-intentional due to historical conditions for there was no public discourse of homosexuality, apart from that of male Platonic love. There was no acceptable way for expressing overt erotic desire such as later emerged in the nineteenth century. In fact, what is found in alchemy and also in any modern or post-modern art that borrows alchemical motifs (such as the paintings of Francesco Clemente) is a regressive model of homosexual behaviour. It is most comprehensible when examined from the standpoint of the son's repressed desire for the body of the father.

This little-discussed relationship has been studied by the cultural theorist Anthony Easthope in his examination of Freudian model of the male toddler's responses to the primal taboo against incest with the mother's body. The daughter transfers her desire from the body of the mother

through that of the father to her lover. The son, however, according to Freud, misses out the intermediary stage of the father and transfers directly from the mother to his bride. The son's transference of his desire to the body of the father is not acknowledged. Easthope points out that it is a desire of a feminising quality which is socially repressed at the very moment of its appearance, so unacceptable is it to the heterosexual models of desire dominant in our society. Easthope argues that the refusal to acknowledge the intermediary stage of the son's desire for the father produces an even deeper repression than that of desire for the mother. (Freud had considered this to be the fundamental repression within the psyche). The girl-child in contrast is allowed, even encouraged, by Freud to express her emotional, even erotic bonds to her father. (This is a negative emotional condition, in fact, since it is a mechanism which keeps her imprisoned within the primal family unit. Freud considered her incapable of developing the super-ego of the social, politicised self).

Easthope argued that the son's deep repression of his homosexual emotions underlies the aggressive codes of masculine bonding and repressed homo-erotic rituals in society (for example. pub-culture, football, as well as the violence of serial killers). The unspoken desire coded into the psyche of the male-child causes the maturation process to proceed in an errant manner (Easthope 1986, 17–26).

On the path to adult heterosexual desire the little boy has to find a way between two dangers. If he has been too submissive to the father he must challenge him for the mother's love, otherwise he'll never come to take the role of the father. On the other hand, if he attacks the father too much and refuses to accept castration, he remains rebellious and infantile, unable to give up his attachment to the mother. The two possibilities correspond to the two sides of the little boy's sexuality, or rather bisexuality. His heterosexual side seeks the mother and opposes the father. But his homosexual side tries to avoid the father's threat by taking the mother's place and becoming the object of the father's love.

It is exactly this divided sexuality that the myth of masculinity wants to deny. Although men are always both masculine and feminine, the myth demands that they should be masculine all the way through ...(Easthope 1986, 19)

The effect of the taboo of incest with the mother has already resulted, according to Freud, in the temporary suspension of the male infant's sexual desire. Easthope argues that it may result in the temporary feminisation of the son who is not yet mature enough to leave the primal family in order to found his own family. Due to the pathological process of gendering that operates in traditional patriarchal societies, anyone whose sexual desire is rendered passive is automatically cast in a feminine role. Even in contemporary western society the male gender is still privileged as being the norm, while female experience is cast in the role of the outsider.

In fact, these same qualities can be encountered in Christian iconography, often expressed both in high art and in religious popular images of Jesus as the Suffering Son of God.

... Jesus is the son who remains entirely subservient to the father and who accordingly shows only his femininity. Jesus does not marry and his interest in women in the New Testament is not sexual. ...Instead of challenging the father for the bride he passively endures the father's aggression and is penetrated by thorns and nails...Jesus' passivity follows from the absence of the mother, the vacuum left by Mrs. God. The Christian Father has no wife and therefore Jesus has no object to desire and to contest with the father. This is the most powerful myth in the whole Western tradition. Its version of masculinity celebrates the son's feminine love for his father and complete obedience to him (Easthope 25).

The feminisation of Jesus' features has an appealing softness, especially in the devotional iconography established by the Counter-Reformation in the seventeenth century cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is not just that youthful beauty is essentially bisexual and hence de-

signed to appeal emotionally both to Christ's male and female religious lovers. The issue of Christ's homosexual Sonship in Christian imagery is especially signified by the cultist emphasis on his broken and especially on his opened body, the wound in the side, the holes of the nails, the open chest exposing the heart. Examples of this are Trecento images such as Giotto's rendering of the feminised flesh on the sinuous body of Christ crucified (*Crucifixion*, Florence: S. M. Novella). A later fifteenth century fresco by Ghirlandaio depicts Christ in a submissive masculine: his downward look, his body swinging off-centre in a feminised contraposto (*Baptism of Christ*, Florence: S. M. Novella).

Recent studies on the iconography associated with medieval European surgery have discussed the psycho-pathology of the gendering-process whereby the wounded, open body is regarded as being femininised. The process of cutting-open this body is spoken of in the terminology of rape since it breaks the taboo against the opening of the mother's body, the revealing of her sex (Sawday 1995, 119–21, 193–205).

Jung went a stage further than Freud in considering some aspects of this Father-Son relation, specifically the bisexual nature of the Son of God, regarding the image of Christ as a mytheme. Jung also analysed the parallel myth of the Shadow of Christ, Lucifer or Satan, who was similarly bisexual but rejected by the Father and cast into the outer darkness. Jung considered that the Christianised Trinity had lost important elements found in pre-Christian, especially gnostic trinitarian ontologies. Alchemy, in contrast, had inherited the original Hermetic Trinity, as found in the Emerald Table of Hermes Trismegistos which had incorporated matter, expressed in the symbol of the moon (itself a metaphor for 'earth'). In Christianity, according to Jung, a fourth had had to be invented to compensate for the loss of the corporeal element which had now taken a demonic form. Satan had fallen and was now trapped and enveloped in matter, indeed he had become the essence of matter. He was the direct opposite of the pure third, Son of God, Christ and of the Church's official fourth element, slightly subsidiary to the Trinity, the Virgin Mary (Jung: 1993, 152, 306, 420, 446). In alchemy Mercurius is the primal matter of the process, also conceptualised as being trapped in matter and requiring release and purification. Mercury in alchemy has the qualities of Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and also of the shadow Fourth or Satan (Jung 1993, 65ff, 132, 188, 420, 425).

The traditional theology of Christ is historically related to that of the pre-Christian 'Anthropos', the bisexual 'Son of Man', whose cult already existed in the second century BC in Palestine, Syria and Egypt. The myth was related to that of the Vedic 'Purusha' in India of the fourth, even fifth century BC (Jung 1993, 304, 368, 392). He re-appears in Paracelsian alchemical cosmology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the macrocosmic man, as in Robert Fludd's alchemical illustrations in the *Utriusque Cosmi …Historia* (Frankfurt 1617). In Gnostic religious beliefs Anthropos was the universal soul who had incarnated within his own creation and had become trapped. He was androgynous because he was the primal All whose subtle body-matter contained all subsequent manifestation. In the esoteric alchemical theosophies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphiteatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (Hanau 1609) influenced by hermetic, neoplatonic, gnostic and cabbalistic influences such ideas were confused and conflated with Christian doctrine and then reinvented as metaphors of the alchemical process.

Within alchemical imagery there exist homosexual discourses in which the Son, Mercury, is feminised and plays the role usually reserved for the feminine principle, the Moon or Silver. The Son becomes the Bride of the Father, undergoing the 'coniunctio' with him through the process of the father's death, as if the father could not be allowed to become conscious of the son's desire.

This is illustrated in the early seventeenth century German treatise of the nobleman Lamb-springk. Within a set of diverse alchemical emblems and associated poetic texts, he includes the story of a king and his son. A third, winged figure acts as 'dux', a guide. It is clear that these figures are drawn from images of the Christian Trinity, as is made manifest in the 'Undecima Figura':

Pater, Filius, cum ductore, sibi sunt juncti manibus, Corpus, Spiritus et Anima, hic subintelligitur (*Musaeum Hermeticum* 1678, 363).
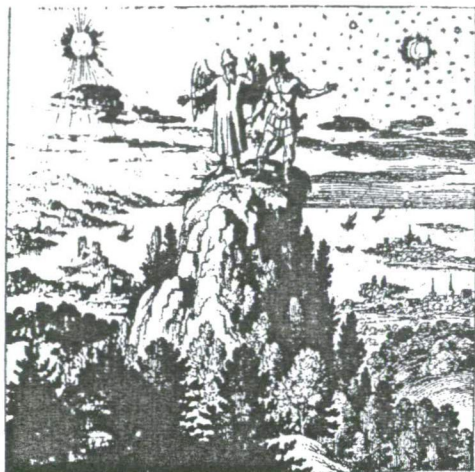

Fig. 1.
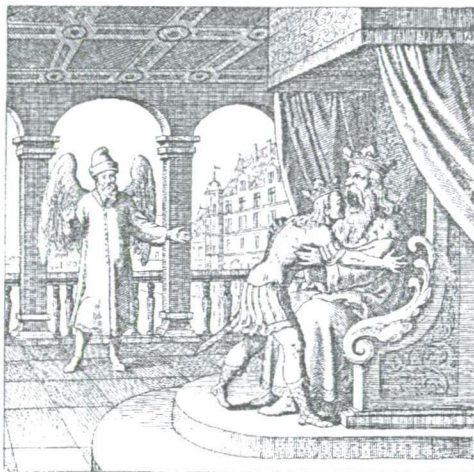
Fig. 2.

The Son runs away with the 'dux' and is depicted in an engraving *(Fig. 1)* standing with him on a mountain-top, as in the New Testament account of the temptation of Christ by Satan. Meanwhile, in the absence of the Son the Father dies from sorrow and yearning. He revives when the Son returns. Embracing him the Father devours him, moved by the intensity of his love *(Fig. 2)*.

> Tuus enim reditus hoc mihi confert gaudium.
> Cum vero domum patris ingrederetur filius,
> Hunc Pater manibus amplexatur,
> Praenimioque gaudio hunc deglutivit,
> Idque proprio sui ipsius ore.
> Pater hic praenimia visudat.

(*Musaeum Hermeticum* 1678, 366–67)

The Father subsequently develops an illness, during which he prays that his Son may be led out of his body. In answer to his prayer, God sends down rain which fertilizes the Father's body. In this astonishing imagery there is surely every indication of the masculine condition of 'womb-envy' *(Fig. 3)*. In this account the masculine gender of both Father and Son is unstable, since they take on feminine qualities at different points in the story. The devouring of the Son is equivalent to the stage of sexual union of male and female principles in other alchemical treatises. Eating human flesh is a metaphor of sexual copulation.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

According to the text, the Father is now transformed into liquid and a new Father and new Son are duly created out of this embryonic fluid. Hencefor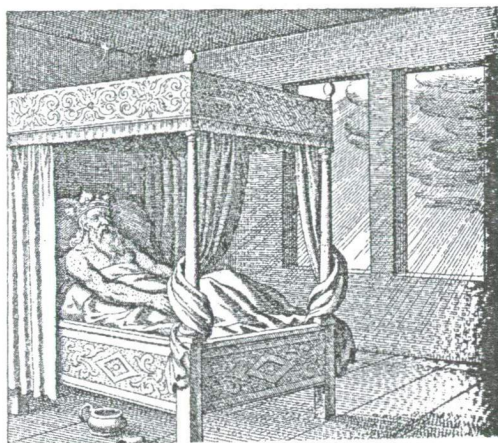ward, the Son always remains in the Father and the Father always in the Son, paraphrasing the New Testament. This union yields innumerable fruits, eternal and imperishable. They sit on one seat in the last engraving *(Fig. 4)* which is captioned

> Hic Pater et Filius in unum sunt copulati,
> Ut simul in aeternam manent (*Musaeum Hermeticum*. 1678, 371).

A parallel account of alchemical homosexual union is encountered in the late sixteenth engravings illustrating the treatise of Petrus Bonus of Ferrara, *Pretiosa Margarita Novella*. The six sons of the King (imperfect metals) pray to their Father for their inheritance (*Pretiosa Margarita*: 1546, 1st page). On refusing, a male warrior appears, not identified by the text, who kills the Father King. Is this one of his sons, or a henchman, or his alter ego? The two are shut-away in the tomb (or alchemical vessel, or furnace) by a figure who probably represents the alchemist. Like the male and female principle in main-

Fig. 5.

stream alchemical texts, the Son and Father putrefy together *(Fig. 5)*. Totally dissolved, only their bones remain, jumbled and confused. However, they eventually receive a new soul from heaven and the resurrected King and his six crowned sons are depicted in the last illustration.
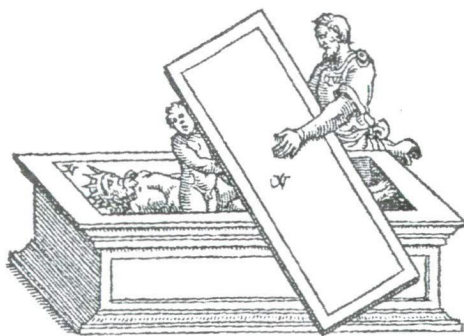
Alchemical changes in gender constantly re-appear in later alchemical imagery. In the account of Eugene Canseliet, the twentieth century French alchemist, he claims to have seen Fulcanelli (the legendary nineteenth century alchemist) transformed into a woman (Rayner Johnson 1980, 265). Similarly there are incidents of such trasngendering, though not always linked to homosexual desire, in modernist art, for example, Marcel Duchamp's alter-ego 'Rrose Selavy', though perhaps only loosely connected to his alchemical interests. In the case of certain woman

artists, however, gender changes are directly related to an alchemical context. For example, they are central to the work of both Leonora Carrington from the 1930s and in post-modern art to that of Rebecca Horn from the 1970s. Moreover, although gender changes are used in relation to the artists' heterosexual desire, there is, paradoxically, a *male* homosexual discourse hovering in the shadows.

Carrington changed her own gender in her fictional self, turning into the boy 'Francis', for example, in *Little Francis* (Carrington 1937). This story reflects her stay at Saint-Martin-d'Ardeche with the artist Max Ernst. Ernst became 'Uncle Ubriaco' and their real passion was turned into a non-sexual relationship between an older 'guru' and a young acolyte. Thereby, Carrington was able to investigate her own ambivalent attitudes towards herself as a woman, her frustration at being a girl due to the contemporary constraints placed on women. When out riding, she felt as free as if she had suddenyl changed sex and become a boy, or Joan of Arc (Warner 1991, 11). Her early painting of *The Inn of the Dawn Horse* expresses this constant longing for a freedom which was possible only by adopting a dual gender, or by regressing to the amorphous sexual nature of a child.

In fact, the shape-shifting beings evoked by Carrington tend to be androgynous, or a-sexual. In her story *The Stone Door* (1946) the female White Child is given the quality of Fire and is represented by the astrological sign of the Ram, although these are always masculine attributes in historical alchemical sources. Meanwhile, Zaccharias' quality is Air and he is equated with the female sign of the Scales, associated with Venus. In this reversal of gender-roles, Carrington has firmly asserted the active character of the female alchemical principle, the White Child.

Carrington's fictional 'maidens' are extremely strange in appearance and not altogether human. This factor could be related to an aspect of female psychology noted by Jung in his investigation of Kore (Maiden) in the Persephone myth (Jung 1951, 151–81). In these stories, the feminine psyche has an innate affinity to animals (Colvile 1993: 162–67) and Kore may even change gender in dreams to emerge as a king's or witch's son (Jung 1951, 159, 195–96, 200). In *Little Francis* (1938), the boy Francis is a persona of Carrington herself and he grows a horse's head when he is abandoned by Uncle Ubriaco, signifying that his instinctual nature has risen to the surface (Chadwick 1985, 75–79). In a paper published in *Cauda Pavonis* I wrote that one of Carrington's major semiotic enterprises was her attempt to produce an androgynous sign, uniting male and female forces. Carrington's novel *The Hearing Trumpet* (London 1988) similarly explores androgyny.

Carrington's feminist alchemy is recounted in her memoire of a mental breakdown in 1940 in an asylum in Santander in Spain where she was subjected to injections with the drug Cardiazol. Carrington experienced a vision of herself as the Universal Alchemist, a supreme deity in specifically female form, who had the power to transmute the chaos created by the male trinitarian god into spiritual gold. In *Down Below* (begun in August 1943 in Mexico and published in 1944), she describes the alchemical ritual that she performed when her personal items were returned to her (Carrington 1988, 196). Carrington viewed this performance as an act of alchemical redemption in which she took the character of "the Sun-Christ-Holy Ghost", as the Divine Androgyne.

> ... I was an androgyne, the Moon, the Holy Ghost ... The son was the Sun and I the Moon, an essential element of the Trinity... I knew that Christ was dead and done for, and that I had to take his place, because the Trinity, minus a woman and microscopic knowledge, had become dry and incomplete. Christ was replaced by the Sun. I was Christ on the earth in the person of the Holy Ghost (Carrington 1988, 195).

What Carrington and Horn do is to short-circuit the stage of the alchemical hermaphrodite, the product of the sacred marriage, by returning instead to an earlier hermetic mytheme, that of the pre-sexual, androgynous state of the child. In their work, an attempt is made to elevate this bisexual infant into a poetic symbol of complete integrity of being.

Rebecca Horn similarly offers a tentative answer to the problem of sexual antagonism between the sexes in her exploration of androgyny. The theme appears primarily in her films *Der Eintanzer* (1978) and in *La Ferdinanda: Sonate fur eine Medici Villa* (1981) whose central protagonists are emaciated ballerinas in early pubescence. In the film *La Ferdinanda* the main character, a young girl, a ballerina aged about twelve or thirteen, is a passive witness to the play of adult sexual passions which results in the death of one of the male protagonists. Horn uses the character of the girl to criticise the stereotyped heterosexuality of the girl's mother and her lover. The girl silently watches the insincere display of affection between the two which she knows to be a cover for her mother's powerful manipulation of other people. The girl's strength is suggested in her refusal to betray her own inner integrity. She makes independent, unusual choices in her own, incipient, emotional life which indicate the possibility of alternatives to conventional sexual interaction (Guggenheim 1993, Pl. 26, 73–74).

The idea of a heterogeneous sexual being, a creature of the pre-Symbolic realm prior to sexual distinction, also haunted Horn's early performance work. She created exotic, bondage/ bandage-like fabric constructions for the young female performers, the most striking of which was the male-female *Unicorn (Einhorn)* (1971). The garment consisted of a white leotard which left the female breasts exposed, while the head-piece consisted of a prominent phallic horn, nearly as tall as the woman beneath (Guggenheim 1993, Pl. 4). Horn's androgyne was female, a young girl with some of the qualities of boyish pre-pubescence. Hence the common-stock of humanity, the norm for Rebecca Horn was female.

In the case of some male artists who venture on the same alchemical theme of androgyny, or bisexual desire, the results are far less confident. Few genuine resolutions are offered to the dilemma of the unproductive conflict between masculine and feminine in the socio-psychological arena. Dualistic imagery, attempting to unite male and female forms, has been especially investigated since the 1980s by Francesco Clemente of the so-called Italian transavant-garde. His work should be contextualised within the problematic and traumatised imagery of other Italian painters, such as Sandro Chia and Enzo Cucchi, who in the late 1980s similarly dealt with the theme of masculine impotency and castration. This theme of the loss of masculine identity seemed to be most explicitly explored by Italian transavantgarde artists.

Feminist and post-modernist attacks in the 1970s and 1980s on the high tradition of modernism had led to the questioning of the role of the male painter as hero and prophet of western culture. The crisis in the masculine language of painting became the central element in post-modernist artistic criticism. As a result there emerged some ironic and self-pitying imagery on the part of artists such as the Italians Stefano di Stasio, Bruno Ceccobelli and Claudio Parmiggiani in the 1980s. These male painters tried to renegotiate a place for themselves and for their art-practice by returning to the alchemical myth of suffering and redemption. Thereby, they hoped to retrieve the threatened shamanic/ prophetic character of the avant-garde, male artist which had been established in the earlier years of the twentieth century by the Futurists, Constructivists and Surrealists. Unfortunately, this return to the early modernist myth also involved restoring its invidious sexual stereotypes. In fact, these metaphors were drawn from the sexual imagery of medieval and Renaissance alchemy.

Francesco Clemente's work is rather more complex than that of the above group of artists. Instead of cathartic pain and anguish, Clemente has painted his images in a spirit of cool, ananlytical detachment. He is, perhaps, the most intellectual transavantgardist, since is aware of

the anti-modernist critique which aimed to discredit the rhetoric of the heroic male artist that was central.to the modernist enterprise. Hence, Clemente uses psycho-analytic linguistic theory in relation to the composition of his paintings and he engages in a semiotic quest, like the alchemists of the Renaissance (and like Carrington and Horn though with different results), for a type of sign which can unite oppositions and cancel dualities, whether linguistic, sexual or psychological.

Moreover, Clemente overtly negotiates in his paintings aspects of what seems to be his own personal, bisexual nature through his use of images of the androgyne, as well as through a series of self-portraits located in a difficult visual relationship to portraits of his mother. In fact, Clemente's work is more easily interpretable in conventional Freudian psycho-analytic terms. (The works of women artists such as Carrington and Horn require other types of linguistic psycho-analytic tools, such as the post-Lacanian theories of Kristeva and Cixous). Clemente's restless questing for a resolution to his inability to define the nature of his own sexual desire (let alone of his sexual gender) are frescos in which he is shown cocooned and bandaged with his mother to form an alchemical emblem of the two-headed hermaphrodite. The same image of a multiple-headed, self-portrait, as both male and female, are found in his *Stations of the Cross,* as well as in paintings in which he is portrayed as the alchemical Rebis, or as the Siva-Shakti Hindu icon of male and female in one body. The Dutch Critic Groot considered these paintings to be images of the sacrifice of self-identity to undergo a purgation, in which the artist uses his own body, like Christ, or like the alchemist, for the redemption of his society.

When Francesco Clemente painted his *Stations of the Cross* he was not offering up his body for the redemption of a people, a country, a part of the world, or mankind as Christ did. By his artistic intervention he simply wanted to reveal the intimate relationship between his self and no one. He subjected his body to torture, he allowed it to suffer, to die and to be resurrected. Through this procedure from death to rebirth he was able to extract his physical being from the oscillation between metaphor and reality, to join it to his soul. In a metaritual...the artist offers himself as an anatomical body in order to achieve a state in which by his own fiat, he can breathe in all the air he wants to live...
(Groot 1986, 42–43)

There problem with such casual, artistic borrowing of alchemical imagery is that it restored the older modernist notion of the artist as Christ, a text in which the self-imposed torment of relentless discipline and emotional isolation were the price paid for individual and universal salvation.

Whitney Chadwick has argued in her book on women artists and the Surrealist movement that the male Surrealists used the esoteric magical traditions as an excuse to plunder female experience (Chadwick: 1985, 74ff, 194–95). However, some of the women (such as Carrington) associated with this group became dissatisfied with the unsatisfactory character of masculinity and femininity as depicted in alchemical motifs. Consequently, they sought to interpret alchemy in a manner significantly different from that of Andre Breton, the self-styled leader of the Surrealist group. Historical alchemical discourse is based on sexual stereotypes which Breton read as confirming his view of the feminine as magical. These pre-rational qualities of the feminine served the purpose of stimulating masculine artistic production. Hence, the first efforts of the women artists were attempts to repossess the imagery of the feminine.

In the original Renaissance alchemical treatises the hermaphrodite/ androgyne was the final, triumphant result of the alchemical transmutation. It was the perfected philosopher's stone. Artists such as Carrington, Horn and Clemente have re-conceptualised this image, offering a different alternative that is far from resolved. Feminist discourses and those of masculinity, however, are not monolithic systems of belief but negotiable and flexible dialogues which shift their

ground continually. The use of the alchemical androgyne as the basis of a new system of visual semantics in order to examine gender and sexual desire is probably only a temporary strategy that will undoubtedly undergo further evolution.

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Irene Werner Stage

THE USE OF GENDER AND BODY IN ALCHEMICAL PRACTICE IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ALCHEMICAL ICONOGRAPHY

The purpose of this article is to consider how gender and the opposites, male and female, were used in some alchemical iconographical representations from late middle ages and the renaissance. Seen from the point of view of a historian of religions we shall see specifically how gender and body can be a key to understand the alchemical Opus and to see how the alchemists used and expressed the relationship between man and woman; their polarities and conjunction.

In the alchemical tradition of symbolic imagery one can find many examples of iconographical representations of male and female represented as mythological-allegorical reference forming part of the cosmos, and the realm of the divine also in a more paradoxical classification like the *Rebis, the hermaphrodite.* How the symbols of male and female influence the Opus and how these categories can be seen is shown in the following pictures through the alchemist´s own way of symbolically classifying the very material.

SOURCE MATERIAL

An important source of information regarding the alchemical Opus is the imagery of alchemy. Normally we say that these kind of materials cannot be interpreted isolated from the texts which refer to its meaning. But in alchemy the pictures are very often, of esoteric nature whereas the text is exoteric and does not very often refer directly to the pictures. The following images are therefore interpreted on the basis of what they themselves show and the text is only referred to if it specifically comments on the images.

The focus of this article is limited to the aspect of gender in alchemy and I have therefore chosen some pictures concerning the *Royal Couple,* king and queen, male and female. There are also a few examples of the *Rebis, the hermaphrodite* in a male-female antistructure. A mythological narrative situation is also depicted in the last representation, where a male meets a female who represents a heavenly aspect of the alchemical scheme of things. The pictures are only meant as examples of gender and body and they do not go together in a specific order.

Five of the images derive from the handwriting *Splendor Solis* ascribed to Salomon Trismosin. The first known edition appeared about 1530–31. Several editions of the work[1] are known and

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[1]   *Splendor Solis* is ascribed to Salomon Trismosin. Nothing much is known about his life (if he ever existed?). The printed work *Aureum Vellus, oder Guldin Schatz und Kunst Kammer,* Hamburg 1708 contains a legendary account of his life. The Berlin manuscript *Splendor Solis* (Codex 78D3) (incomplete), Kupferstich-kabinett, Berlin is dated 1530–31. *Splendor Solis* (ms. Germ, fol. 42.) Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin. 16th century. *Splendor Solis* (ms. Harley 3469), British Library, London. 1582. *Splendor Solis* (ms. 146.766), Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg. 16th century. *Splendor Solis* (ms. German 113, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. 16th century.

the images derive partly from this first known edition codex 78 D3 and partly from a reprint of the Harley ed. Ms 3469, 1582. Originally these pictures are in colour, so although the illustrations in this article are printed in black and white, the colours important to the classification of the pictures will be described.

The two other images where gender is at issue derive from the handwriting of Johann D. Mylius: *Philosophia Reformata* published by Lucas Jennis in 1622. Later the figures were copied in the *Chymisches Lustgärtlein,* an alchemical emblem-book by Daniel Stolzius von Stolzenberg in 1624[2].

We cannot be quite sure of the original order of the iconographical representations in the handwritings. On the other hand, there are many coincidences of themes in the imagery in the different alchemical works.

The themes are represented in recognizable symbols. The images are a source of information that express some kind of structure and content for the practice of the alchemist.

ALCHEMY – A RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Alchemy is represented in many cultures, but European alchemy has its roots in Hellenism, where the oldest texts were from the 2nd–3rd centuries. Through these texts alchemy and the *Hermetic art* also were connected to the gnostic traditions that aimed at a salvation by gnosis or "knowing". It was a religious practice where the goal was to attain perfection and in the very end immortality.

Theoretically alchemy was based on the assumption that forms of matter aim at perfection and develop under the influence of nature itself and the four elements – earth, water, air and fire. Matter was considered to be creative, and alchemists thought that a growth of the metals was going on in the soil. In the alchemical Opus they wanted to accelerate this growth in order to turn base metals into precious ones with the help of a *Philosopher's Stone* possessing the qualities of transformation or transmutation[3]. This generative aspect included not only a chemical aspect but a spiritual one in the search after perfection, where the stone was associated with immortality. In this way, alchemy contains a soteriology.

A basic approach to the alchemical material in western alchemy is based on Greek philosophical models, especially of Empedokles and Aristoteles and their teachings about the four elements. The four elements earth, water, air and fire, and their respective qualities – cold, moist, dry and hot[4] – represented an important aspect of the work. So when the alchemist involves the elements with other materials and colour systems organized in a symbolic classification in the process of his work, he also involves a spiritual and ritual process, aiming at a religious goal. These two aspects of alchemy, soteriology and rituals, are essential characteristics of a religion.

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[2]   Daniel Stolz von Stolzenberg, alchemist and physician, was born in Hungary and studied at Prag and Marburg University. In 1624 came *Viridarium Chymicum* and later *Chymisches Lustgärtlein.* Lucas Jennis was the publisher of the emblem-books. See a.o.: Read, 1961, 260.
[3]   The Philosopher's Stone or the substance has many names corresponding to a generative aspect, in which the Stone is able to transmute from a small part to big parts of base metals into gold. It can be developed by growth but is often referred to as a paradox. See: Abraham, L. 1998, 145.
[4]   The idea of the four elements was derived from Empedokles. According to Aristoteles the four elements have common properties and change into one another. Fire is hot and dry, air hot and moist, water moist and cold, earth cold and dry. The qualities hot, moist, dry and cold are shared and interchangeable. See: Hopkins, A. J. 1967, 22–24.

At different levels of the Opus one can recognize a hierarchical colour-system, in which black *(Nigredo)* was the first level, white *(Albedo)* the next. The third, yellow *(Citrinitas)* was seldom represented, and the fourth was the red one *(Rubedo)*. Other colours were represented too, symbolizing different metals and other levels, for example, the rainbow colours *(Cauda Pavonis)* which are represented in the last picture. The various colours do not only represent levels, metals, gender etc. but are also used as symbolic levels of status, where the alchemical world is organized in colours. As well as the alchemical world is organized in gender.

In the alchemical Opus the two main processes *Solve et Coagula,* dissolution and coagulation were repeated processes. Solve et Coagula were based on the principles off sulphur and mercury which were generally conceived as opposites[5]. What is of special interest here, is that they were often identified as the male and the female principles, the symbols sun and moon, king and queen, the colours red and white etc. This means that male and female were used as a category in the alchemical process, where man and woman were extensively used to describe the generation of different types of phenomena. But as a characteristic this generation could not take place unless there had been a conjunction of these opposites and a death. What is meant is male and female principles are part of the alchemical process, where matter must die from an earlier way of being transforming to being through the well-known pattern: Separation – a symbolic death – and a reviving.[6]

Male and female also seem to have an effect in the repeated patterns of dissolution and growth, conjunction, death and rejuvenation in a ritual process that aimed at attaining the pure gold.

USE OF METHODS

In this kind of iconography a theoretical procedure is necessary. Due to the fact that descriptions of alchemical operations are different and difficult to reduce to a useful formula, it is difficult to present a more precise model analyzing the imagery of the Opus Alchymicum. However the area of gender is important and can be used to uncover some of the code of the alchemists. Before giving some examples, let me supply some information about how the pictures can be read as allegories of the alchemical manipulation in a threefold method inspired by structuralism. The starting point of the threefold method relies on the works of E. Panofsky, R. Needham, G. E. R. Lloyd and V. Turner.

According to iconographical representations the tripartite system of the art historian E. Panofsky[7] forms some levels of analysing the material.

His first level the pre-iconographical analytical level, is to uncover the form, objects and colour. In addition to using this analysis to identify these pictures, I chose two comparative ways of analysing this material through methods of classification (Needham and Lloyd).[8]

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[5]   Solve et Coagula (dissolve and coagulate). Frequently the processes of separation and conuinctio are identified with the Solve et Coagula. See: Abraham, L. 1998, 187.
[6]   Based on the tripartite model of rites of passage developed by Arnold van Gennep.
[7]   Panofsky, E. 1972, 14–15.
[8]   Rodney Needham, professor of Social Anthropology is known for his work on symbolic classification, left and right symbolism, marriage-systems and philosophy of belief. In "Polarity and Analogy" the scientist G. E. R. Lloyd has developed the two types of argumentation in early Greek thought.

This pre-iconographical level and methods of classification is combined with methods of history of religions and anthropology (Turner)[9] because my aim is to interpret the expressions of male and female through the function of ritual. By combining these three kinds of methods it will be possible to identify the manifestation of gender in mythological and allegorical references and see the polarities of gender and other pairs of opposites symbolized in a model of the alchemical system. Thus, it is possible to see how the alchemist used gender and dichotomies in arranging the cosmology and how the gender principles articulate other levels going on in the alchemical work.

Victor Turner evolved a concept of the liminal phase in the tripartite structure of the rite of passage, developed by Arnold van Gennep.[10] According to Turner the phase of liminality is characterized by a condition of "betwixt and between" (being neither dead nor alive) frequently using symbols of death and fertility. In the liminal phase is often communicated so-called "sacra" in the form of "what is shown", "what is done" and "what is said".[11] Communication of "sacra", can also be viewed as a ritual effect in some of the following pictures.

A ritual can be defined as actions filled with meaning worked out in order to change or preserve its object[12]. Seen from that point of view, the alchemists in their actions in the Opus generated something related to the alchemical goal. So far as one chooses to view the Opus as a ritual, the practice of the alchemist can be seen as ritual action in which metals, gold and silver, male and female and elements etc. can be identified and classified.

The alchemical pictures can be seen to deal with such actions, because they accumulate meanings concerning the rites. Rituals may also be defined as actions of meaning that make use of cosmological and mythological- allegorical references. And the key to the alchemical ritual is based on the view that when the alchemists manipulated metals and gender they also manipulated the cosmos.

Keeping in mind that ritual is connected to a certain type of action, and that classification is a question of how the pictures are structured, gender in its classificatorial and symbolic correspondences shown in the structure of the picture can express the cosmological implications of ritual action.

When the alchemist worked with the Opus, he not only had knowledge of nature, astrology and metals, but it was also necessary to have knowledge of ritual. The alchemist knew that metals were symbolized as gender. Gender was symbolized as the hot active male and the cold passive female principle, the sun and moon, where the moon, the female symbol was a picture of a passing-away, coming-to-be and growth. When the alchemist worked with gender it was through knowledge of the elements, celestial bodies and planets. All this knowledge and ritual action probably also influenced the alchemist on an inner dimension, even if it did not necessarily express the alchemist's own belief.

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[9]   According to Turner liminality is connected to a suspension of normal social behaviour. On background of his fieldwork the anthropologist Victor Turner also worked with symbolic communication in connection to rituals and liminality. Turner, V. 1966.

[10]   CF. note 6.

[11]   Turner, V. 1966, 102.

[12]   For the definitions of rituals I am deeply in debt to J. Podemann Sorensen, The University of Copenhagen. See: Sorensen, J. P. 1997, 80,103 ff.

THE ROYAL MARRIAGE (Fig. 1):

Fig. 1. Splendor Solis. Repr.
The Harley ed. Ms 3469, 1582.

The first picture is centered about the Royal Couple an important class of symbols. According to the text the king and queen, man and woman, are symbols for the two manipulations Solve et Coagula[13].

Identification of Objects, Forms and Colours. Motto:

On the right side of the picture, a young king is seen in the colours red, white and gold. In his hand he has a scroll with the motto "Coagula Maschculinum" in his hand. Over his head is a golden sun with a face. He is standing upon a blazing fire.

On the left side the queen is robed in the colours blue, white and a little red. She seems pregnant standing upon a dark earthly moon. On the scroll the motto "Lac Virginum" is inscribed. Over her head in the air is a silvery sun. The golden sun looks at her, the silvery at him.

At the bottom of the picture, the text "Via Universalis, Particularibus Inclusis" is inscribed. At the top of the picture: "Particularia". In the background is a city and landscape.

Classificatorial Constellations:

In a scheme of classification the picture involves gender, fertility, elements, planets, and celestial elements. In a left/right dichotomy in a vertical classification is shown:

Left	Right
Silvery sun	Golden sun
Female	Male
Milk (Lac Virginum)	(Coagula Maschculinum)
White (a little red)	Red (a little white)
Dark moon	Fire

Implicit:

Silver	Gold
Mercury	Sulphur

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[13] Text. "...and among all these are belonging to this Art the aforesaid operations, which are explained by the Philosophers in two word "Man and Wife," or "Milk and Cream." He who does not understand these do not understand the preparation of this Art". *Splendor Solis.* Repr. The Harley ed. Ms 3469 1924, 24.

In the horizontal structure of the picture one can say that:

Left relates to right as silvery sun to golden sun, as female to man, as milk to getting the masculine coagulate, as earth to fire. In the vertical structure of the picture the dyads coincide with the analogies where:

Left relates to silvery sun (silver/mercury), female, milk and dark moon as right relates to golden sun (gold/sulphur), male, coagulation and fire. So the gender system does not only constitute an order of oppositions but also forms part of a symbolic manipulation of classifications in an alchemical hierarchical system, where the analogies are effective.

In such a form of classification we cannot only see how the alchemistic universe, iconographically expressed, is arranged with starting point in the male and female. But also, niveaus like planets, colours, metals, the elements with their qualities are united in these two main manipulations Solve et Coagula. In the symbolic classification is a macrocosmos connected to a microcosmos. The metallic is united with the spiritual aspect. And contradictions between all the qualities attached to the two sexes are visible.

In the ritual action depicted in the picture, the situation shows that not only a manipulation is going on with metals and substances, but also a manipulation with the cosmos.

Also diagonals are represented in the picture. Golden sun is directed to the female and the silvery to the king which can be interpreted as oppositions to be conjunctured. And with them the whole system of classification.

On the level of classification, the metallic is connected with the spiritual and in the ritual action a communication is going on with anthropomorphic celestial elements and planets. The change of the Corpus of the metallic substance, which is the object of the ritual, contains both a possibility for life and fertility but also a death by fire and the dead, female, moist mercury. Where the cosmological and allegorical references form part of the classification, they are to be understood as effects so that the ritual action may succeed.

When the use of gender is expressed in alchemical pictures as king and queen, it is because the situation of king and queen is especially potent and closer to the divine than ordinary man and woman and this gives more power to the ritual itself. They can be seen as mythical prototypes, where their pattern of fertility specifically has an effect on the work with the alchemical substance.

In the image a coniunctio, or the *Chemical Wedding,* is going to take place between male and female principles, king and queen, gold and silver, fire and dark, moist moon on the earth. Between the active dry principle and the cold, moist passive principle expressed by king and queen, and also expressed by the whole classification in a complicated union of dual principles. In a liminal situation the king is standing upon fire and is, in a way not dead, but not all alive. He is going to be united with the queen already seemingly pregnant in connection with the elements and the cosmic creative forces Sol and Luna.

In a ritual linking of the classificatorial constellations the small parts "Particularibus" can be interpreted as included in the "Via universalis…".

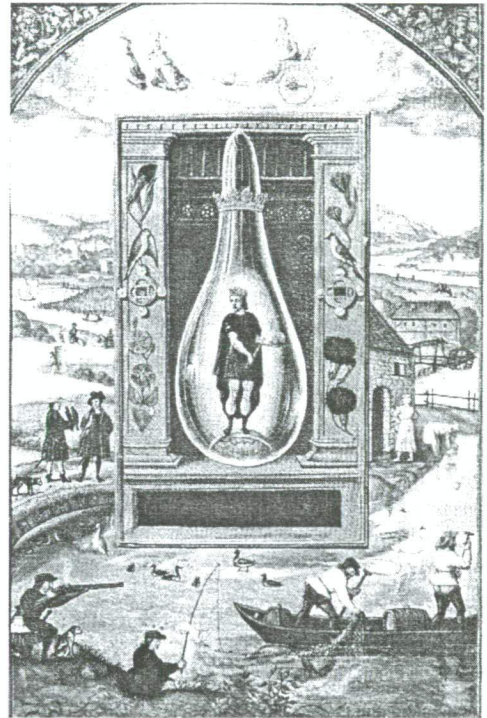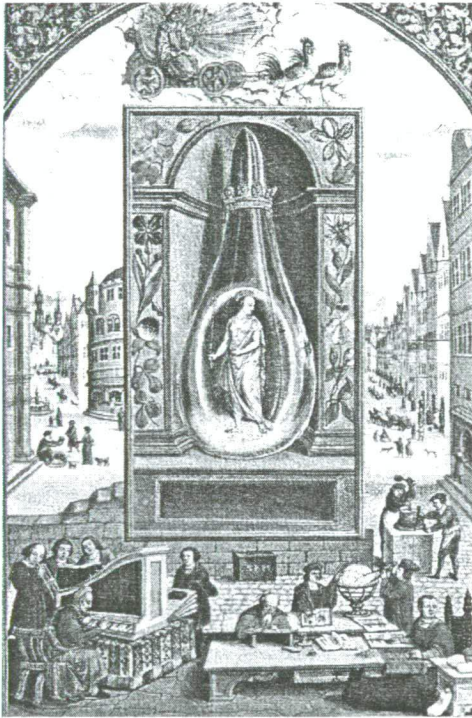# THE SUN AND QUEEN, THE MOON AND KING IN THE VESSELS (Fig. 2a–b):

Fig. 2a–b. Splendor Solis. Repr.   The Harley ed. Ms 3469, 1582.

According to the symbolic classification of pairs of man and woman the two pictures should be seen together. In one of the vessels the pregnant partly naked queen is going to be united with the solar, active principle shown by the down-faced sun at her feet. Standing in a mandorla, a sign of perfect wholeness, she is sacralized. On the top you see the planetgod Mercury and a virgin with a vessel. The fact that the king is not with her in the vessel shows us that she is conjunction with a cosmic principle. Outside the vessel we see a balanced situation with science, art and music, women, and trade with gold. A hierarchical ascent of several rituals can be seen in this picture outside the vessel as well as within the vessel. The vessel and the planetgod are in the middle of the picture and what is also interesting, is that the image depicts an inside and an outside world. We are at the same time, in and out, in the double meaning between the two, whereas the scene with the king and queen in the previous image were shown in the foreground with a landscape background.

In the other vessel the young king is depicted in a mandorla in conjunction with the lunar aspect. Like the queen he is not incorporated in the surrounding society, but he is in a more sacrilized state. The alchemical process is however not fulfilled even though the identification of queen with sun and the king with the moon. On golden background the king is going on to the apotheosis and the gold in a liminal situation. However, that the gold is not far away one can see from the red king in the golden mandorla and the harmonious correspondences outside the vessel. Here the correspondences are exemplified by nature with hunting and noblemen repre-

senting royal deeds in colours symbolizing the Opus. Two women wash the white sheets of the Opus.

Astrologically and mythologically the situation is under control of the planetgod Mercury and a moon-goddess, where the ascendence upward to the gold is ensured in the form of a correspondence of the queen to the god Mercury and the king to the lunar-female principle.

As mentioned before the king and queen can be seen as mythological allegorical prototypes and, associated to sun and moon and identified with silver and gold, they have ritual effect. The conjunction of the complementary oppositions have also ritual status. However, in order to produce silver and gold it is necessary that the queen is united with the sun, and the king with the moon, it also include the whole classificatorial constellation like female/moon/mercury/earth to the male/sun/sulphur/fire.

As we have seen already the symbolic classification involves the aspect of gender in a way where sun and moon, metals and colours, elements and their qualities are represented in a linked construction. This very construction takes effect on the level of ritual action in the alchemical process. The two pictures of king and queen each in their vessel also contain a soteriology in the form of uniting with the highest alchemical principles Sol and Luna.

THE ROYAL BATH (Fig. 3):
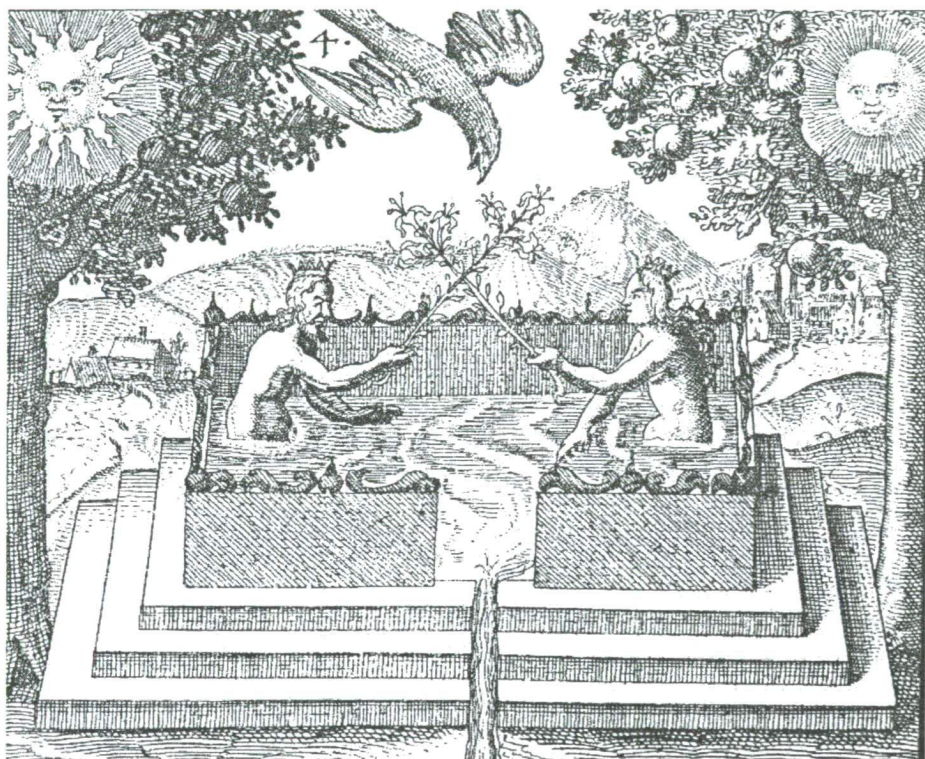
Fig. 3. J. D. Mylius: Philosophia Reformata, 1622.

The female principle is manifested as a queen, the male as a king in an act of purification in the royal bath.

When we look for constellations of classification we see at the horizontal level a rectangularly bath consisting of three steps and a special one with an upper ornamentation around the bath, where a stream of water runs to the ground. We see the king and queen with two crossed branches which have three white flowers each. The branches join the couple and a threatening dark bird is in the center. Outside the bath there is a fruit tree with sun and dark fruits, and on the other side a tree with light fruits and a moon. On the king's side are small houses, hills and a flat landscape in front. In the background on the queen's side is a mountain and a city with a castle in front of it.

So, if you classify from the point of view of gender, we will see in a left/right dichotomy:

Left	In the middle of the picture	Right
King	A dark bird	Queen
Male	Flowers with crossed branches	Female
Dark fruits	A common stream of water	Light fruits
Sun		Moon
Flat landscape		Hills and a mountain
Small houses		Castle

Through analogy: The man relates to the woman as sun relates to moon, as flat landscape to high hills, as small houses to a castle.

What happens in the middle of the picture is important. Besides the common stream, the crossed branches the fierce dark bird is the one to mediate the paradoxical situation between the two principles expressed by the king and the queen. Also the elements are represented in the picture like air, water and earth. In a dual alchemical universe wee have a paradigm of structure filled with contrasts aimed at a conjunture of the metals symbolized by gender in a ritual carried out by the alchemist.

The bath is a liminal container in itself and beyound that, there is something not quite right. Based on the works of G.E.R.Lloyd one can see how the Aristotelian view of right and left is used in alchemy.[14] According to this view right is superior to left, but here the king who is supposed to be at the right side as superior to the queen is situated at the left side. Furthermore we also know that the female and the man have to conjunct. Symbolically it means the queen with the sun and the man with the moon. But here the female aspect is wrongly placed right side with attributes of the king like castle and a mountain in the background. She is still not conjuncted with the sun. Together with that the presence of the dark bird also tells us that we are in the beginning of the Opus -where a conjunction must happen which is symbolically expressed by king and queen, the crossed branches and the common stream of water.

As I mentioned before what is happening in a ritual is often at a certain stage, combined with liminality and conferring of "sacra". In the picture with the royal couple, wee can see that the very special bath is separated from daily life, and there is a rather dangerous looking bird[15] in a specific area. The picture is meant for the alchemist and contains not only certain information about elements, metals, sulphur and mercury symbolized by gender but also offers a plan how the alchemist should operate ritually with elements and allegorical figures. The alchemist treats the categories like sun and moon, king and queen, man and woman and a bird in a ritual conjunction.

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[14]   Lloyd, G. E. R. "Right and Left in Greek Philosophy" in Needham, 1973, 167. The model of interpretation of right and left according to the Aristotelian point of view is used in my specially studied subject: *Splendor Solis. An iconographical examination.* 2001.

[15]   The union of the male and female substances at the Chymical Wedding is frequently compared to the birth of a bird. See: Abraham, L., 1998, 23, 25.

FERTILITY AND LIFE (Fig. 4):
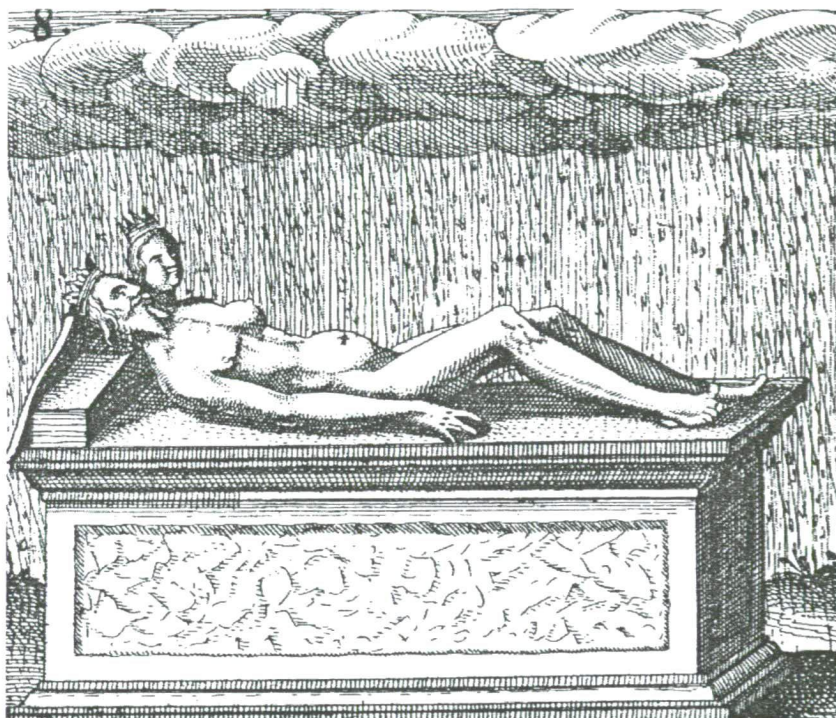
Fig. 4: J. D. Mylius. *Philosophia Reformata,* 1622.

In alchemy the strongest symbols about giving life are associated paradoxically with those of funeral and death where the liminal symbols are connected to death and fertility. The theme of life and death combines the opposites, and in the conjunction between man and woman, king and queen, the alchemist seems to ritualistically mediate this antagonism between life and death.

In the fourth picture we meet the king and queen again, now united in one body as a hermaphrodite on a coffin in the rain. The creature seems to be pregnant. The coffin means death but the fertility of rain or dew and the pregnancy and plants promise new life. Thus this condition can both be the place of creation as well as destruction, reaching a point zero with a recreation of an original mythic situation, where the hermaphrodite was born by a misalliance[16]. But this liminoid creature, which is not a man, not a woman, but pregnant lying on a coffin – not quite dead not quite alive – has to be parted again in a woman and a man. In order for society to persist, in order for life to continue.

The symbolic death is characterized by liminality and confers "sacra", that can be viewed as a ritual effect. The man-woman creature is in itself however also a ritual effect to transcend death. It is a way of showing an impossible status in order to get to a new one.

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[16] As we know from myths the androgyne was born as a misalliance from the egg as a solution of an original antagonism. The sacrifice of this mythical being is mythologically connected to the very first beginnings. The symbol of the Rebis has different significance in different cultures. See a.o.: Eliade, M., 1948, 419–425.

THE HERMAPHRODITE REFLECTS SOCIAL STRUCTURE (Fig. 5):

The Rebis, the hermaphrodite is a well-known symbol in different alchemical treatises in the basic-two-headed model. What is different here is the depiction of a nobleman and the costume which refers to a socially valued cultural aspect, but also appearing as an angel with both heavenly and earthly qualities.

The picture is divided in a foreground and a background, and the Rebis is situated to the left side. The pair of oppositions, male and female is united, but according to the classification right and left, the representation is a paradox.

Fig. 5: Splendor Solis (Codex 78 D3), 5th parable. 1530/1531.

Left:	Right:
Rebis	Nature (eart/water/air)
Trees	

Left side – left:	Left side – right:
Male	Female
Red wing	White wing
Tree (golden leaves)	Tree (silver leaves – dead trees)
Shield with the four elements	Egg
Golden halo	Silver halo

In the complicated picture the double, the Rebis manifests itself as a whole and as a duality of man and woman which is the active and passive principle, sun and moon, the red man and the white woman, sulphur and mercury and the potential gold and silver. The colours also signify different levels of the Opus the red (Rubedo) level and the white (Albedo) level.

Obviously the Rebis is a figure where nature, elements and Opus are included. One can say that spirituality is involved because the elements and the Rebis which is depicted both as an angel and a nobleman is a part of the whole constellation.

In the hand of the Rebis is an egg. The egg is a complex symbol in the alchemical tradition referring symbols to a prototype vessel, the _Philosopher's Egg_. In a mythological context this egg can be parallelled to the cosmogonic egg and in this sense the vessel and the Rebis are a ritual part of the creative power of the egg[17].

The hermaphrodite is a classificatorial paradox and the androgenous figure mediates an integration of the opposition of the elements and their qualities by virtue of its appearance as a paradoxical metaphor. The alchemist, through use of gender in this figure that mythologically also is connected to the very first beginning[18], comes close to the original totality and harmonious state that existed before the Rebis was born in the cosmogony. The alchemist is ritualistically manipulating all this in the vessel the Philosopher's Egg and makes a communication between this and the first world.

The Rebis is a _Coincidentia Oppositorum,_ a mediator between heaven and earth, between the human being and the divine world. Since the figure also is connected to ambivalence, self-creative gods, and the Philosopher's Egg, we see that very special powers are going on. Rebis, the man-woman figure, can be seen as an expression of inversion, that appears as a transcendent principle in a dual universe, in which the classificatorial levels of genders, metals, planets and elements are rituallistically involved. In this special combination, gender and the egg establish a point zero from where the ritual works. The alchemical process is not yet finished, because later on a separation of the male and female is necessary according to the social imbalance pictured here.

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[17] The Cosmogonic Egg. See: Eliade, M., 1948, 413–16. The egg as the alchemist's vessel see: Abraham, L., 1998, 66–67.
[18] Cf. note 16.

A MYTHICAL NARRATIVE SITUATION (Fig. 6):

On the right side of the picture the female manifests itself in the form of an angel and queen with white wings, a crown of gold and silver and a red coat. On the left side the Moor[19] a naked man with a black, white and red body comes from a swamp stretching out his white arm to the red coat.

In a cosmology that operates with a spiritual world that is up and matter that is down the female represents the spiritual aspect from above, as in an epiphany. The black, white and red man represents matter with a potential to change. The point of the meeting is that his body or the alchemical body must be spiritualized.

The picture is characterized by its opposites and the correspondences:

Fig. 6: Splendor Solis (Codex 78 D3),
4th parable. 1530/1531.

Left:	Right:
Swamp	Growing grass
Small plants	Trees
Globe	Crown
The moor is naked	The angel is dressed
Earthly being (mortal)	Supernatural being (spiritual)
Life	Death
Filth	Purity

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[19]   According to the text the black man is allegorized ""schwartz wie eyn Moor..". See: *Splendor Solis.* (Codex 78D3) 4th. Parable. 1530–31. The Moor or the ethiopian is a known figure in the alchemical tradition e.g. in the handwriting: *Aurora consurgens. Ein dem Thomas von Aquin zugeschriebenes Dokument.* Reprint. in: Jung, C.G.: *Mysterium coniunctionis.* Walter-Verlag. Olten, 1971.

Earth, water and air are represented in the picture. The black/white/red colour potentials of the black man refer to the stages of the Opus, and gold/silver and the many-coloured dress of the angel as a reference to the level Cauda Pavonis[20]. There is a movement from the left to the right side. The elements, earth and water have the quality cold and moist. The air and earth the quality dry/moist. That is they have moist in common, which can mediate the situation.

This picture accumulates information about how the alchemist rituallistically operates with the cosmos, in which a spiritual dimension is involved where the female angel must be seen as a central and mediating part in making a progression in the Opus stimulating the metals into fertility.

What is going on in the picture looks like a depiction of a rite of passage, where the object, the black man (who also is a symbol of the metallic substance) is separated from the swamp in a liminal situation where everything might happen with the cosmic appearance of the female angel. But we don´t know what happened after that, so the situation cannot be interpreted as a full rite of passage. Following the text[21], he is dressed in the coat and taken from a dirty unclean place without status to a higher cleaner status that is incorporated after a change has occurred.

It is a critical situation where the expected efficacy of the ritual is based on the roles of gender that also are an essential part of the cosmology. It is the identification of the Opus with a legendary mythological level that makes a reinforcing element for the ritual action. It is the imitation of a mythological event with male and female, the references and niveaus, shown by the classification that is going to make the alchemist succeed in changing the character of his object. The goal here is attached to the aspect of the female, where the alchemical substance is changed to a higher status in the alchemical hierarchy.

CONCLUSION

The intention with this article is to show how it is possible, equipped with appropriate theories to see associations about gender as a key to the alchemical Opus. Gender used in a classificatory system of polarity and analogy, combined with mytho-references, planets and elements as a part of a cosmology and the divine. Thus one can also say that the world as a part of the cosmology, is classified in male and female, shown by king and queen, woman and man with different aspects mirroring different levels of the Opus.

Although the different examples of pictures are isolated and not meant to go together, looking back we have seen a pattern with the king and queen undergoing destruction and reviving through death, purification and renewal to a higher ontological status. As mentioned the two pictures of king and queen each in their vessel also contain a soteriology in the form of uniting the highest alchemical priciples Sol and Luna.

The pictures with male and female symbols can be centered on a point zero, where a new beginning or dramatic change seems possible. A conjunction is going to take place whether it is a meeting between king and queen, or a meeting between the black man and a messenger from the divine, or in a more paradoxical form – the hermaphrodite. Fertility and reproduction are

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[20]   The level of all the colours of the rainbow Cauda Pavonis is also called the Peacock´s tail. See: Abraham, L., 1998, 141..
[21]   Because the three levels: Separation, a symbolic death and a reviving (as mentioned p. 3) are not represented in the picture one cannot say that the picture as such represents a whole rite of passage. Yet following the text a transition is going on: "Sy beklaidet den Menschen mit eym purpur gewandd/ vnnd bracht in zu seyner höchsten klarhayt vnnd furet In mit Ir zy Hyml...". See: *Splendor Solis*. (Codex 78D3). 4th. Parable. 1530–31.

strong powers and so are the appearances of cosmic creatures and so is the conjunction of king and queen based upon a projection of human reproduction. Also in this sense one can say that the alchemic process depends on gender and sexuality.

The construction of the pictures and the way of seeing the pictures show that the balance between male and female is a fundamental factor in the ritual action towards renewal. As we have seen, the procedure is to connect the bodily functions in death, on the coffin, on the fire and the ritual specialist – that is the alchemist – is in control of the ritual. As well, some of the objects in the picture represent systems of control, for example, different gods and the queen with angel wings.

The symbolic expressions of female and male are bound to the alchemical material as a part of a classificatory system in which the ritual activity mediates the "betwixt and between" or para-doxical or mythological situation. The process is going on in a hierarchical system where gender and sexuality connected to a symbolic death is a problematic link in the relationship of the upper and the lower world, for example, the king and queen on the coffin and in the vessels.

The work with the theories of classification has also presented some problems, because even if the dyads are the basic form of the alchemical images, the dyads are not always like that. For instance in the case of classificatorial disorder, there is the Rebis, the hermaphrodite.

In alchemy, male and female principles and male and female intercourse are fundamental for the relation between human and the divine world. In that sense, gender and sexuality become religious in a world-view where the ideas of fertility, rebirth and metamorphosis are visible. As iconographical symbols, – male and female – gender do not only reflect the values of culture but make up an essential transmission of the alchemical concepts.

How the powerful symbolic images gave life to the fantasies of the alchemist, and how much the images transcended his view of gender is very difficult to uncover, but it must be assumed that the reading of the pictures did stimulate or influence the alchemist while he was working on the Opus. But primarily the pictures in their structure and content offer a possibility to work out theories and a religious practice. The alchemist had to be in control of the ritual situation, where the male and female principles as symbolic knowledge were significantly involved with meanings and effect in the alchemical world.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig.1 + 2 a–b: Splendor Solis. 1924. Alchemical treatises of Salomon Trismosin. London: Keagan, Trench Trubner & Co, Ltd. (Repr. The Harley ed. Ms 3469. 1582. British Museum).

Fig.3 – 4: Mylius, J.D.: Philosophia reformata. Lucas Jennis. Frankfort.1622. Copied in Stolzius, D.: Chymisches Lustgärtlein, 1624.

Fig.5 – 6: Splendor Solis. 1530/1531 Codex 78D3. 5th Parable- 4th parable. Ascribed to Salomon Trismosin. Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kultur-Besitz.

Róbert Péter

THE GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS OF ENGLISH MASONIC IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY *

> To trace the origin of Females being excluded from the rites of Masonry will ultimately end in a mere conjecture, as the reason for their being so is one of the valuable secrets in possession of the Fraternity.
> *Free masonry, for the ladies...* (Dublin / London, 1791), 3

Today on weekday evenings millions of women and men after work rush to meet up with their fellows in the hearts of cities all over the world. They swiftly change their clothes and put on strange garments decorated with esoteric, geometrical and religious symbols. Then they solemnly enter clandestine temples, where they take secret oaths on sacred writings and teach each other about morality and the meanings of secret signs. The members of these societies are known as freemasons. Even in our postmodern, politically correct world, most lodges maintain a striking principle, that is,that women are not allowed to join their company (UGLE 1999, xiii). This gender-exclusive rule, which logically follows from the historical development of the fraternity, is a fundamental requirement of the regular lodges that are affiliated with the English mother Grand Lodge. This body, properly called the United Grand Lodge of England, has given patents for approximately two-thirds of the lodges world-wide.

The study of British freemasonry has received proper scholarly attention only for a decade or so. Before the mid-1980's, research, especially in Britain, was restricted, among other things, by the closed archives of masonic libraries. Most of the European academic centres for research into freemasonry have been established within the last decade. The first such centre in Britain, which is at Sheffield University, organised its inaugural international conference in the summer of 2002 on the theme of fraternal organisations and the structuring of gender roles. It is striking to observe that scholarship has hardly yet examined the gender-hierarchies in English masonic rituals and iconography. Yet, this subject has been of great relevance to the ongoing debate on the impact of Enlightenment sociability on women *in France*. One discussion between Dena Goodman, on the one side, and Margaret Jacob and Janet Burke, on the other, has revolved around the relationship of Freemasonry to gender perceptions. Following a feminist line of scholarship, Dena Goodman accuses the "masculine" lodges of repressing women and limiting their role in building the enlightenment project (Goodman 1994, 1–52, 73–135), while Margaret Jacob and Janet Burke emphasise how the enlightenment idea of equality was lived out in the female masonic "lodges of adoption" first appearing in the late 1730s (Burke & Jacob 1996, 513–549). These popular women's lodges were officially recognised by the Grand Orient, the governing body of French freemasonry in 1774. It can be said that the gender aspects of French

freemasonry have been well-documented and properly examined[1], but the same is not true for the lodges in the mother country of the society.

Marie M. Roberts' article, "Masonics, Metaphor and Misogyny: a Discourse of Marginality?," investigates certain gender-related issues of eighteenth century England but her usage of sources is sometimes confined to twentieth-century ritual exposures, Augustan theatrical epilogues and bawdy lodge drinking songs. Based upon the latter documents, she correctly points out the misogynistic elements of masonic practice, while, in my opinion, she slightly exaggerates the 'virulent' misogyny of freemasons.[2] Roberts' paper fails to examine a number of relevant primary materials, the use of which would have refined some of her findings. As for gendering English freemasonry, therefore, there is a clear need for examination of a wider range of primary sources.

Drawing on some so-far neglected material available in the Library of Freemasons' Hall in London, the British Library and the Bodleian Library in Oxford, this paper intends to contribute to this discussion by investigating the gender structures and roles represented in mainly eighteenth-century English masonic constitutions, pamphlets, rituals as well as lodge icons.[3] To examine these sources, the following method of proceeding logically arises: First, we shall investigate the origin of the exclusion of women from the fraternity in England and examine whether there were any attempts to subvert this principle either theoretically or in practice. Secondly, we shall test the general assumption of the period that English Freemasons were misogynists by analysing the aforementioned masonic texts. Finally, the paper will look at the gender constructions of masonic rituals and iconography to highlight how they represented the culture of masculinity in a male-dominated English society in the so-called Age of Reason.

It was in 1723 that the society of Freemasons published their first book of constitutions in London. As Margaret Jacob notes, in the eighteenth century "the constitutional ideal, the creation of constitutionally governed civil societies, was masculine work" (Jacob 1991, 135). In accordance with this, the third charge demanded that the "Members of a *Lodge* must be good and true Men, free-born, and of mature and different Age, no Bondmen [largely servants], no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report" (Anderson 1723, 51).

Despite their all-inclusive and egalitarian rhetoric, the available evidence suggests that English freemasons had a bad reputations with regard to their attitude towards women. For instance, a father described freemasonry to his son who had just been initiated into the fraternity as "a Set of Men who are strongly suspected to bear no great Good-will to the Fair Sex... The Good Wives hereabouts conclude themselves ruin'd the Moment their Husbands become *Free-Masons*" (Knoop 1945, 164–165). The view that freemasons were women-haters also appeared at the beginning of theatrical epilogues presented by the wives of masons, but they ended up as anthems to the joys of marriage to a mason:

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[1]   However, as Margaret Jacob points out, most French historians do not realise that vast, unexamined archives were returned to Paris in 2000 from Moscow. Among them were over 750 large boxes of masonic manuscripts stolen by the Nazis from the Grand Orient on rue Cadet in June 1940. For instance, some of the recently found documents prove that there had been a lodge for women in Bordeaux as early as 1746. The most recent works on the gender relations of French Freemasonry include James Smith Allen. 2003. "Sisters of Another Sort: Freemason Woman in Modern France, 1725–1940" *Journal of Modern History* 75: 73–135. Bernard Kenneth Loiselle, "*New but true friends": Freemasonry and the culture of male friendship in eighteenth-century France* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2007).

[2]   It should be remembered that some of these songs were written by Georgian anti-masons.

[3]   The pamphlets under discussion and some of the rituals quoted in this paper were reprinted by Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones and Douglas Hamer in *Early Masonic Pamphlets* (1945) and *The Early Masonic Catechisms* (1963). It may be noted that, to my knowledge, the other quoted ritual passages are published in this study for the first time.

> I thought – unable to explain the Matter,
> Each MASON, sure, must be a Woman-Hater...
> Ye marry'd Ladies, 'tis a happy Life,
> Believe me, that of a FREE MASON's Wife,
> Thou' they conceal the Secrets of their Friends
> In Love and Truth they make us full Amends[4]

In what follows I shall examine how freemasons themselves *wrote* about women, which was a significant element of masonic ideology. First, let us look at the rituals of the fraternity since playing out ritualistic dramas is an essential part of masonic practice.

If we examine the rituals of the first three "degrees" of the period, we can observe that, apart from very few exceptions, the written text of the rituals depicted a world without women. The fact that womanly virtues such as a mother's love and defence of family and home were lacking from the universal truths and fundamental moral lessons of these ceremonies is not surprising at all in the male-dominated English society of the eighteenth century. In masonic rituals only men were addressed and recognised as moral agents. As we shall see, this does not mean that English freemasons regarded feminine virtues as totally irrelevant to life's highest truths. However, it can be said that the language of the rituals privileged the male and his power.

To illustrate my point, I refer to the third degree ceremony, which is called the Master Mason ritual. It expounds and embodies such human qualities as self-reliance, courage, rationality and independence, as well as companionship, brotherhood and mutual support. In eighteenth century Europe, these ideals were seen as masculine. The freemason was told to cultivate his own strengths, namely the masculine virtues of duty, self-reliance and reason. This example clearly shows how masonic rituals reinforced gender hierarchies in the age of Enlightenment. Hence, it is no wonder that masculinity and perhaps male superiority in masonic practice were soon ridiculed by the "profane", that is, the non-initiated. The first such writing is dated as early as 1724 and entitled "The Sisterhood of the Sempstresses" (Knoop 1963, 226–228), which was a short skit on freemasonry and women. It was soon followed by other anti-masonic pamphlets, which reinforced the prejudices against the brotherhood.

Although allusions to women and womanly virtues were lacking from most rituals, other masonic writings made brief references to the other sex. Most of these texts spoke of women respectfully and a few of them even praised women. A good example is found in a late-eighteenth-century ritual book, in which, *separated* from the ritual, one can read a slightly cabalistic story of genesis:

> The Almighty then, as his last and best Gift to Man, created Woman, under his forming Hands, a Creature grew Manlike, but different in Sex, so Lovely Fair, that what seemed Fair in all the World before now seemed Mean, or in her summed up; on she came, led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen, and guided by his Voice, adorned with what all Earth or the Heaven could bestow to make her amiable. Grace was in all her Steps, Heaven in her Eye, and in every Gesture Dignity of Love (Browne 1798, 14)

Needless to say, this account is far from being misogynistic. One possible reason for this praise of women could be that by freemasons consciously or unconsciously were trying to com-

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[4]   *The Antient Constitutions of the Free and Accepted Masons, new engrav'd on Copper Plates with a speech deliver'd at the Grand Lodge of York....Likewise a Prologue spoken by Mr. Mills, and an Epilogue spoken by a Masons's Wife, at the Thatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, on Friday the 27th Day of December, 1728* Printed for B. Creake (Second edition), 1731 [British Library] no page number indicated. It is telling that this epilogue and another one by Mrs Bellamy were published in other masonic constitutions (e. g. Dermott 1756, 195–196). By doing this, freemasons might want to show that they were in good relationship with the other sex despite the prejudices.

pensate for the masculine aspects of the rituals. In other pamphlets of the eighteenth century, the image of a queen often occurs in accounts of women (Knoop 1945, e.g. 91, 93, 171, 183, 266). Moreover, in a theatrical epilogue a freemason commenting on the exclusion of women from lodges says,

> We know that the Ladies of this present Age / Can keep a secret, if their Word engage; / Our Lodges doors should therefore open fly, / The Beauties of this Isle to gratify: / But Solomon's each Tongue has fix'd a Chain / Which past a certain Length, no Pow'r can strain. / And yet to shew how complaisant we are, / We've brought the Flow'r of all our Lodges here, / Griev'd at the Heart we can't receive you there / We'll do our utmost to redress that Wrong (Knoop 1945, 231).

Following these ideas to their logical conclusion, some quasi-masonic clubs and convivial societies in Britain admitted both sexes to their ranks in the age of masculine enlightenment.

The rudest references to women that I have found in English masonic texts were concerned with women's curiosity and jealous nature. According to Roberts, "traditional female curiosity in the activities of the lodge is likely to have been a collective male fantasy fuelled by the self-importance of its members" (Roberts 1998, 148). But it would be unfair to conclude from these allusions, even if we consider the masculine rituals, that freemasons were misogynists. This is well exemplified by the following quote from a letter correspondence:

> That the Ladies are a little jealous of the Fraternity is natural, from their Innate Curiosity by reason the Mysteries of *Masonry* are secluded from that Sex; but so far are *Masons* from slighting that agreeable Part of the Creation, that I fear, too many of the Brotherhood love 'em too well (Knoop 1945, 161–162)

Though we are unable to reconstruct how the members of the fraternity actually spoke about women after their lodge meetings, the majority of the *written* evidence suggests that they respected women. However, these positive references to women could also be seen as either defensive counter-reactions to accusations against freemasonry or the compensation of the masculine ritual space and practice. Since there are several other areas where the rhetoric and praxis of freemasonry contradict one another, it is not hard to imagine that having consumed a few pints after the ceremonies, the all-male company made jokes about the absent women or sang misogynist songs, too. Thus, of course, we cannot invalidate Roberts' thesis that freemasons were misogynists--perhaps the opinion of the public was well-founded but we do not have enough written evidence to justify it. What we know for sure is that they excluded women from their membership. In the next part of my paper, first, I will summarise how freemasons themselves defended the principle of exclusion, and then interpret their justifications.

The male dominace in masonic membership can be dated back to the Middle Ages. Although modern freemasonry as an institution was established in early-eighteenth-century Britain, the founding brethren saw the origin of their society in the medieval past. That is why their first *Book of Constitutions* of 1723 heavily and intentionally builds on the regulations of medieval stonemasons. Mainly due to the nature of their work, the stonemasons' guilds had

predominantly male members.[5] Relying on this tradition and considering the male-dominated European societies of their time it was natural for them to close their lodges to women.

Of course, this was not so obvious for some recently enlightened minds within and outside the fraternity. They saw a contradiction between the sexual exclusivity of the lodges and their ideal of equality. So there were some occasional calls for reforms by individuals but they did not find enough support. Consequently, in response to anti-Masonic writings that attacked the lodges, among other things, for excluding women, freemasons had to develop justifications for their all-male, gender-exclusive association organisation. This theme formed a continuing part of masonic apologetics from the 1730s onwards. So let us review the main arguments of these apologetic works.

"Why we don't admit *Women*, as well as *Taylors*, into our *Lodges?*" (Knoop 1945, 132, 144), asked a masonic author as early as 1725. His answer, which appeared frequently in later defences, was the following: "I have some Reasons to fear, that our SECRETS are in danger of being ex-pos'd" (Knoop 1945 132, 144–145). This was further elaborated by other pamphlets, which argued that women were incapable of keeping secrets.

Robert Beachy's research on masonic apologetic texts in Continental Europe highlighted that simple praise for homosociality in the earliest masonic documents swiftly gave way by the middle of the eighteenth century to broad elaborations of sexual difference. "Some authors noted women's legal and financial dependence on fathers and husbands as an implicit disqualification for lodge membership. In sum, women could never establish the freedom of thought and action requisite for Masonic affiliation. Other writers developed elaborate descriptions of the physical and moral shortcomings of the female sex. Vanity, moral weakness, and excessive sensuality made women poor candidates for the rigors of lodge association, including fraternal loyalty and the ability to maintain secrets."[6] However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that English freemasons went as far as their Continental brethren in their criticism of women since most of these justifications did not appear in those apologetic writings. The different attitude is also exemplified by freemasons` selling a book about the moral and physical vindication of female talents in their headquarters.[7]

In English masonic practice, if a non-mason manages to pass through the lodge door guarded by the "Tyler" with a sword to ensure only members of the fraternity entered, the sex of all new members is revealed both symbolically and physically, by exposing the left breast during the initiation ceremony of the first degree ritual. However, this screening did not always prove to be sufficient means to exclude the other sex, as the following passage from a footnote of a ritual confirms:

> This [exposing the left breast] is done lest a Woman should offer herself; and tho' many Women are as flat chested as some Men, and Brethren are generally satisfied with a slight Inspection, I

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[5]   In general, English craft guilds were never exclusively male, and women were admitted into their ranks form the Middle Ages onwards. Cf. Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*. New ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 1992 [1919]). Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300–1620* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Peter Gordon and David Doughan. *Women, Clubs, and Associations in Britain* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

[6]   The above quotation is from the abstract of Robert Beachy's paper "Masonic Apologetic Writings and the Construction of Gender in Enlightenment Europe" presented at the aforementioned Symposium "Lodges, Chapters and Orders: Fraternal Organisations and the structuring of Gender Roles in Europe (1300–2000)" at the University of Sheffield on 11–13 July 2002.

[7]   Lady. *Female Restoration, by a Moral and Physical Vindication of Female Talents; in Opposition to All Dogmatical Assertions Relative to Disparity in the Sexes. Dedicated to Her Majesty; and Humbly Addressed to the Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland. By a Lady.* London: sold only at Free-Masons coffee-house, Great Queen-Street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; and J. Macgowan's, No. 27, Paternoster-Row, 1780.

would advise them to be more cautious; for it is probable, that a Woman, with a tolerable Degree of Effrontery and Spirit, may, one Time or other, slip into the Order, for Want of necessary Prudence. If the Irish may be credited, there is a Lady at this Time in that Kingdom, who has gone through the whole Ceremony, and is as good a mason as any of the whole (G****** 1766, 29–30)[8]

So far we have seen that by using the rhetoric of male power and privilege in the cult of feminine domesticity of the eighteenth century, masonic writings only reinforced the existing socially constructed gender stereotypes.

Although, what has been said so far about the gender constructions of masonic thought and practice was put in the past tense, it may be noted that the use of the present tense would not have distorted the picture of masonic gender relations in our postmodern age. The main reason is that, in terms of gender, the philosophy of regular freemasonry has not undergone any significant changes since its genesis. In the next section of the paper I will illustrate this point by the examination of some traditional masonic icons.

To understand the basics of masonic thought it is essential to examine the iconography of freemasonry as the the fundamental tenets of masonic ideology have been indicated by symbols since the early days of the fraternity.

As I have mentioned earlier, the iconography of modern freemasonry is built on the working tools of medieval cathedral-building craftsmen. The first rituals gave metaphorical interpretations of the working tools of these stonemasons: freemasons were and are supposed to build up their own spiritual temples stone by stone.

After the newly admitted mason being enlightened by the teaching of the ritual, he starts to dress, smooth and square his 'Rough Stone' by expanding his intellect, controlling his passions and purifying his life. In his masonic labour of perfecting the stone (ashlar in masonic terminology) the candidate metaphorically uses the so-called working tools such as the square and compasses. In terms of masonic iconography, the former is to regulate actions, while the latter is to keep masons in due bounds with all mankind, particularly with their "brethren" in freemasonry. These examples clearly show that the central icons of the fraternity include a number of masculine tools. As opposed to the medieval operative craftsmen, modern gentlemen freemasons wear silk gloves and lambskin aprons. The usage of these soft and elegant materials indicates the historical pro-
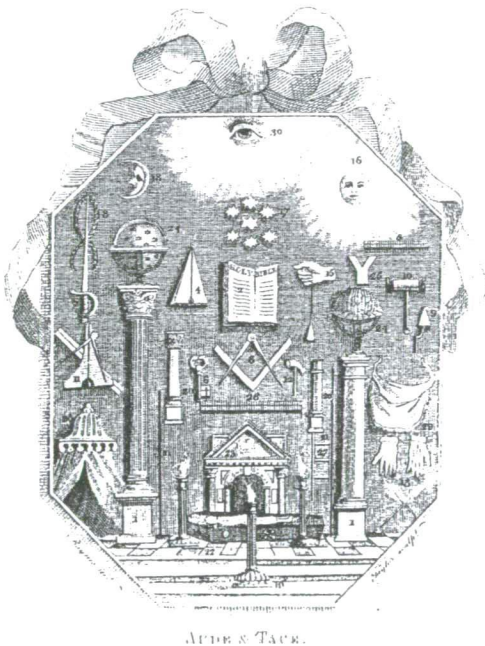
Fig. 1. Masonic Symbols–frontispiece of the *Jachin and Boaz* ritual (1797)

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[8]   The unknown masonic commentator on this ritual refers to the authenticated instance of Elizabeth Leger, who was "made a mason" after she accidentaly witnessed a secret ceremony carried out in her father's library, which functioned as a home lodge on certain occasions in the 1710s (Conder 1895, 16–23). It must be noted that Leger's initiation took place prior to the constitutional exclusion of women in 1723.

cess during which the working stonemasons accepted gentlemen into their lodges in the seventeenth century.

As we have already seen in the case of the Master mason degree, masonic rituals convey masculinity in other ways, too. They emphasise the power of reason, the man's capacity to control and reorder the world around him. The masculine elements of masonic degrees are also indicated by blood-thirsty oaths of secrecy and the repeated allusions to angular geometric figures.[9] It must be noted that the masculine aspects of masonic ritual praxis are softened or perhaps feminised by singing songs and having physical contact during the ceremony. The latter includes an embrace called the five points of fellowship carried out in the Master degree ritual, which is "hand to hand, foot to foot, cheek to cheek, knee to knee, and hand in back" (Knoop 1963, 169). By doing this, the candidate (Hiram Abiff, the murdered master mason of King Solomon's temple) is symbolically raised from the dead and given the secret word (Machbenah) of this ceremony.

As for the ritual space, most seventeenth and eighteenth-century freemasons performed their ceremonies in the upper rooms of taverns or inns. The decoration of these rooms was simple, and of course, not permanent--the symbolic tools of the rituals were moveable. The fraternity erected the first Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street, London in 1776 as its headquarters, which provided an excellent venue for large gatherings as well as for individual lodge meetings.[10] The first Hall designed by Thomas Sandby resembled the interior of a great Roman Doric
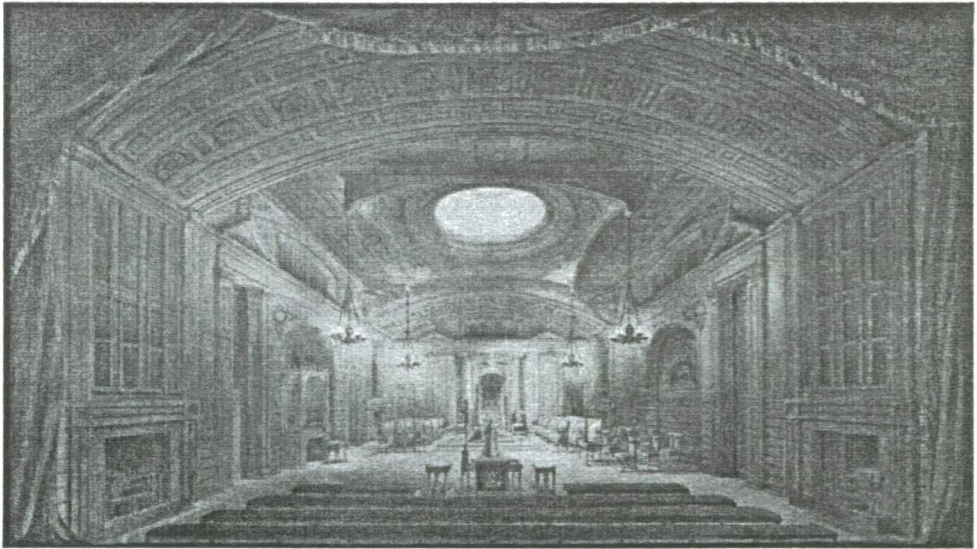
Fig. 2. The Council Chamber, Freemasons' Hall, London (1832)

temple. The architecture of the building shows that Sandby, like Newton and Stukeley, had a

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[9]   See Figure 1. The frontispiece of the following ritual *Jachin and Boaz, or, an Athentic Key to the Door of Free-Masonry, Both Ancient and Modern* Printed for E. Newbery, Vernor and Hood..., 1797.

[10]   The foundation stone of the first hall was laid down in 1775 by the Catholic Lord Petre, Grand Master at that time (Galvin 2003, 89). An illustration of the Interior Hall of Freemasons' Hall can be found on the frontispiece of James Anderson (revised by John Noorthouck). 1784. *Constitutions of the Antient Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons...* London.

keen interest in reconstructing the Temple of Solomon.[11] The metopes in the frieze were decorated with masonic symbols, triangles and intersecting circles, stars and suns (Watkin 1995, 406). This hall was extended according to the designs of John Soane on the same site between 1830–32. Here the rectangular spaces, heavy bronze chandeliers were compensated by richly or-namented rooms and colourful windows. According to one of Soane's drawings for a wall elevation, an ornamental panel is inscribed as decorated with "bundles or rods and ribbons and oak leaves & shamrock twisted around them" (Watkin 1995, 414). By playing with the light and using rich symbolic ornaments, Soane managed to create powerful poetic and emotional effects. Thus, as Watkin notes, he achieved a deeper religious atmosphere than in any of his designs for Anglican churches as the "evening view" of the temple drawn by Joseph Gandy well demonstrates.[12] It can be said that in the headquarters of the fraternity, the all-male, "masculine" rituals took place in a somewhat more "feminised" setting partially due to its rich natural ornaments than in ale- and private houses, where the traditional masonic meetings continued. In general, the lodge room with its tools of craftsmen and geometric figures remained an exclusively male sanctuary.

At this point it should be emphasised that my statements regarding the gender constructions of masonic degrees are only applicable to the first three degrees of the masonic hierarchy of rituals. The reason is simple. To my knowledge, no scholarly writing has been devoted to the gender analysis of the so-called higher degree rituals of the eighteenth century. So, at this moment, I can only present a hypothesis based upon my preliminary investigations. It is clear that the language of some of these higher degrees including the Rose Croix and the Knights Templar is more esoteric and overtly religious in comparision with the introductory blue degrees. Accordingly, their iconography might seem to be less masculine than those of the first three rituals. This may be indicated by a mid-eighteenth century richly decorated apron, which was worn during a Rose Croix ritual. It depicts a pelican, the symbol of Christ, pricking her breast to let her young drink her blood as well as red roses curling around the cross. One cannot see any geometrical figures or symmetrical lines on this apron.[13]

Drawing on the majority of the texts and icons analysed so far, we can conclude that the masonic lodge was a ritual space for men only, and its design and furnishing in most cases reinforces that fact. The lodge offered a legitimate space for men where they could express their masculinity. Therefore, it was traditionally
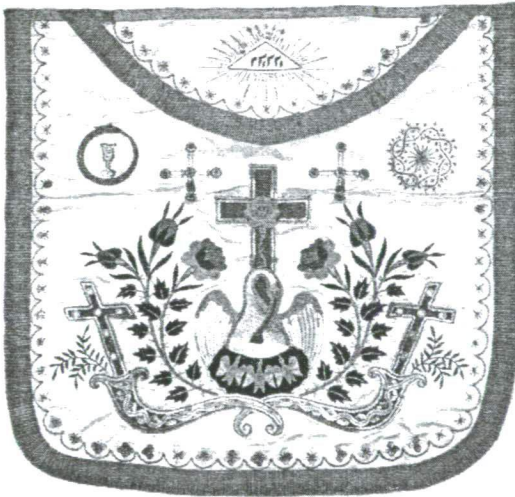
Fig. 3. Eighteenth-century Rose Croix ritual apron with Christian symbols.

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[11]   Ibid., 76–91. Cf. Sir Isaac Newton, *The chronology of ancient kingdoms amended. To which is prefix'd, A short chronicle from the first memory of things in Europe, to the conquest of ...* (London: printed for J. Tonson, J. Osborn, and T. Longman, 1728), 332–346.

[12]   See Figure 2. The Council Chamber, Freemasons' Hall, London (1832) by Sir John Soane, from a painting in Sir John Soane's Museum.

[13]   See Figure 3. This apron is reproduced in *Freemasonry Today* 17 (2001): 27.

an environment that was alien to women. Thus, another possible reason for the exclusion of women from the lodge could be that men wanted to immerse themselves in a masculine setting. However, it could be argued that being among men only freemasons could freely exercise their feminity since they did not play a man's role. This could be illustrated by the moving table speeches that took place when a brother was leaving a lodge because of his old age or illness. We should also remember that they tried to "feminise" this masculine environment by ritualistic embraces and singing songs as well as by the rich decoration of their headquarters. Yet, this primarily masculine atmosphere did not prevent certain enlightened women, particularly in France, from fighting for their admission in the first half of the eighteenth century. Moreover, in Britain there is some not entirely conclusive evidence of the initiation of ladies even from the last decade of the seventeenth century.

For a long time masonic scholars had thought that the first woman freemason was the aforementioned Elizabeth St. Leger, who was initiated in her father's lodge at the age of seventeen around 1710 (Pick and Knight 1983, 148–149). But recent scholarship by Neville Barker-Cryer has pointed out that even in 1693 two widows were named as members in a masonic lodge in York. The York Manuscript No. 4 (stored in the Grand Lodge of York) claims that an apprentice is admitted the "elders taking the Booke, he or shee [sic] that is to be made Mason shall lay their hands thereon, and the charge shall be given" (Barker-Cryer 1995, 20). But this was unimaginable for male-oriented masonic researchers, who therefore interpreted "shee" as a misprint for "they." Analysing the original manuscript, Barker-Cryer argues that the document says "she" without any doubt. Furthermore, though, as we have seen, according to the *Constitutions*, women were not allowed to join the brotherhood, still one can find thirteen ladies among subscribers for Lawrance Dermott's edition of the *Constitutions* in 1756 (Dermott 1756, xix-xxii).

Nevertheless, in France women did not have to wait too long to be officially admitted into masonic lodges since by the 1740s, gender exclusion had begun to break down. As opposed to the accidental involvement of women in English freemasonry, certain French lodges now began formally to admit women. Historians cite this event as a crucial moment in the history of Western liberal culture. According to Janet Burke, the eighteenth-century mixed lodges "showed quite clearly the first stages of feminist thought and the women members' links to the Enlightenment" (Burke 2000, 255). Women tasted one of the first fruits of liberty in masonic lodges. It should be stressed that they did so at a time when some of the Parisan salons of the great *philosophes*, like d'Holbach, specifically excluded women from their proceedings.

According to present-day gender norms, their admission was not in every respect politically correct. For neither the English nor the French language offered a gender-neutral term for "siblinghood" that did not imply subordination or parental authority. As an aside, it may be noted that Hungarian freemasons did not have a problem with this designation since we have a nice and neutral word for brotherhood and sisterhood, that is, 'testvériség'.[14]

Though traditional masonic historiography in Britain is extremely sensitive to gender issues it still admits that there were at least three more or less authentic admissions of women into the fraternity in the world – one in England, one in the United States and one, intriguingly, in Hungary (Pick and Knight 1983, 149). Unfortunately, due to reasons of time I cannot give accounts of these interesting initiation stories (cf Hills 1920, 63–75). But what I cannot omit to mention is the fact that the unique Hungarian case, the admission of Countess Hadig Barkóczy in 1875, is only superficially touched upon in recent literature on the fraternity in Hungary. This clearly requires a good deal of further investigation.

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[14]   A composite word in which "test" means body and "vér" stands for blood.

Before I conclude, I would like to refer to the current status of gender relations in regular English freemasonry. Today there exists an order of women freemasons known as the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons in early twentieth century Britain.[15] Naturally, this body is not recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England. But what is striking about this society is the gender construction of their rituals and iconography. On the one hand, the members of this all-female body call themselves 'brother' (Miller 1999, 26). The present Grand Master of the order admits that sometimes it has hilarious consequences. For instance, somebody's sister in a lodge meeting becomes a 'brother'. On the other hand, they not only use men's rituals but have also preserved the masculine visual elements of ritual space—symmetrical, rectilinear interior with smooth planes and great mass without any ornaments, any signs of natural phenomena or picturesque scenery. Moreover, during their meetings they feel it more practical to wear plain clothes so as not to detract from the ceremony. So it can be argued that for these women, the icons of traditional freemasonry are cosmopolitan and gender-inclusive rather than masculine.

To sum up, we have seen that the rhetoric and iconography of English freemasonry tended to articulate the values of the dominant culture in the age of Enlightenment. By using the rhetoric of male power and privilege in the cult of feminine domesticity of the eighteenth century, the principles of masonic thought only reinforced the existing socially constructed stereotypes. Masonic rituals praised the masculine system of order and rationality. Accordingly, the visual elements of lodges testified to male power. Therefore, like their medieval stonemason forbearers, it was obvious for modern speculative freemasons to exclude women from their fraternity. The justification of their gender-exclusiveness was naturally built on contemporary stereotypes such as the curiosity of women and their inability to keep secrets. These all reinforced the existing gender hierarchies. However, if we consider the historical development of masonic ideology and rituals, it is clear that masonic iconography was hardly deliberately anti-women. Aside from some misogynist drinking songs, we have seen that English freemasons wrote about women with respect and sometimes with admiration. The number of masonic wives who praised the values of freemasonry in public and their assistance in fund-raising for masonic charity, among other things, testify that freemasonry was not an organization of a purely masculine tendency.

It can be said that the gender constructions of masonic icons and rituals have contributed to the underpinning of gender hierarchies. It has been increasingly difficult for freemasons to defend the exclusion of women since the foundation of the fraternity. Like other clubs and societies born in the age of Enlightenment, masonic lodges have continued to confirm the sharp gender division in English society. However, on the Continent the enlightened reformers managed to break down the gender boundaries characteristic of masonic practice as early as the 1740s. As a result, women lived out the enlightened ideas of liberty and equality in mixed-gender lodges, which can be seen as the first stages of the feminist movement. This is not true for their twentieth-century English sister 'brothers' who somewhat paradoxically exclude men from membership. Today, as we have seen, these English ladies are determined to preserve the traditional masculine characters of masonic iconography and rituals. This also highlights the fact that gender issues still sharply divide the ideally universal and egalitarian masonic world.

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[15]   It may be noted that it was not until the late nineteenth century that women started to take their place in new magical orders that catered for both genders such as the Golden Dawn or the Theosophical Society.

In the recent evolution of the study of fraternal associations gender analysis is of great assistance for scholars since it helps to categorise single-sex or mixed gender organisations and better understand their inter- and intra relationships.

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Irén Annus

GENDER IN THE LANDSCAPE:
THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE
GARDEN BY THE MID-19TH-CENTURY US

The first half of the 19th century witnessed major transformations in various areas of life in the US, primarily in the economy, but also in the social and intellectual realm, which impacted over-all American culture, including the art world. These also found their ways to the artistic expres-sion of Andrew J. Downing, a celebrated garden and cottage designer of the era. This paper ar-gues that his designs not only expressed the altering aesthetic, class, and gender distinctions, but also contributed to the constitution of these through his designs and the various gardening prac-tices he introduced, both framed by his philosophy regarding the social significance of horti-culture in general.

1. CHANGES IN THE LAND

The most prominent transformations to consider in the first half of the 19th century in the US are economic changes. Resulting from a number of inventions and technological develop-ments as well as major investments in transportation, along with the expanding market and in-dustrialization, US industry had experienced an unprecedented boom, especially in the North. Industrial expansion was accompanied by an exceptional growth in the urban population,[1] draw-ing both from rural areas and abroad. This growth led to the emergence of a new way of life, al-so accompanied by a number of difficulties. Responses to urbanization were twofold: on the one hand, supporters of urban growth called for urban planning and reform in a joint effort to make cities enjoyable, livable places, while, on the other hand, people critical of city life favored rural life, condemning the city as the place where evil was at work. This had led to the pursuit of alter-native home life styles, resulting in the first attempts at suburbanization as well as in the initial development of rural resorts and holiday spots outside of cities.

Both sets of attitudes appeared in contemporary intellectual currents. The most populist advocates of urban development and living were the boosters[2], whose rhetoric focused on the "promotion of the city in heroic language [and] rhetorical metaphors"[3] describing the city as the place of unlimited potential and success, where the American dream could truly be realized. Views that challenged city life were more numerous. One of these was the strong agrarianism advocated so convincingly by Thomas Jefferson, who considered country life superior to urban living, claiming that "cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens, they are the most

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[1]   In the 1840s, the total population of the US grew by 36%, while the urban population grew by 90%. Samuel E. Morison. *The Oxford History of the American People, Vol. 2* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 231.

[2]   For example, William Ogden of Chicago and Daniel Drake of Cincinnati. Boosters, understandably, were often successful entrepreneurs themselves.

[3]   Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E. Smith. *The Evolution of the American Urban Society* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988), 43.

vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous."[4] The second current favoring rural life was transcendentalism, expressing a Romantic sentiment toward nature with a new appreciation of its values and impact on human nature.[5] Thirdly, Unitarianism was also critical of urban life: it regarded the predatory elite in the US "ignorant of tradition and devoid of religious spirit" and viewed it as the "principal obstacle to ... [d]emocracy as the realization of a divine order among men [which] had to be based on just institutions, an equitable distribution of wealth, an upright religious faith, and an appreciation of the teachings of nature."[6]

The period brought about major changes in the daily lives and thinking of the people as well. The emergence of substantial middle and upper classes so distinct from the lower classes was one of the results of industrialization. Margaret Marsh[7] proposed that the most noticeable feature of the rapidly changing society was the development of middle-class domesticity. It centered on the Victorian model of the ideal family, in which the cold, aggressive, and stressful male realm – identified with the public spheres of work and business – was counterbalanced by the warmth, gentility and peace of the female-guided home, an idealized bastion, where morals, emotional harmony, religious belief and faith in humanity were maintained. This was in compliance with contemporary physical environmentalism, which claimed that the home environment had the most formative impact on children's moral, aesthetic, and intellectual development. Accordingly, the success of a woman on earth – as both wife and mother, and thus as a woman – depended greatly on the physical home and its environment, which she created.[8]

Unlike the traditional family model that favored the extended family of three generations working and living together, the Victorian model was that of a nuclear family with clearly definable and completely separate spheres and roles related to gender. The husband was regarded as strong and smart, the powerful breadwinner, tough in business but gentle at home. The mother was envisioned as humble, loving, always content and in good spirits, self-sacrificing, piteous and submissive, but independent and strong in running the household and instructing the children. This was the new feminine ideal domesticity had created, resulting in women being isolated in the home: their husbands and children became their business enterprise, and their success could be measured in terms of their performance in the home. Thus, the home became not only their refuge but also their work place.

During this period some women were also able to begin shifting the moral significance they had attained in the home into the public sphere, thus becoming major advocates of the various movements against social ills. The most powerful of these was the temperance movement, in which women who were viewed as the guarantors of morality in the family and, thus, in society, took the leading role and in so doing transcended the boundaries of their homes and went public in large numbers. In educating the public about the evils of alcohol and its destructive impact on the individual, family, and society, they used a highly moralizing tone and, for the first time, they gained a position superior to men in a specific public matter. The framework of American

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[4]   William Pierson. *American Buildings and their Architects, Vol. 2* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 356.

[5]   For example, Ralph W. Emerson. "Nature", (1836) in Stephen E. Whicher ed, *Selections from R. W. Emerson* (Boston: Mifflin, 1957), 63–80.

[6]   By Theodore Parker, liberal preacher and social reformer, in Giorgo Cincci, Francesco Dal Co, Mario M. Elia and Manfreado Tafuri. *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal* (London: Granada, 1980), 157.

[7]   Margaret Marsh. *Suburban Lives* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

[8]   Major discussed pieces by Timothy Dwight, President of Yale and prominent figure in the Second Great Awakening, and theologian Horace Bushnell, among others. Judith Major. *To Live in the New World: A.J,.Downing and American Landscape Gardening* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 112–117.

traditional values also offered a wealth of argument for those who were attempting to improve the position of certain disadvantaged groups; thus women also were in the front line in the early struggle to achieve suffrage, to improve prisons and insane asylums, to assist children and the poor, to create equality in public education, and to abolish slavery.

2. CHANGES IN THE VISUAL ARTS

The role of nature and its proper treatment became central to American Romanticism in the 19th-century, resulting in the cultural transformation of its social role and artistic depiction. This transformation was embedded in a number of processes. One of these was related to American national identity. Unlike European nation states, which were organized around ethnic groups, their vernacular language, and sense of shared history, the US constituted its nationhood based on ideas, convictions and values, and a freshly created history, all shaped by various documents, as well as on the natural environment of their homeland. Historically, Europeans had been fascinated with the American continent for centuries. Kenneth Myers,[9] through an analysis of various texts that describe the American land and its inhabitants, traced the constitution of America as a unique place from Columbus's Letter of 1493 to accounts from the second part of the 19th century. The exceptionality of the continent during Romanticism was also captured in painting, which accentuated its uniqueness, beauty, and grand spirit. Thus, American landscape had been objectified and started to emerge as a trope for the US and its cultural, moral, and political values.

However, this cultural and artistic transformation had to be accompanied by the transformation of the audience. In the preceding centuries, the land was primarily depicted for a curious, educated audience outside the North American continent, while for the locals, it remained a matter of utility and hard work. With the emergence of the middle and upper classes with leisure time and a refined public taste, aesthetic pleasures included the appreciation of nature. This, according to Myers, took place through the objectification of the national environment as "a visually integrated aesthetic whole", which was also evidence of unchanging moral truths.

Raymond Williams proposed that "representations of rural or wild environments as naturally beautiful were used by the eighteenth-century British elites ... to validate their sense of superiority to their social inferiors who worked but did not appreciate environments as landscapes".[10] Similarly, in the US appreciation of the national landscape was a taste specific to the middle and upper classes, a feature which separated them from the laboring classes who did not value landscape as such. John Stilgoe proposed that this shift took place between the early 1840s and the 1870s, when "[O]lder notions of agricultural aesthetics, an aesthetics summed up in the phrase "pretty country", lingered among isolated eastern farm families and governed the thinking of western settlers but no longer shaped educated middle- and upper-class public opinion. ... Educated urban men and women abandoned the once-powerful allegiance to the rural beauty so prized in the early Republic and ... instead embraced the half-wild, half-rural standard its champions called picturesque."[11] Myers argued that the new aesthetic also justified the expense related to landscape appreciation and united viewers in their Protestant piety and national pride.

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[9]   Kenneth Myers. "On the Cultural Construction of Landscape Experience", in David C. Miller ed, *American Iconology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 58–78.

[10]   Myers 1993, 73.

[11]   John Stilgoe. *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 22–23.

This could also be traced in the development of painting in the given period. Angela Miller[12] stated that, in a mutual effort of artists, critics, collectors, and men of letters, an institutionalized aesthetic developed in this era, with a certain critical and stylistic orthodoxy, associating scenery and character, rooted in Lockean philosophy. Landscape painting was highly sentimental, primarily rooted in the tradition of Claude Lorrain's sublime, and borrowing from the picturesque aspect of Salvator Rose's art. The most fashionable resort area, the Catskill Mountains, and the Hudson River provided the inspiration for the first landscape painters, who, like Thomas Cole, the leading figure of the Hudson School of landscapists, made outdoor sketches, but finalized their pictures in the studio, allowing their hands to be led by their insights and introduce corrections necessary to the actual scene to achieve perfect beauty and harmony.

Landscape painting was also integrated into the constitution of the emerging leisure classes and the art market. By purchasing landscape paintings in which the view enjoyed on the occasion of a weekend outing was captured, nature could be brought into one's home and function as a reminder of that experience, but more importantly, as an art object marking elevated aesthetic tastes and appreciation of high art, as well as signifying the American nation and its values. This is well illustrated by the example of a commonly held belief in the middle of the 19th century: a real home must have a Bible and a landscape over the fireplace.[13]

3. DOWNING AND HIS DESIGNS

Landscape paintings thus provided a way to bring the national landscape into American homes. However, the real ties between nature and people could be established by placing the home in the landscape, as proposed by Andrew Downing, whose aim was to establish an environment of refined taste, harmonizing landscape and building within it. He proposed that country homes were superior to city dwellings because of the quiet and stress-free environment, clean air, beautiful and morally uplifting surroundings,[14] all of which were embodied in the English family cottages, built in Classical and Tudor Gothic style, at a location where most of the natural site and vegetation may remain; thus, he proposed, "the art of the (garden) improver should lie in harmonizing all his improvements with the main features of the place already existing."[15] The taste of landscape artists was, therefore, to perfect the original beauty of a natural site—just as painters perfected it in their paintings.

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[12]   Angela Miller. *The Empire of the Eye* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
[13]   James Thomas Flexner. *That Wilder Image* (New York: Bonanza, 1962).
[14]   As a result of this concept, he is also often discussed among the first representatives of suburbanization in the US.
[15]   Alexander Downing. *Cottage Residences, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening* (1846). (New York: Century House, 1967), 120.
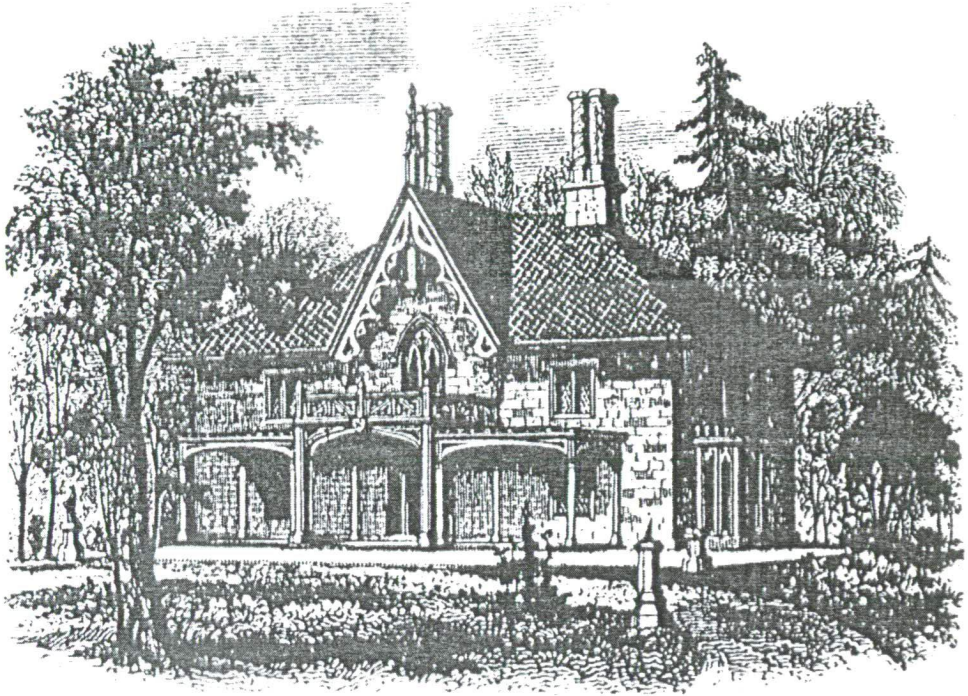
Fig. 1. Picturesque English cottage design.[16]

3.1 Home designs

Downing's houses were picturesque homes, which suited the natural American landscape the best. They were also able to "exemplify virtues missing in American domestic life, and particularly in the domestic life of the city."[17] Stilgoe argued that traditional English cottages in the US united the image of the traditional American farmhouse, associated with traditional family life – separated roles for the men and women in the family, the cultivated land as the fruit of their hard labor, overall practicality, diligence, simplicity and virtuous life – with the new needs the urban middle and upper classes had: a peaceful nest, an elegant place, with natural ornamentation of the half-tamed landscape and an aesthetically matching house. The building had to blend into the landscape; thus the house design was to have organic shapes in decoration, natural pastel colors and a number of balconies, verandas and terraces which could integrate the inside of the house into the natural sites outside. In his designs, Downing preferred two-story houses, placing the communal places, such as the dining room, the sitting room and the semi-private library, on the first floor and the private rooms on the second, thus physically separating the public from the private sphere.

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[16] Downing 1967, Fig. 9.
[17] Stilgoe 1988, 30.

The functional arrangement of the rooms encouraged further separation within the family. The library, the site of assembled knowledge and displayed symbols of manliness, was considered the male refuge, reserved for the master to find peace, reading or receiving his friends. The sitting room was a communal place for everyone, but often remained the place for women's entertainment and children's games, especially after meals when men often retired to the library. Mothers often engaged in conversation on their own and kept a watchful eye on their children who were playing outdoors. The second floor housed the individual bedrooms, where everyone could rest and pass time in a manner of their own liking. However, it was primarily the women and the children who took advantage of this opportunity, as the master of the house used the library for his personal pastimes.

3.2 Garden designs

Downing's garden designs reflect the contemporary cultural transformation of the American gardens and landscape. Previously, American gardens had been highly utilitarian, characterized by regularity, symmetry, and geometrical forms in their layout, displaying "labored art", as Downing called it. The traditional gardens had primarily been vegetable gardens, with few ornamental flowerbeds, in which plants and flowers were arranged in random order, with no conceptual considerations of beauty and elegance.

This manner of routine gardening was challenged by Downing who looked at major British landscape gardeners in the 18th century, especially Loudon, for inspiration. British landscape gardening represented a departure from the previously popular Renaissance gardens, characterized by strict formalism, precision, and geometry in the design of the garden as well as in the shape of the plants. Instead, it advocated irregularity, more natural, soft, curving lines in the design, echoing natural shapes, making use of natural colors and textures, combining lawn, woods, waters, rock formations, flowers, and bushes in a picturesque manner. Downing identified with these principles and also believed that, in order to maintain authenticity and picturesqueness, as much of the original landscape must be kept as possible. As additions, he insisted on flowers, plants, and trees native to the North American continent, which, in his opinion, provided a unique collection of natural beauty. The result was what Stilgoe defined as "an Eden of climbing roses, honeysuckle, peonies, and tulips."[18]

4. GENDER IN THE LANDSCAPE

Downing's homes were the ones Santayana identified as the domain of the women: an expression of the genteel tradition, the place characterized by the American intellect, religion, tradition, and arts.[19] And the garden around it, as Stilgoe suggested, was "an Eden created by Eve."[20] Eden signified a natural site with God's handiwork, improved to become a landscape garden by men, such as Downing—although later women also started to introduce designs, but not as professionals—which was managed and tended by the women in the family. His was a form of ornamental gardening, which hoped to capture the original beauty of the natural landscape, but also

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[18]   1988, 32.
[19]   George Santayana. "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy", (1919) in Richard V. Lyon ed, *Santayana on America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), 36–56.
[20]   1988, 32.

introduce improvements, which were viewed as proof of the faith, education, culture, and refined taste both of its creator and caretaker.

4.1 Structure of the gardens

The grounds around the house were divided into various areas, each with its own distinct purpose and character. The typically recurring parts in Downing's garden designs were the following: the entrance (a), the dwelling (b), the stable (c), door to the stable (d), flower beds arranged in a decorative manner for annuals and perennials (e), shrubbery belt (f), grass for bleaching and drying clothes (g), kitchen garden (h), cross walks framed by trees or an arbor of grapes (i), a walk with an arbor of grapes (j), fruit trees (k), and native ornamental trees, with a lawn in the rest of the area.
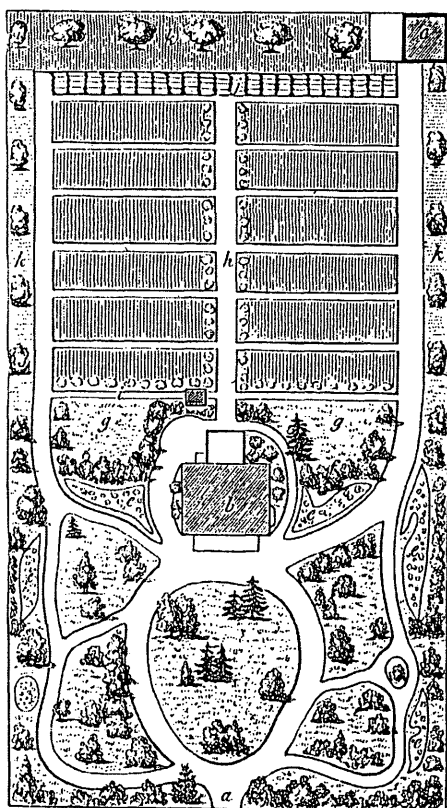
Fig. 2. Garden design for the picturesque English cottage, in Figure 1.[16]

Usually one third of the lot was devoted to the kitchen garden, which included vegetables, herbs, berries, fruit trees, and a tool shed. These areas served the traditional, utilitarian roles of gardens and provided a wide selection of fresh fruit and vegetables for the family. The gardening performed here was considered to be rather agricultural in nature, that is, pure labor performed for essential human needs. Nevertheless, this area was expected to be somewhat pleasing to the eye and thus was often divided by borders, with the beds being arranged in exciting shapes and with a focus on color and texture. The fruit trees usually surrounded the garden, visually separating it from the rest of the estate. This section of the garden was further separated from the rest of the grounds by being placed right behind the house, out of the frontal view. Thus, this part was also a more personal area, visited only by the servants and members of the family.

The frontal two-thirds of the land were occupied by the house and by areas meant strictly for ornamental purposes. Native trees, shrubs, evergreens, a careful selection of roses, vinery, lawn, and flowerbeds made the front of the house inviting and beautiful. This part of the garden was also often decorated with reclining chairs and elegant benches, urns and various embellishments placed at spots from where the view seemed to be especially pleasing and elevating. These areas, often divided by paths and springs, were centered on leisure. The ornamental garden expressing the refined taste of the family and true natural art, in its beauty and picturesqueness, with the flower beds, original trees, shrubs and lawn, was

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[21]   Downing 1967, Fig. 16.

placed at the front of the house. It was an extended façade, exposing the sense of beauty to visitors and passers-by, as well as a public display of the refinement and education of the lady of the house who carefully tended most of this section. As this area was always in sight, it could not be neglected and had to be kept in perfect condition all the time.

4.2 Philosophy behind gardening

Downing's recommendation for the upkeep of the garden was informed by his philosophy regarding the natural characteristics of men and women as well as his understanding of their roles in society. The people involved in the upkeep of the garden included the mother and the father, the daughters—but never the sons—and the servants or gardeners. Downing proposed that hard work, meaning the agricultural labor in the kitchen garden and the upkeep of the walks, had to be performed by the gardeners, perhaps with the help of the master of the premises. He suggested that if the master wanted to participate in the upkeep of the garden at all, he could attend to the lawn, which required regular mowing and as such provided the master with an outdoor leisure-time activity and the opportunity to display his competence in gardening.

The rest of the garden, that is, the ornamental garden, was to be tended exclusively by the lady of the house and her daughters. According to Downing, women were assigned to these tasks because "[t]he cultivation and study of flowers appears more suited to females than to man... [as women] resemble them in their fragility, beauty and perishable nature."[22] He then added that taste for flowers and plants "is a peculiar attribute of woman, exhibiting the gentleness and purity of her sex...."[23] Downing convincingly argued for their participation in gardening in the following words:

> "The mistress and her daughter, or daughters, we shall suppose to have sufficient fondness for flowers to be willing and glad to spend, three times a week, an hour or two in the cool mornings and evenings of summer in the pleasing task of planting, tying to neat stakes, picking off decayed flowers, and removing weeds from the borders, and all other operations that so limited a garden may require. The love for these floral occupations ... gains upon us as we become interested in the growth of plants and the development of the varied forms of beauty and grace ... and the exercise involved in the pursuit thus soon becomes, also, a source of pleasure and mental satisfaction, and is not, as in many other cases, an irksome duty performed for the preservation of bodily health."[24]

Downing regarded ornamental gardening as a female leisure-time activity, which "advertised the absolute leisure of its creator,"[25] the matriarch of the home. This attitude was in line with the genteel Victorian view of women, who were expected not to perform work at all—not even in their homes. Thus, tending the landscape garden had to be transformed from a form of labor, as conceptualized earlier in the case of agricultural gardening, to a form of leisure which well-to-do women were happily willing to undertake. In the process of the constitution of this new meaning, ornamental gardening and the activity it required of leisured women had become heavily loaded with ideological explanations, typically provided by men, such as Downing himself, and one or two active women writers, such as Catherine Beecher.

As part of this new ideological construct, ornamental gardening was held to operate as a social indicator, signifying the status, wealth, and culture of the family it belonged to. It was a visual symbol of the elaborate sense of beauty and elevated tastes of the female members of the

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[22]   Stilgoe 1988, 33.
[23]   Stilgoe 1988, 33.
[24]   Downing 1967, 39.
[25]   Stilgoe 1988, 32.

family: it was indeed viewed as an expression of their devotion, domesticity, taste, and piety, a display of their education and culture, a possible form of expression of their creativity and personality – in short, a visual expression of their worth and identity.

The garden in its social impact was multifunctional: it was excellent for fresh air and exercise, and thus for everyone's health; it cultivated taste for the beautiful and artistic; it served as a place for recreation, both physical and intellectual; and it could provide a setting for a number of hobbies/leisure time activities. It aided in one's education, especially in nature and art, uplifted one morally and functioned as a means of communication between God and his people. The flower garden was also considered the ideal place in that it "sharpened the intellect and heightened the emotional sensibilities of their creator and her husband and children."[26] It also offered a refuge with its ornamental benches and chairs out of sight, where people, especially women, could retreat with their favorite books and read or just elevate their spirits by admiring the view. Tending the floral garden provided a lesson in beauty, morality, and divine creation, and was an activity "every husband should encourage ... [so that] his wife and daughters will prove wiser, and happier, and better."[27]

Contemporary interpretations also argued that ornamental gardening was an indicator of the growing social influence of women as well, since, through the display of their beautiful ornamental gardens, their eloquent style passed beyond the property line and everyone simply passing by would be influenced by the superb view. Thus, they claimed, women could elevate public taste though their tasteful and beautiful gardens—which may be interpreted as an argument to encourage women to take up ornamental gardening rather than a statement regarding actual social processes. Nevertheless, the fact that women were depicted as publicly influential figures does indicate that women of the era were actually longing for public roles and recognition, and they were promised to achieve that through the proper management of their gardens.

Ornamental gardening also created a platform for learning about horticulture. By the mid-19th century, botanical science had transformed into a favorite form of self-teaching for women, as essential as reading or music. It called for regularity, a sense of order, and discipline. Moreover, as Stilgoe also noted, "the botanizing movement did not threaten the intellectual supremacy of men .... while it trained the mind and exercised the body, [it] produced nothing of political or financial worth."[28] Botanical science may have helped women to use herbs in cooking and curing, but was yet another significant project to keep them at home and prevent them from appearing in the public sphere. With time, this science also became an expression of sentimentality: women developed a semiotic system, assigning meaning to various flowers and colors, as a result of which the interpretation of bouquets and flower arrangements took on a life of its own as an important intellectual field, providing a frequent topic of female discussion, in which flowers were interpreted as if messengers conveying the thoughts and desires of the men giving them.

4.3 The constitution of leisured womanhood

In his analysis of feminine attitudes of the era, Cunington examined fashion magazines, among other things. The following section he found in a magazine from 1873 demonstrates how contemporary female dresses were physically enhancing as well as representative of high morality: "Of late years fashions have greatly improved in elegance and taste. The tight-fitting jacket shows the dainty little waist; the looped-up skirt displays the feet and the pretty high heel boots;

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[26] Stilgoe 1988, 32.
[27] Stilgoe 1988, 33.
[28] Stilgoe 1988, 34.

and a fullness in the skirt behind and at the hips gives grace to the figure and makes the waist look smaller, and shows a development of that contour which is universally considered a great beauty in the female form."[29] The corset, however, was "an ever-present monitor, indirectly bidding its wearer to express self-restraint; it is evidence of a well-disciplined mind and regulated values."[30]

Ornamental gardening operated in a similar manner. The original garden, just like the female body, was naturally given, in essence considered the source of supreme beauty and pleasure, but could be improved to perfection by ornamentation, which was achieved through the newly planted trees, shrubs, and flower beds in the garden, while the female body was beautified by the dress. Both types of beautification were performed for reasons which were determined by men and served purposes outside the women: to please and impress others, to convey a message prescribed in social expectations, to set a stage for proper social performance.

All these were for the outsiders, and the real female selves may not have come through. Dressing and gardening were part of the controlled social performance, the representation of the self in the public sphere – defined as the front region by Goffman – which typically did not expose segments of the more intimate and personal back region, the sphere for the location of the self.[31] The garden designs express a prescriptive, highly regulated set of social attitudes regarding gender roles in the middle and upper classes, determined and dominated by male society, presented through a set of ideological constructs which made these expectations appear as being in line with women's essential, God-given nature, abilities and desires.

However, ornamental gardening also operated as an important technique resulting in a social practice, which was a significant factor in the contribution of leisured womanhood. This practice helped leisured women—without their awareness—to conceptualize, represent and objectify themselves in their roles and positions. However, it also subjectified them, through a discourse which emerged out of what Foucault[32] defined as regimes of truth, produced by women's powerful Other: the male realm. The garden, just like the corset, was a constant reminder of proper female moral conduct and action in a society which remained traditional and patriarchal. The ornamental garden demanded hours upon hours of constant attention, turning leisure into labor, a duty and an obligation. The fact that the gardens—and through it women—were always on display, helped to keep them at home, in their assigned realm, as well as served as a source of instant surveillance over them. Therefore the garden, instead of freeing them, bound them, both in time and space, both physically and intellectually.

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[29] Horton-Edwards 1974, 198.
[30] Horton-Edwards 1974, 198.
[31] Erving Goffman. *The Representation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).
[32] Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977.* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

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Elizabeth Mix

ICONS OF EVIL: AMAZONES AND THEIR TOYS

There were several types of toys that French artists used repeatedly in the latter half of the nine-teenth century to symbolize the changing nature of the relationship between the sexes – *poupées* (dolls), *pantins* (hand-puppets) and *marionettes* (puppets manipulated by strings). While all are toys, they are distinct because of the power relationships they suggest. Dolls are made for girls to play with in a mock mother-child relationship. The term *poupée* referred originally to a "rigid or semi-articulated figure that represented an older girl or woman" (Porot, 236). This definition was ex-panded during the last half of the nineteenth century to refer as well to figures representing young children or infants. The latter also became known as *bébé* – a modification of the English word "baby" – and while the terminology overlaps within the period 1855 to 1875, in the toy industry, the term *poupée* most frequently referred to a fashion doll representing a grown woman or "Parisienne" (Theimer, 9). Importantly, *poupée* also had a slang meaning in popular vernacular; it was used by men to refer to young women of a dating age they might see on the street, or in a café. A *pantin*, or puppet, implies some type of manipulation, since it is usually used to tell a story. The difference between the puppet and the marionette is the degree to which such manip-ulation is visible to the viewer. The marionette is moved by strings that are visible, and its move-ments tend to be more mechanical – less organic – than those of a puppet. Some considered the *pantin* inappropriate for young children. One writer warned that while they might seem frivolous toys, "ces petites figures peignent par leur égalité, la promptitude avec laquelle les plus faibles ressorts peuvent mettre en jeu la machine humaine." (d'Allemange, 206). This interpretation of puppets as signifying power or powerlessness was fully exploited by artists.

A drawing by Henry Somm from 1879, entitled *Jouets, (Toys)* shows dolls and marionettes in a store *(Fig. 1)*. A woman passes by on the sidewalk, accompanied by four miniature men – one in a breast pocket, one in a hip pocket, one that strains on a string in front of her, and a fourth, held in her left hand. Each is in a state of heightened distress. The figure on the leash has fallen to his knees; the one in the back pocket has removed his top hat and seems to implore the dolls in the toy store for help. The man she holds in her hand begs for mercy. Somm carefully planned the composition to indicate that the men pos-sessed by the woman are not toys. Furthermore, within this context, the specific toys shown in the background have a symbolic function. Hanging in the left window is a small dog on wheels that corresponds to the man on the leash. Also in the left window are two dolls of the Baby Jumeau variety that were designed to be used by lit-tle girls to train for their traditional roles as good mothers and wives. Their domestic function contrasts with the woman in the foreground, who has seemingly not learned that lesson and has turned instead to the torture of adult men. At the same time, however, she seems disconnected

Fig. 1.

from her actions – she makes no eye contact with her little companions and moves as if in a trance. The final toy in the left window is a soldier on horseback wielding an unusually large sa-ber. He seems positioned to further threaten the puppet-man held by the woman, whose head is at the same level. The window on the right exhibits more traditional or conservative toys. The marionettes, Pierrot and Polichinelle, come from the tradition of the Italian *commedia dell'arte* – the former is the sad clown who is unlucky in love; the latter is known for comic violence. The third marionette, slightly separated from Pierrot and Polichinelle, is a male figure based on a rag-picker, a popular character from earlier in the nineteenth century, who epitomized poverty in the city. The ball in this window serves to emphasize the fact that the marionettes are hanging (much like the dog at left) helpless – under the control of some unseen force. The ball might also suggest the earth upon which these power struggles take place.

Fig. 2.

Another drawing by Somm, *Crossing the Gauntlet* (1879), reiterates several of these ideas *(Fig. 2)*. A jump rope (another toy from childhood meant specifically for girls) has been fashioned into a tightrope tied to a peg at the left and held at the right end by a woman in a fancy floral dress. One puppet man who has already tried crossing the rope has fallen and in-jured his leg. His top hat lies on the ground between him and the figure who is presumably next to try his luck. The crossed feet of the puppet man are above the rope – this and the upward motion of his hat suggest that he, too, is in peril. The goal or prize for accomplishing this feat seems to be the woman, who, for her part, seems quite unconcerned about what is happening. She does not seem to see the man's actions; she holds the end of the jump rope limply. In the background, an Asian is fishing for carp, which are easily caught, a metaphor for the helpless men. Everything in the composition suggests a naturalness or ease by which the woman has achieved control or domination over her puppet domain. This puppet motif seems to have struck Somm as ripe with possibilities to express his own, and other's, difficulties in forging rela-tionships with ephemeral women who paid more attention to contemporary fashion than to the feelings of the men who flocked to them. In transforming what seemed to be an innocuous ob-ject into a powerful symbol, Somm relied on meanings already attached to dolls and puppets – not the least of which was the traditional use of dolls to aid in the training of pre-adolescent girls for motherhood.

The traditional background of dolls in French culture is important to consider, because it was the manipulation of expected values that resulted in the powerful symbolism used by Somm and others. In *La Femme* (1859), Michelet provided a useful introduction in his chapter entitled "Love at Five Years: The Doll." He wrote that typically a young girl would make a primitive doll for herself as a result of being scolded. Michelet claimed that this activity was "serious play." Not only could the little girl imitate motherhood, but she also found in the doll her "first love" – a gentle younger sister and confidante. Michelet characterized the relationship between a girl and her first doll as a significant psychological one: to illustrate this he related a story of a child who died of grief after disaster befell three successive dolls.

Michelet's text takes a romantic, poetic view of the relationship between a girl and her doll—a view echoed much later in the century. Antonin Rondelet, writing for the *Journal des Demoiselles* in 1880, declared the doll to be the "jouet par excellence" for little girls. Marie-Louise Néron, writing for the feminist journal *La Fronde* in 1899, noted the role that dolls played in developing "noble sentiments," as well as preparing girls for motherhood. Néron began her article with a statement that the relative education of women in various societies could be gauged by examining their dolls. Her intent was to impart a sense of importance to a subject her readers often deemed frivolous. Léo Claretie, writing for *Le Magasin Pittoresque* in 1897 had already declared that nothing was as serious as the doll, suggesting that it was at the center of grave questions regarding political economy, commerce, industry, philosophy, morals, and pedagogy. Henry René d'Allemagne rationalized the necessity of his extensive study, *Histoire des Jouets,* by stating that while it was possible to imagine a family without lace or jewels, it was impossible to imagine a family without toys, which helped in the development of the child's, "corps, esprit ou sentiment." Wherever there was an infant, there was a toy, "le premier instrument de l'activité humaine" (8).

The French toy industry expanded dramatically during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Whereas only six patents for toys were filed between 1791 and 1824, there were some 250 patents filed in the year 1893 alone. The number of toy stores grew from twenty-six in 1816 to eighty-three in 1830 and close to four hundred in 1889.[1] There were significant changes in production as small family enterprises that assembled and clothed dolls in the1840s and 1850s were replaced by large factories and highly specialized boutiques for dolls and their accessories. Publicity generated after the French dolls swept the awards at the London Exposition of 1862 made Paris the favored shopping destination as parents from the provinces and abroad sought the best dolls for their children. New illustrated journals were devoted to children and their dolls: *La Poupée* (1863–64); *La Gazette de la Poupee* (1863–66); and *La Poupée Modele* (1863–1923). Theimer and Theriault credited these magazines with the creation of the fashion trend called "mode enfantine," a style developed in the 1870s in response to the promotion of doll clothes, which were eventually adapted for the wardrobes of little girls. The luxuriousness of doll fashion became a persistent facet of the industry – a detail that became increasingly suspect as the nineteenth century progressed. While these dolls were realizing gains in elegance, they were losing their unique character: "c'est la banalité du sujet de tout le mode" (Neron, 2). Dolls were too "grown up," which caused concern regarding the education of girls and the possible consequences for public morality.

Vociferous criticism of the French doll industry began with exhibition reviews of the 1867 Exposition Universelle. Englishman George Sala, in his *Notes and Sketches of the Paris Exhibition* (1868), attacked the opulence and decadence of the doll industry, connecting it to the policies of Napoleon III that included the Haussmannization of Paris, which destroyed housing of the poor to benefit the rich. While Sala's views were no doubt affected by British Victorianism, they were soon echoed by French critics. Sala cited not only the initial cost of these dolls, but also the expense of maintaining them – washerwomen charged high prices to clean their clothing – and "doll entertainment" – dinners at expensive restaurants, nights at the Moulin Rouge, and summers at the beach. In the past, dolls had served a useful purpose, in Sala's opinion. Sold undressed, this "mere bifurcated bag of bran" taught little girls to be "neat and tidy" by working scraps of fabric into dresses (143). Sala speculated that dolls dated from the beginning of humanity, as Eve, "tired of stitching her fig-leaf apron," likely took the time to make "something pretty" for Cain and Abel to play with (149). But this was a far cry from a "doll's wardrobe

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[1]   François Theimer, *Les jouets.* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 9.

shop" on the rue de Choiseul, which he believed to be a corrupting influence. At the 1867 ex-
hibition, the displays were "extravagantly absurd, but irresistibly fascinating," with some in-
cluding lapdogs for the dolls. Sala decried the necessity of providing a Paris doll with a furnished
interior, complete with grand piano and designer products. Assuring his reader that he was dis-
cussing dolls and not the contemporary women of Paris, Sala warned that these French dolls,
"to feed their own insatiable appetite, would eat you out of house and home, mortgage your
lands, beggar your children, and then present you with a toy revolver to blow out your brains
with" (146–7). His chief indictment of the new dolls was that they had "nothing to do with the
happy, innocent, ignorant time of childhood," and rather "looked like *cocottes*, [leaving] an un-
pleasant taste in the mouth" (147, 149). The term *cocotte* was far from a neutral one, since it re-
ferred to a woman whose morals were questionable – somewhere between those of a "femme
entretenue" and a common streetwalker. The *cocotte* was considered by many to be a negative
force in modern French society.[2]

Despite their desire to claim superiority of French products, French critics joined Sala in his
criticism of the doll industry. An anonymous writer for *L'Exposition Universelle de 1867 illustrée* told
of meeting a little girl who wished she was one of the dolls, believing their lifestyle to be far su-
perior to her own. But the author also quoted an economist, who, upon seeing the expensive dis-
plays, remarked: "si le pays des poupées existait, ce serait le Paradis" (211). A writer of an 1867 ar-
ticle in *L'Illustration* went even further, declaring "real" dolls (and thus public decency) dead:

> "Voulez-vous connaître le *fin du fin* des moeurs actuelles? Regardez, à l'Exposition, les vitrines des
> marchands de jouets d'enfants. Mais quoi! Il n'y a plus des enfants. Aussi n'y a-t-il plus de jouets!
> [...] ...point de *bébés*, plus de poupées. Grave symptôme. La poupée se meurt, la poupée est morte!"
> (275)

The doll of 1867 was described as neither child nor woman, rather as an indefinable hybrid with
disdainful airs and a mocking mouth. Rather than treating the doll as her own child, the little girl
considered it a close friend, or possibly a superior! How could a girl play the mother to someone
who was better dressed, and wearing makeup? The author declared that the child would no
longer "modèle la poupée sur elle-même, c'est l'enfant qui se modèle sur la poupée."

The increased commodification of fashion and accessories for the home following the Sec-
ond Empire brought with it new condemnation of the "other" *poupée* – the real women of Paris.
By the 1880s, there was more to fear as real women gained increasing independence and a cor-
responding visibility. This fear made the "adult" dolls, who seemed to be preoccupied with fash-
ion and makeup, dangerous models for young females. Antonin Rondelet reported that he knew
of a two-year-old who had been given perfume to use on her doll; he feared that makeup and
rice powder would be next. Unlike the traditional doll that encouraged little girls to practice
mothering, "la poupée moderne est une jeune émancipée qui répand autour d'elle la contagion
du mauvais exemple," (Rondelet, 141). Rondelet urged parents to protect their children from
the "spectacle of the exterior world" presented through elaborate doll displays with adult acces-
sories in shop windows and at successive World's Fairs; these were capable of stimulating an
appetite for conceit, *coquetterie*, and domination. In Rondelet's opinion, it was dangerous to give
little girls dolls with "allures provocantes," and to allow them to dream of extravagant fashions.
This would introduce them to the frivolous aspects of life and would stimulate in them a preco-
cious *coquetterie*. Rondelet went so far as to directly blame modern dolls for societal decay. In a
second article, he reminded readers that dolls continued to play an important role in the educa-

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[2]   Lucien Rigaud, *Dictionnaire du jargon parisien*. (Paris, 1878), non-paginated, entry "cocotte." Rigaud calls
the cocotte "le centre de ce monde."

tion of future mothers; the introduction of improper dolls could compromise maternal instinct. The primary issue, as Rondelet saw it, was the desire for ready-to-wear clothing and accessories—first for the doll, later for her owner. The result was a preoccupation with material objects that would ultimately undermine any maternal instinct the doll was supposed to stimulate. Rather than domesticity, the new dolls promoted a more theatrical, fantastic and exaggerated world, which the child was in danger of understanding as reality. Rondelet's, and others', fear of feminism—that is, of woman's desire for a life outside the home, outside the domestic sphere—was strongly connected to their fear of the disintegration of the family unit and of a corresponding decrease in the birth rate. Modern dolls promoted materiality over maternity and self over family.

Rondelet's condemnation of the desire for beautiful clothing and objects (especially by those who could not normally afford them) closely mirrors nineteenth century writings on prostitution that describe a strongly stratified network of sex workers that had at its upper levels women motivated to enter prostitution for personal items they desired, but did not really need for survival. Such fears must have been heightened by the names of Parisian doll stores, among them "Au Polichinelle vampire" (1826–68), "A l'enfant sage" (1848–87), "Aux bébés sage" (1871–1914), "Aux enfants sage" (1863–94), "A la tentation" (1879–1900), "Au bonheur des enfants" (1862–1901) and "Au paradis des enfants" (1861–1925).[3] Eventually the dolls themselves were given erotic or suggestive names, such as Bébé Baiser (1892), the Bébé Moderne (1896), Bébé Parisiana (1902), Bébé le Séduisant (1903) and the Eden Bébé (1905). While the harshest criticism of dolls came from men, women also wrote of the harmful moral effect of the new dolls, including Jeanne Sizon, in the *Bulletin de l'Union Universelle des Femmes* in 1890, and Jeanne Peyrat, in the *Libre parole illustré* in 1893.

Sala in 1867 had denied that his description of dolls at the 1867 Universal Exposition was actually a discourse about real women, but the author in *La Vie Parisienne* of 1901 demonstrated that by this time, it was common to conflate the notion of *poupée* with the contemporary Parisienne. Already in 1877, one author had stated "La femme est devenue une sorte de poupée artificielle," due to an increasing focus on external appearances by members of the middle classes.[4] The January 1902 cover illustration for *Le Charivari* illustrates this parallel *(Fig. 3)*. Three fashionably dressed women pause at a window of a doll store on the boulevard. It is the women, not the dolls, however, who attract the attention of the viewer—the contours of women's bodies break out of the border demarcating the edge of the illustration, their hips sway provocatively. The woman at left looks out at the

Fig. 3.

viewer, as if to intone the caption: "It is we who are the most beautiful dolls!"[5] The role of masculine imagination in the desire generated by fashionable women is confirmed in a work Alfred Grévin published in *Le Charivari* in 1883 with the caption "Sans notre sale imagination, que ces jolies poupées-là seraient peu de chose!" The man in the image who "thinks" this is observing

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[3]   These and other stores are listed in an appendix to Theriault, *A Fully Perfected Grace,* as well as a record of doll and doll-accessory firms listed in *L'Annuaire du commerce,* 1850–1880.

[4]   Anonymous, *Les Femmes et la fin du Monde.* (Paris, 1877), 40.

[5]   *Le Charivari,* January 10 1902, cover. Illustration is signed "Lucien Robert."

a woman strolling by. Her shadow ominously predicts both fertility and inherent danger, as the shadow has a swollen abdomen and seems to carry both a newspaper and a gun.[6]

Poupée was not new slang in the nineteenth century, but the word seemed to change in meaning as the dolls became more mature and thus more threatening to male society. One common use of the word was for describing an actress—a use that conflated the meanings of *poupée* and *pantin* since the theatre suggested actions being manipulated by an unseen force. In a sense, actresses were pulled between the world of the play written primarily by men and the world of the courtesan, the most "liberated" women in Paris. In 1896, *La Vie Parisienne* published the spread *Les poupées de Paris,* in which the heads of the dolls—presented on wooden stands that made them seem lifeless—were portraits of actresses from all the major theaters: Mme. Bernhardt representing the Renaissance; Mlle. Hirsch from the Opéra, Mlle. Lara from the Théâtre-Français and so forth.[7] At the edge of the composition a group of men, not unlike those in Degas' paintings of dancers, wait in the wings of the theater to pick their dates for the evening.

Henry Somm exploited contemporary meanings of the term *poupée* in his complex imagery. His watercolor cover for Gustave Droz's *Oscar* (1875), for example, shows a man with a miniature woman on a leash (Oscar's wife) and a woman (his mistress) with a similarly tiny man wearing a macabre-looking muzzle. The text reveals that the man in the muzzle is none other than Oscar himself. Somm's cover reflects Droz's entire story. Oscar treats his wife, "a ravishing doll," as a prisoner, criticizing her and accusing her of infidelities without evidence. His relationship with his mistress, Niniche, is completely different. She is a courtesan with many admirers—Oscar knows this and accepts it, just as he accepts her constant humiliating remarks about his stupidity, weakness, and unattractiveness. A short verse by Droz provides the moral of the story: "Lecteurs du *Figaro,* protecteurs des cocottes, / Dont la morale est de jouir!" Thus Droz criticized the hypocritical morality of the bourgeoisie, who made up the readership of the daily Paris newspaper *Le Figaro.* Without men who acted so inconsistently, prostitutes would have no customers.

Somm's motif of the "lover on a leash" evolved to a one-sided affair—with women always controlling men. Vignette illustrations for *Le Monde Parisien* in 1879 showed Somm's dolls with their puppets walked like a dog *(Fig. 4)* or about to be executed. In "Dompteuse," for *La Monde Parisien* (1879) *(Fig. 5),* the woman takes the role of the "trainer" of the puppets, who learn to perform tricks. Numerous works by the artist are variations on this theme, an extended narrative of domination and control. The puppet men can be found chained

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

6   Alfred Grévin, illustration titled "Fantaisies parisiennes" in *Le Charivari,* January 13 (1883): 3.
7   Signed Sahib, "Les poupées de Paris," *La Vie Parisienne,* November 14 (1896): 656–657.

to perches in the place of parrots, or, as in the case of a work titled *Pupazzi,* crowded into an acid bath for etchings, presided over by a fashionably clad amazon who has a burin and a scraper dangling from her sleeve. *Pupazzi* is designed to be a tongue-in-cheek theatre program, with the first performance "Une Séduction" featuring M. Blancminet and Mme. Julie de St. Amour. During the second performance, "L'Affair St. Menuphar," "toutes les questions du jour sociales ou autres seront traitées à l'eau-forte et produiront sans doute une TRES BONNE IMPRES-SION." The evening's entertainment will conclude with a performance by Jacques Offenbach of D'Orphee aux enfers. Offenbach did perform a work by this name, with lyrics written by Somm's friend Ludovic Halevy. Somm cleverly associated the corrosive etching process with the seduction of men by powerful, and often evil, women: after his ill-fated marriage to his beloved Eurydice, Orpheus was dismembered by the Maenads. The Greek myth leaves unresolved the issue of the good versus the evil woman, since Orpheus was essentially destroyed by both types. In referring to this myth, Somm also alludes to the idea that the passion that men feel for seemingly innocent women is their Achilles heel. Moreover, his use of the motif etching, his preferred medium, indicates that he considers himself to be among the victims. His awareness of woman's evil will not save him.

The puppets in Somm's works represent the real men of Paris, threatened by increasingly independent women: prostitutes, whose sexual behavior was considered perverse and unnatural; actresses, who might cross-dress as men; and especially "women of letters," who followed in the footsteps of Georges Sand. Women who declared themselves, or were thought to be, feminists posed the greatest threat, not only to individual men, but to French society. Somm seems to have developed this type of imagery in 1874 or perhaps even earlier.[8] Almost immediately, other artists borrowed his constructs. A. Humbert's illustration from his series "La Ménagerie Humaine" for *Le Sifflet* (1875) included *La Gommeuse (Fig. 6),* a well-dressed woman who tries to crack open – with her teeth – the head of a male puppet chosen from the "oyster bar." The accompanying text explains that this figure is partial to fashion and has an increasingly dangerous nature. She is described as "un mammifère carnassier qui s'apprivoise assez facilement; cependant, même à l'état domestique, elle est peu susceptible d'attachement." She has voracious habits, leaving her den at twilight to search for food and using her "pink claws" (painted nails) to exhume "petits gommeux" (her male counterpart, known

Fig. 6.

as "dandies") which she eats alive. Her "digestive apparatus" works on the basis of prodigious force and elasticity, which effectively likens her to a snake. In addition to describing this creature's appearance and method of procuring food, Humbert also provided a recipe for creating her by artificial means: start with a carefully-washed goose girl, infuse her with "essence of laziness," gluttony, and *coquetterie*; add several glasses of champagne, a false chignon, and several pinches of erotic spices. Then the "object" should be dried, dusted with white powder makeup, touched with rouge, sprayed with perfume, and wrapped in velour or silk. Humbert's final instruction is to "serve cold." Humbert's *Gommeuse* appeared in a journal that was primarily

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[8]   The first documented use of the motif occurs in an illustration for *Paris a l'eau-forte* no. 63, June 21, 1874 issue. Plate b/w pp. 86 and 87.

political in focus. But large women exercising control over miniaturized men could also be found in the widely read *La Vie Parisienne*. In a spread by Ferdinand Bac describing how various women kept themselves warm, the *cocotte* roasts eight puppet-men on a spit.[9] Henri Gerbault, in *Leurs états d'Ame II* (also *La Vie Parisienne*) illustrated "l'ame perverse" with a nude woman manipulating puppet men by their strings, then discarding them in a heap at her feet.[10] A similar approach can be seen in Lucien Metivet's *Pluie d'Or* (*La Vie Parisienne*, 1899) where puppet-men are placed in a closet to illustrate money saved for a rainy day.[11]

Fig. 7.

While most of the illustrations considered thus far depict this new powerful woman as an amazon through manipulation of scale, others link the puppet imagery more directly to the emergent French feminism. In a cover illustration by Henri Gray for the *Le Chronique Parisienne* in 1885 *(Fig. 7)*, entitled *Les Pantins de Paris,* a short haired, monumental amazon dominates the composition. The woman, in the pose of a classical ruler and wearing a toga and tiara suggestive of Greek goddesses, cradles the 1885 volume of *Le Chronique Parisienne* in one hand; the other holds strings connected to smaller figures. A man sporting a monocle and top hat has been elevated on his string; he grins stupidly at the spectator like a child's toy. Another string controls a fashionably dressed Parisian woman; she wears a large bustle and carries a parasol. Importantly, this is the only figure to share the pedestal on which the amazon sits. Three doll-like male figures are sprawled lifelessly at the base of the pedestal; the only other female figure is nude and in a position of abandon just to the left of the journal volume – indeed the string that manipulates her is coming from the tome. Gray has utilized the puppet imagery to suggest not only that there exists a new, dangerous woman in Paris, but that current fashion and the popular press have helped create her dominion.

Even more closely associating puppet imagery with feminism is another watercolor by Henry Somm, entitled *Droits de la Femme* (private collection). The title is placed inside a circle that suggests a full moon and a halo simultaneously, perhaps referring to an alternative religion, like a cult or witchcraft. The woman's costume can be dated to about 1881, the year a law forbidding women to meet in groups of more than three was repealed. The woman holds the scales of justice in one hand, but this is not a representation of "blind" justice. With her other hand, she uses a pistol to murder miniature men that fall in a crumpled heap near her feet. Both the nearly balanced scales and the burning candles suggest the passing of judgment. The ground is littered with dead bodies. One of the figures floating safely (for the moment) behind her back is dressed as a minister, symbol of changes in law. He smiles stupidly at the spectator, seemingly unaware of the carnage. Again Somm advances the idea that men are being controlled or eliminated by a new powerful woman, but he also suggests, through the blank stare of the woman, that she is acting in a trance. This alludes to a prevalent concern of the period that adds a further level of meaning to popular imagery: the phenomenon of magnetism and hypnotism, which also involved domination, to produce psychic control.

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[9]   "De quel bois elles se chauffent," *La Vie Parisienne,* January 14 (1888): 20–21. Illustrations by F. Bac.

[10]   "Leurs états d'âme, II" *La Vie Parisienne,* March 4 (1899): 118–119. Illustrations by H. Gerbault.

[11]   "Pluie d'Or," *La Vie Parisienne,* April 22 (1899): 216–217. Illustrations by L. Metivet.

Sciences of the mind were in vogue in the latter part of the nineteenth century. An article on "Magnetisme et le somnambulisme" appeared in *L'Illustration* (1878). Paul Janet wrote a series of four articles detailing the history and characteristics of hypnotism for the *Revue Bleue* in 1884. General articles also appeared in *La Revue Encyclopedique,* in 1894 and 1897. One specific case gripped the imagination of the public – that of Gabrielle Bompard, a twenty-two-year-old woman accused of complicity in murder and robbery. It was not, however, the nature of the crime, but the nature of the defense – acting under post-hypnotic suggestion – that aroused discussion. It was feared that hypnotism would awaken "animal tendencies in this unconscious and suggestible side of bourgeois womanhood, with the result that such sexual energy might meet with the appropriate, and moreover uncomplaining, response from the victim" (Harris, 220). Outrage at this possibility was expressed in the feminist journal *Le Droit des Femmes:*

> Traiter l'amour comme un cas pathologique, cela nous semble blesser toutes les lois naturelles. Ne pas laisser à l'amoureux le libre cours de ses sensations, nous appelons cela violer la liberté humaine. Persuader par des moyens factices qu'un être qu'on avait cru bon est mauvais, qu'un coeur qu'on avait cru sincère est fourbe, voiler les doux et bons côtés de l'être aimé pour ne laisser béantes que les plaies de son caractère et de son esprit, c'est là une action vile, c'est là une duperie au rebours???? de l'illusion première. M. le docteur Emile Laurent, dans son *Amour morbide,* tente de démolir, à l'aide de l'hypnotisme et de la suggestion, le seul brin d'idéal et de bonheur qui rende, sur notre triste et arriérée planete, l'homme capable de l'élever au-dessus de lui-même, de sentir et souvent de créer le beau. (Potonié-Pierre, 258–259).

But perhaps just as disturbing was the claim by some doctors, such as J. Grasset of Montpelier, that if the defense of hypnotism in the commission of a crime was accepted by the courts, women would begin to fake the symptoms.[12] Women might *use* hypnotism as a method of control, even if they were not literally practitioners of it.

A humorous 1888 illustration by Ferdinand Bac (1859–1952) for *La Vie Parisienne* entitled "Hypnotisme, hypnotisées et hypnotiseurs" demonstrated that passage of a law making the practice of hypnotism illegal had not dimmed public interest or satiric commentary.[13] Many of the varieties of hypnotism shown and described in the accompanying text examine sexual relationships. In "Hypnotisme politique," a woman under a briefcase's spell suffers through annoying dinners and her husband's infidelities to achieve the "ecstasy" of entry into the government ministry. An advertisement of December 3, 1887 for *Le Bébé Jumeau* took the form of an article entitled "Le Bébé Jumeau et le Magnétisme," written by Paul Laur and dedicated to M. Liégeois, who advocated the "moral inoculation" of women to protect them from charlatans. The "article" described the plight of a child named Madeleine, who had been terribly disappointed the previous Christmas when she had not received a Bébé Jumeau and thus practices hypnotism upon her father – a strategy which yields the desired effect. The ad humorously suggests to parents that they not wait for their own children to use the techniques of "magnetic suggestion" on them, but rather to make the conscious decision to buy the doll now. Both Bac's illustration and the Bébe Jumeau advertisement suggested how women could profit from hypnotism. Both also indicated an important scientific "fact" – the *magnétiser* could stimulate obsessions in their "victims."

That a person could be overcome by desire for some type of object was exploited by *magnetiseurs* in their use of fetishes to induce a hypnotic state. By definition a fetish is "a natural object or an object of art with which a cult is associated and to which its possessor ascribes super-

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[12] J. Grasset, "Le Roman d'une hysterique..." *Revue de l'hypnotisme,* v. 4 (1889–1890): 270–277.

[13] Ferdinand Bac, "Hypnotisme, Hypnotisées et Hypnotiseurs," *La Vie Parisienne,* March 3, 1888, 118–119.

natural powers."[14] Sandra Hampson has studied the presence of fetishism in the French fin-de-siècle as manifested in the work of J. K. Huysmans and has linked fetishism to the concept of material excess. While she is primarily concerned with "fetishistically-endowed environments" created by Huysmans, especially in *Au Rebours*, the basic argument applies to the consumer-driven environment of department and toy stores. A fetish works by arousing suggestion. While any material object can become a fetish, traditionally human forms predominate, leading to the possibility that the women depicted in popular illustrations are presenting miniature men as fetishes. This was not a new idea, for Chateaubriand had mentioned the use of dolls by "savage mothers" in the New World to prolong "les illusions de leur douleur." In this case, the doll was treated like a live infant. This is a variation on the use of the doll for "gender education." Another connection between the French doll and fetish object is found in the practice of giving dolls to women when they reached age twenty-one, the "majority age." Dolls were also common wedding and anniversary gifts. This practice encouraged unmarried women to marry, just-married women to start a family, and those who were already mothers to consider having another child.

A fetishistic quality runs throughout Pierre Louÿs *La Femme et la pantin*, which appeared in serial form in *Le Journal* in 1898, at least twenty years after the appearance of the "woman and puppet" motif in popular illustration. Although Louÿs set the action for *La Femme et le pantin* in Spain, the story had autobiographical references linking it to the women of Paris – especially to his doomed relationship with Marie de Régnier, which he attempted to terminate just days before *La Femme et la pantin* was serialized. Elsewhere Louÿs connected the plot of *La Femme et le pantin* to another fatal relationship that he had witnessed in Paris – the tumultuous affair between André Lebey and a woman named Estelle from the Latin Quarter, who had quickly revealed "un caractère effroyable" – possessing an odious penchant for luxuries and a tendency to publicly humiliate Lebey (Goujon, 205). In the story, Louÿs slowly revealed man as a puppet, controlled by woman through sexuality. The protagonist, André Stévenol, has a chance meeting with a mysterious woman who "smiles with her legs as she spoke with her torso" (165). Louÿs repeated the motifs of fatality and obsession as the story unfolded in a series of flashbacks related to André by Don Mateo, who had earlier succumbed to the wiles of Concha Perez, allowing her to repeatedly humiliate him, and eventually receiving perverse pleasure from it. The story ends with Don Mateo and André Stévenol helpless puppets under Concha's control. In July 1898, Sahib executed a two-page illustration based on Louÿs short story in *La Vie Parisienne*.[15] Throughout Sahib's illustration, Mateo appears as a jointed marionette, who progressively shrinks to puppet size in response to his complete humiliation. Only in the depiction of a scene when Mateo beat Concha does he appear without the jointed arms, and at full size. At this particular moment – in Sahib's estimation – Mateo is a man, but he's a puppet by the end of the story, sitting discarded, as a bare-breasted Conchita lifts her new travelling partner – a now puppet-sized André.

Félicien Rops produced three major images entitled *Le Femme au pantin*, which predate the publication of Louÿs book. In all versions of Rops' *La Femme au pantin*, the puppet has an egg-like shape and also resembles the *commedia dell'arte* character Polichinelle. The first version, executed in pastel, shows a woman in a low-cut dress with tight waist and a bustle holding a fan in one hand and a dead puppet in the other. In an 1877 pastel, the puppet is lifted higher and the woman's costume has been altered significantly. Her breasts are bared and a suggestive swath

[14]   Max van Boehn, *Dolls*. (New York: Dover, 1972), translated by Josephine Nicoll. See chapter three, "Fetishes, amulets and talismans," especially 51.

[15]   "La Femme et le pantin," *La Vie Parisienne* (July 9, 1898): 392–393.

of fabric encloses her hips. Still holding a fan, it now opens slightly towards her chest and the other end points – as does her curled finger – to a small cup decorated with a serpent. The setting is a temple decorated with hieroglyphic figures suspended by strings and the words "Ecce Homo" – "Behold the Man" – associated with Christ dying on the cross. Below are a devil's head and a satyr-herm. In the background looms a sphinx. The final version was published in Octave Uzanne's book *Son Altesse la Femme* and was reproduced widely through *La Courrier Français* in 1896 *(Fig. 8)*. Here the woman, in a black costume that bares her breasts, raises the puppet high above a font as if to make a sacrifice. Below sits a court jester holding a baton with a skeleton's face. In both of the latter versions, the puppet's body has been sliced open (with the knife held in the woman's left hand) and coins pour out into the cup or font.

The woman in this image is typical for Rops. A further nuance in our understanding of Rops' *Femme au pantin* is provided by the context of the illustration in Uzanne's book. Here the image clearly represents a dangerous

Fig. 8.

female described by Uzanne. Woman, symbol of the foyer and "terre promise des renouvellements de son *soi*," will someday lose man's devotion. Who were her victims? Fools – wrote Uzanne in the accompanying text – impertinent, powerless or grotesque fools, who might be students of positivism or doctors of materialism. These disillusioned pawns, sleep-inducing philologists, cripples of nature, with "constipated souls" and cramped hearts, ironically expressed contempt for "le culte des fervents de la créature d'Eve et des amoureux indomptés par l'ennui de la vie." Vice embodied in this woman takes its power from misery, a characteristic Uzanne equated with prostitution, despite the sometimes glamorous exterior of a courtesan. Uzanne claimed that this corruption is the fruit of lassitude and distaste, an innate perversity fueled by idleness and ennui that pervades the simple pleasures of ordinary life like a pungent spice. What he called "le vice mondain" is deemed indestructible. In the context of Uzanne's text, it seems that Rops depicted the evisceration of a bourgeois man's pocketbook and heart simultaneously, by a prostitute.

In his introductory "advice to the reader" in *Fleurs du Mal,* Baudelaire wrote that "the devil holds our strings in puppetry" (5). Similarly, in 1883, Joséphin Péladan made a similar, telling statement, in the context of discussing Rops' images of women: "l'homme, est le pantin de la femme et la femme, est le pantin du diable." Rops, like his artistic contemporaries discussed above, saw woman as an embodiment of evil, an agent of the devil. Henry Somm apparently agreed with this estimation. In 1876, he drew a frontispiece for a book by J. Olivier entitled *Alphabet de l'Imperfection et Malice des Femmes,* which shows a devil controlling women by the means of strings. Next to the devil sits Eve, holding an apple. The "M" in malice is transformed into a striped snake. The text itself was a lengthy diatribe against women, originally published in the seventeenth century, then revived and reprinted in the nineteenth century. Olivier declared "Man hath not in the world a more cruel enemy than Woman, and which more sensibly and apparently is hurtful to his life, his honor, and all his fortunes, nor which more malciously opposeth all his designs" (21). In this text, women were seen as ruining houses, families, and the health of men. "She is the sworn enemy of friendship, an inevitable pain, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, and domestic danger" (158). The attraction/repulsion dichotomy that typifies the femme fatale is clear in the phrase "desirable calamity." She is also a "natural temptation," both "closer

to nature" and "closer to the devil." The biblical creation story is cited by Olivier as evidence of woman's propensity to cause "hurt, loss and damnation" to her husband, when she ought to procure his good – a fate sealed specifically by the devil's manipulation of woman (125). The ability of woman to control man in turn was described by Olivier as "terrible tyranny," in which the woman is deemed to be the "head of sin, the weapons of the devil" and the cause of man's expulsion from Paradise (159).

The theme of the *pantin* or the puppet thus emerged as a powerful nineteenth-century symbol in literature and art. Through this motif the modern woman was depicted at first amusingly, then increasingly as a dangerous femme fatale. The debate over the role of dolls in educating girls and the use of dolls to sell fashions to adult women allowed Henry Somm to encode his early images of women controlling male puppets. His works allude to "bad mothers," who had been brought up not with the traditional baby doll that inspired maternal devotion, but rather a coquettish adult doll that stimulated lust for material goods. Both Somm and Félicien Rops progressively developed imagery that referred to the contemporary women of Paris through carefully described ready-made fashions and accessories. Their intent was to visualize the presence of the femme fatale in modern Paris by blending elements of fatality and modernity. The use of the term *poupée* to indicate a beautiful woman seen in public, or a prostitute, created a further layer of encoding. These artists, as well as the writer Jules Bois, recognized the hypocrisy of condemning the prostitute by moralists and feminists alike. At the same time, they faulted feminism as another mechanism by which women – and by implication the devil – could gain power over French men.

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The Performance

of

Self-Representation

Anna Wessely

GENDERED AESTHETIC CONCEPTS AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF GENDER IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1

Art theory as a modern academic discipline, called aesthetics, was created in the second half of the eighteenth century, at the time when the basic concepts of thinking about human social and political existence were being reinvented or reformulated. The aim was to enlighten the public by providing its discourse and sociable conversation with points of orientation and principles of division. The authors of the innumerable treatises, essays, pamphlets, and novels self-consciously regarded themselves as agents of the all-encompassing process of Enlightenment, propagating new ideas that they had set free from the confined world of learned, scholarly books and transmitted to a growing public of avid readers who were soon to apply them as basic terms in the new social discourse. Words like civilisation and culture, the polity and the citizen, the public and the private, civil society and the family, society and individuality, etc. were becoming common coins of conversation, suggesting a conceptual web within which a new kind of human subjectivity had to be developed, recognised, and located. Social roles began to lose their 'self-evident' stability and the relations of individuals to their multiplying social roles were turned into objects of systematic reflection, supplying an ever-fascinating topic for moralistic talk on emotions, attitudes, and the proper codes of behaviour. While the natures of man and woman, the duties of husband and wife, and the right models of conduct for each age group were in the focus of attention, it was little noticed how fundamentally gendered most of the general, apparently neutral, concepts were in which social life as such was conceived.

The emerging discipline of aesthetics formed no exception to this rule. Since it was to be the science of sensations and affections, of bodily anchored sensibility as such, the ties between notions of sexuality, pleasure and pain, on the one hand, and the sensible qualities of aesthetically pleasing or revolting objects of experience, on the other, were closer and more pronounced. Aesthetics attempted to rationalize the confused regions of bodily sensation, desire, emotion and passion. To quote Terry Eagleton:

> Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body. [...] The distinction which the term 'aesthetic' initially enforces in the mid-eighteenth century is [...] between the material and the immaterial: between things and thoughts, sensations and ideas, [...] It is as though philosophy suddenly wakes up to the fact that there is a dense, swarming territory beyond its own mental enclave which threatens to fall utterly outside its sway. (Eagleton 1990, 13)
> Moreover, aesthetics as the science of sensibility was seen as the "sister" of logic, as a feminine, inferior counterpart to reason. It was, therefore, the duty of reason to foster and paternalistically control this feminine realm and thus help sense impressions and emotions to mature into reflected sentiment and knowledge. In this way, aesthetics was "born as a woman, subordinate to man but with her own humble, necessary tasks to perform." (Eagleton 1990, 16)

2

The pervasive gendering of categories also extended into the substance of this new science of sensibility. While the ancient Platonic distinction of passive, female matter and active, male form (or idea) was revived (cp. *Timaeus* 50a-d), the equally Platonist identification of the true and the good with the beautiful got discarded for the sake of a sharp separation of morality and aesthetics. The beautiful and the sublime as core categories of the aesthetic object and, later, of the aesthetic experience were marked out and defined along the lines of gender difference. There arose, in the wake of *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) by Edmund Burke, a veritable system of binary oppositions within aesthetics. Each pair of concepts worked to exclude women from the domains of truth and morality and, thus, to justify the exercise of male guardianship over their lives. The resulting conceptual frame is aptly characterized by Paul Mattick (Mattick 1995) as a kind "gender totemism" in the theoretical constitution of art. Burke's definitions connected the aesthetic experience of the sublime to the urge of self-preservation, that of beauty to the urge of the society of the sexes, that is, to man's sexual desire of a woman:

> The passions which belong to self-preservation turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; [...] Whatever excites this delight, I call *sublime*. The passions belonging to self-preservation are the strongest of all the passions.
> The second head to which the passions are referred with relation to their final cause, is society. There are two sorts of societies. The first is, the society of sex. The passion belonging to this is called love, and it contains a mixture of lust; its object is the beauty of women. The other is the great society with man and all other animals. The passion subservient to this is called likewise love, but it has no mixture of lust, and its object is beauty; which is a name I shall apply to all such qualities in things as induce in us a sense of affection and tenderness, or some other passion the most nearly resembling these. (Burke 1975, 125)

The binary opposition of sublime and beautiful provided a conceptual medium for reflection on the unsociable sociability of modern society. The sublime is individualistic and unsociable; the beautiful is sociability itself. The appropriate objects of the sublime experience are vast, jagged, rough, heavy, hard, loud and strongly coloured; those of the beautiful are small, smooth, curvy, delicate, soft and softly coloured. The one is awed by the brute force of untamed nature; the other draws delight from the tender sociality of the domestic sphere. Since the relentless social authority of the father is associated by Burke with the sublime, the frequently evoked conceptual pair of nature and culture figures here with reversed signs: man represents the terrible forces of nature and woman stands for culture and domestication. Although Burke insists on distinguishing beauty and love – the passion caused by beauty – from sexual desire, his attempt to produce a model of freely accepted, amiable authority by fusing features of the sublime and the beautiful characters into one required the desexualisation of man: A grandfather can be already loved, "in whom this authority is removed a degree from us, and where the weakness of age mellows it into something of a feminine partiality." (Burke 1975, 190) Interestingly enough, Mary Wollstonecraft adopted a similar strategy in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Reclaiming sublime heroic virtue for women, she drew the picture of a widowed mother, able to unite authority and love in her person, provided she repressed her sexuality:

> She is left a widow, perhaps, without a sufficient provision; but she is not desolate! The pang of nature is felt; but after time has softened sorrow into melancholy resignation, her heart turns to her children with redoubled fondness, and anxious to provide for them, affection gives a sacred heroic

cast to her maternal duties. [...] she subdues every wayward passion to fulfil the double duty of be-
ing the father as well as the mother of her children. Raised to heroism by misfortunes, she represses
the first faint dawning of a natural inclination, before it ripens into love, and in the bloom of life
forgets her sex – ...(Wollstonecraft 1975, 50)

The stakes in the contention over the compatibility of the sublime and the feminine were, of
course, very high. The aesthetic debate touched on two crucial issues: social order and authority
on the one hand, personhood on the other. The female sublime, if conceivable at all, is, in the
eyes of eighteenth-century authors, the bad sublime, the sign and personification of social dis-
order – a witch, a murderess –, Medea or the Queen of Night in Mozart's *Magic Flute* (Mattick
1995, 40–42). There is one significant exception to this rule: Winckelmann (*Geschichte der Kunst
des Alterthums*, 1764) seems to have reversed the customary identification of the male with the
sublime and the female with the beautiful. He finds the beautiful style of Ancient Greek sculp-
ture realized in the erotically charged, sensuous forms of naked male bodies as in the group of
Laocoon and his sons. The sublime style was, in turn, rarely achieved. It is manifest in certain stat-
ues of goddesses and heroines, which can be described only negatively, by pointing to their lack
of erotic appeal, their lack of self-consciousness, to their having been transformed into dehu-
manized fetishes of the phallic mother. In Alex Potts' interpretation:

> the outlines of an ideal self freeze into the forms of a dehumanized object, on which fears of trau-
> matic self-annihilation – or fear of castration as Freud would have it – can simultaneously be
> projected and disavowed. The stifled, mutely eloquent forms of the sublime are both charged by
> the violent reverberations of these fears and blank them out. In other words, the sublime object
> draws the viewer into a compulsive engagement with the idea of self-annihilation, and at another
> level displaces this threat. (Potts 1994, 142–143)

In sum, the promotion of the category of the sublime to the top rank of art theory had not sub-
stantially helped to conceptualise the ambivalence, the immanent transcendence of the aesthetic
experience. Instead, it had led theorists into a maze, a labyrinth of mirrors that reflected back
on them their desires, repressions and anxieties connected to sex, gender, subjectivity and social
authority. Moreover, the gendering of aesthetic concepts did not stop here but encompassed the
theory of genres as well. Burke had already suggested that the sublime, male principle found its
appropriate form in poetry, while the beautiful feminine was best expressed in the visual arts.
Lessing, who amply used even if never quoted Burke in his *Laocoon: An Essay upon the Limits of
Poetry and Painting* (1766), picked up and elaborated this idea. While apparently endeavouring to
discern and explain the specific features, strengths and weaknesses of these two art forms, he
argued for strict border control to separate them. The blurring of genre boundaries, the poach-
ing of one on the territory of the other amounted, in his eyes, to an adulteration of the arts com-
parable only to adultery. He saw generic decorum closely connected to proper gender roles. To
prevent women from indulging in adulterous fancies and bearing, as a consequence, monsters
instead of virtuous and beautiful sons, they must be made to look at beautiful statues and paint-
ings. At this point Lessing even felt prompted to call upon the law and the authorities to with-
hold painting from transgressing boundaries. (Mitchell 1986, 95–115)

3

Surprisingly enough, it is Immanuel Kant who helps us here to get down from the heights of
theoretical speculation to the more specific level of the iconography of gender. His *Observations
on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* were published in Königsberg in 1764. Its third section

carries the title "On the Difference of the Sublime and the Beautiful in the Mutual Relationship of the Two Sexes" (Kant 1912, 269–285). The differences are observed in more than a dozen dimensions from appearance, stature, and physiognomy through temperament, mental capacities, character traits, sentiments, and moral attitudes to typical forms of behaviour and action. This veritable table of gender-dependent differences is reinforced by describing the social rank and attire as well as the literary form most appropriate to each sex. Kant finds that the qualities attributable to masculinity are diametrically opposed and, as it were, naturally complemented by the qualities that belong to femininity. Man is big – woman is small, his time of the day is bright daylight – hers is the night. He is of mature age, tall, with a brownish complexion and a pair of black eyes; she is young, small, has a light complexion and blue eyes. The expression on his face is serious, sometimes stiff and astonished; she laughs aloud, has a smiling face and bright eyes. He is of noble birth and rich, yet simply dressed, her clothes are various, colourful, adorned, and artificial. His mind is profound – hers is beautiful or witty. He merits respect, she invites love. The sublime male is deeply moving, the beautiful female is attractive; he elicits a pleasant shudder, she is received with happy smiles. His work consists of exertion and meditation, hers is accomplished with ease. He is pensive and taciturn, she is talkative. He thinks in terms of eternity and despises the world, she happily spends her time in busy activity. He seeks and values friendship, she looks for sexual love. He is brave, frank, honest, virtuous, and self-controlled; she uses tricks, invents compliments and jokes in order to please, she is generous and easily moved by sympathy with others. Male virtues are all founded on principles; female virtues are merely adopted or, politely put, "beautiful" virtues.

All this must be kept in mind in considerations on the education of women. It is absurd and ridiculous for a woman to immerse herself in study, whether of geometry, logic, philosophy, physics, geography, history, or Greek poetry. She might as well grow a beard, suggests Kant, for that would much better advertise her wish to create an impression of profundity. Nature herself instituted the difference between the sexes and education must conform to the fact that humans are not of the same kind. The gentle sex should avoid abstract speculations as well as useful but boring data. The appropriate object of woman's knowledge is humankind, more specifically, man. (Kant 1912, 271–272) Neither should her moral education attempt to inculcate principles of morality and general rules of conduct that she is unable to grasp or follow. Rather, her moral sense has to be developed by providing her with judgments on the behaviour of the people she meets. If the wife has received an education of this sort, then the couple united in marriage will constitute a single moral personality, governed and enlivened by the husband's understanding and the wife's taste. (Kant 1912, 285)

In Germany, anxiety over middle class women's efforts to break out of the confines of their traditional role culminated in attacks against the pretensions of learned women. In France, the same anxiety focussed on the dangers of upper class women's public presence and political influence. Nevertheless, the same remedy, domestication of women was suggested in both cases. The means to this end was the strict enforcement of the gendered separation of the public from the private sphere, restricting women's activities and influence to home and family. Rousseau was quite explicit on this point in his *Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre* (1758):

> [...] there are no good morals for women outside of a withdrawn and domestic life; if I say that the peaceful care of the family and the home are their lot, that the dignity of their sex consists in modesty, that shame and chasteness are inseparable from decency for them, that when they seek for men's looks they are already letting themselves be corrupted by them, and that any woman who shows herself off disgraces herself; I will be immediately attacked by this philosophy of a day which is born and dies in the corner of a big city and wishes to smother the cry of nature and the unanimous voice of humankind.
> [...]

Is there a sight in the world so touching, so respectable, as that of a mother surrounded by her children, directing the work of her domestics, procuring a happy life for her husband and prudently governing the home? … a woman outside of her home loses her greatest lustre, and, despoiled of her real ornaments, she displays herself indecently. […] Whatever she may do, one feels that in public she is not in her place; […] when they take on the masculine and firm assurance of the man and turn it into effrontery, they abase themselves by this odious imitation and dishonour both their sex and ours. (English translation quoted from Landes 1988, 72, 85)

4

In fact, the life style of the middle class underwent slow but consequential changes in the second half of the eighteenth century. New forms of middle class sociality were replacing the more traditional organisations of life. Households comprising only the nuclear family of parents and their children were becoming the norm. In addition, the opening channels of mobility within state administration and the growing importance of cultural markers of social prestige as well as the emergence of new sites and forms of sociable intercourse all worked to heighten the significance of family socialization and education. In this context, the mother role as well as gender relations and the institution of the family came to be seen in a different light. (Gerth 1935) The anxieties and fascination that accompanied the experience of change and the uncertainty of judgment on innovative aspects of domestic life secured instant popularity to an anonymous essay *On Marriage,* published in Berlin in 1774. (Hippel 1774) Success prompted the author to revise and enlarge his work as well as the publisher to commission frontispiece engravings for the third, 1792 edition from the best-known, prolific illustrator of the times, Daniel Chodowiecki *(Fig.1).* This 1792 version was not only almost five times as long as the original, but also much more radical in its critique and suggestions. And it was soon followed in the very same year by another book, *On the Civil Improvement of Women* (Hippel 1792) from the same anonymous author. While the first version of the book on

Fig. 1. Daniel Chodowiecki: Happy Marriage. Frontispiece of the 1792 edition of *Über die Ehe.* Engraving, 115x60 mm, 1791.

marriage had been concluded with a flattering appeal to women readers, suggesting that, all in all, the essay represented a rigorous defence of their privileges, both books of 1792 rejected the idea of such privileges and insisted, rather, on the human and civil rights that women should claim. On this point, the author did not hesitate to criticize the French Constitution, proclaimed in September 1791, for having excluded half of the population, women, from citizenship:

The French National Assembly, which claims to defend human rights loudly, has so far forgotten that women are also humans, […the prescription should be] the improvement of the civil status of women, […] Some approach the work of enlightening humankind analytically, others synthetically, […] suggesting a reform either from bottom to the top or from the top to the bottom. The other sex should also be involved in this plan; let this *people of God* be granted human and civil rights, and God's country will be nearer than ever. (Hippel 1796/1976, 74–77)

The author in hiding was Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–1796), lawyer, high-ranking Prussian official, mayor of the city of Königsberg, student and friend of Kant's. He also published anonymously a book of poems and two novels written in the manner of Laurence Sterne. His secretiveness made guessing at his identity into a particular literary parlour game, some suspected Lichtenberg, others Kant with the authorship of his works, requiring both to publicly refute such allegations.

While Hippel, the advocate of marriage remained a bachelor all his life, the illustrator of his book, Daniel Chodowiecki (1726–1801) was a family man with a firm trader-craftsman lower middle class background, deeply rooted in the communal life of the Huguenot colony of Berlin. Although his first ambition was to become a painter, his real fame rested on his innumerable illustrations to contemporary literary works, beginning with a series to *Minna von Barnhelm* by Lessing (1769) as well as to the historically significant political events of his times. Although in his later years he became an important figure in the reorganisation of the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts as its secretary and then president, his 1771 engraving, entitled *Cabinet d'un peintre (Fig. 2)*,
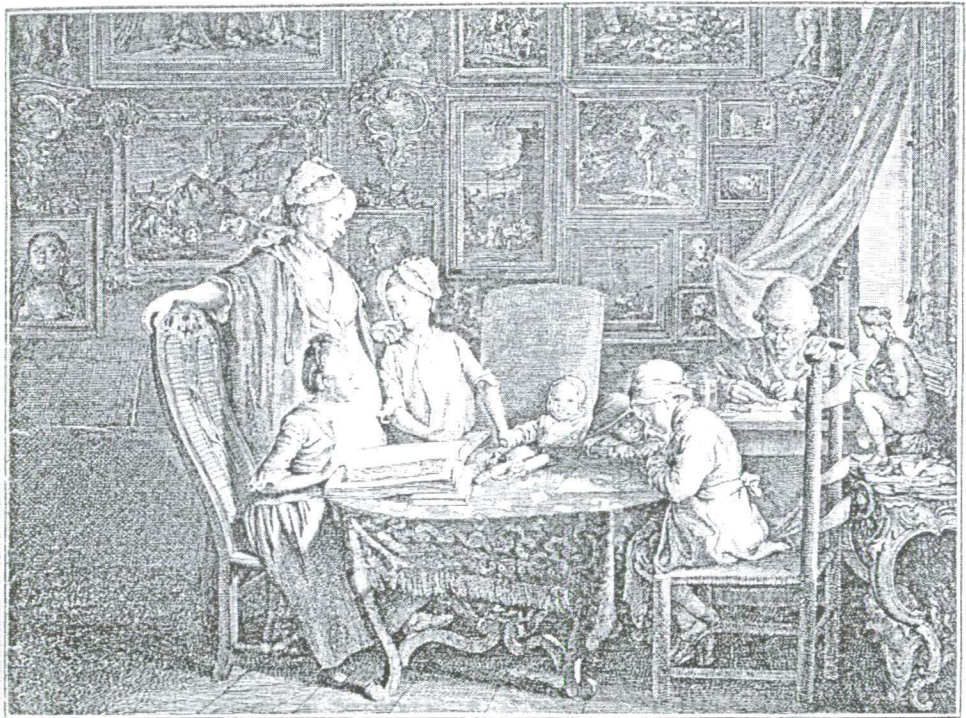

Fig. 2. Daniel Chodowiecki: *Cabinet d'un peintre* (A Painter's Workroom). Etching, 180x230 mm, 1771.

shows him as a sober middle-class craftsman without any academic pretensions, who keeps working, surrounded by his collection of art works, in the same room in which members of his family gather, with the wife taking care of the education of the children. Nevertheless, his work as an illustrator brought him into close and regular contact with writers and publishers, ardent advocates of the Enlightenment. These political interests are evident in the series of six engravings from the year 1791, entitled *The Six Great Events of the Past Decade*. Only three pictures represent literal events of political history; the other three are allegorical representations of Enlightenment, Tolerance, and the New French Constitution.

The image I want to discuss here is the engraved frontispiece to the book *On Marriage*. It faces the title-page with the vignette that shows the abhorrent image of the opposite of a happy married life, the fruitless poverty and cold insensitivity of the room the bachelor calls his home *(Fig. 3)*. Both are etched engravings and, as usual, of a very small size (115x60 mm; a diametre of 60 mm), a relevant fact concerning Chodowiecki's style since this size demanded expressive postures and gestures, leaving little scope for subtle facial expressions. *Happy marriage (Fig. 1)* shows an attractive and affluent young couple, sitting close to each other on a settee, the arched back of which encloses their group in a semi-circle, counterbalanced by the verticals of the pilasters and the ornate clock on the wall. They lovingly turn to each other while their four little children climb all over them. What strikes the beholder first is the omnipresence of physical touch, that traditionally does not figure in the representation of fathers and their children. Parents and children are all very close together, one little girl kneels on the father's thigh while she embraces the mother, a little boy whose hobby-horse lies on the floor, has slid off the settee but does not relinquish physical contact: one hand is on the father's thigh, the other clutches the fist of a younger sibling who lies or rather fidgets in the father's lap. The fourth child suckles on the mother's breast.

Marriage and domestic life are recurrent subjects in Chodowiecki's work. A few

Fig. 3. Daniel Chodowiecki: The Bachelor. Title-page of the 1792 edition of *Über die Ehe*. Engraving: 65x59 mm, 1791.

Fig. 4. Daniel Chodowiecki: Forced marriage followed by despair. Pair of engravings from the series *Beweggründe zum Heirathen und ihre Folgen.* 90x50 mm each, 1788.

Fig. 5. Daniel Chodowiecki: Marriage from inclination followed by family happiness. Pair of engravings from the series *Beweggründe zum Heirathen und ihre Folgen.* 90x50 mm each, 1788.

years earlier, he designed a series of 6 pairs of prints on the various incitements to marriage and their outcomes. Egoistic marriage on account of financial considerations results in an inability of the couple to relate to each other, in boredom. If people are forced to marry against their will, they cannot find to each other and escape in desperation the site or symbol of conjugal happiness, the settee with its arched back *(Fig. 4)*. The same piece of furniture reappears however, as the right place to sit when making and accepting a marriage proposition, dictated by love. The result will be domestic bliss with breast-fed babies, many children and parental pride *(Fig. 5)*. While the father's visit to the nursery is a subject common enough, the remarkable novelty of the frontispiece is the representation of the parents' equal share in their children's care and education. The motif of the settee with the embracing couple enjoying the company of their children returned again in the 1796 engraving *Domestic Bliss (Fig. 6)*; happy family life as the scene of the new, intimate forms of celebration in the prints of 1799 on *Christmas Eve* and *Father's Birthday*.

Charmed or bored by all these images of happy domesticity, let us return to the frontispiece to the book *On Marriage*. There is a troubling, almost uncanny undertone to this image that cannot be explained by reference to any aspect of its subject; it is connected to the poses of the two children on the right and to the way the whole family group is composed as consisting of a mess

of intertwining limbs. The artist evidently relied on formal solutions known from elsewhere and the connotations of these are much more sinister than what the surface suggests. Artists have always exploited what Shaftesbury called the *materia plastica* in the painter's mind: the repertory of representational forms, figures, poses, expressions that serve as the starting point and the medium of invention:

> The good painter [...] begins by working first *within*. Here the imagery! Here the plastic work! First makes forms, fashions, corrects, amplifies, contracts, unites, modifies, assimilates, adapts, conforms, polishes, refines etc. forms his *ideas*: then his hand: his strokes. [...] Accordingly a proficient in this kind [...] will apply to his idea, and study invention, for which a real secret [... is] passing the forms in review (as soldiers mustering), then checking, redressing, imprinting, stirring, exciting; then criticizing; then corroborating.
>
> (Shaftesbury 1993:142)

Fig. 6. Daniel Chodowiecki: Domestic Bliss. Engraving from *Carl Lang's Almanach für 1976*, 153x192 mm, 1796.

Fig. 7. Daniel Chodowiecki: *La cervelle d'un peintre* (The Brain of a Painter). Etching, 45x83 mm, 1792.
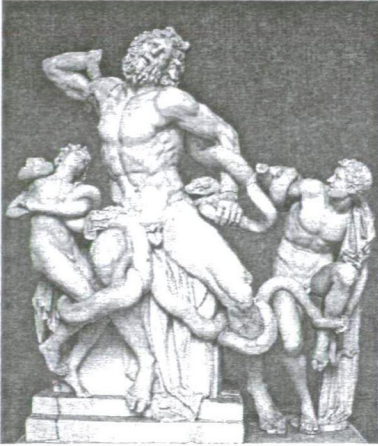
Fig. 8. Laocoon and his sons. Photo Allinari, Florence, cca 1880.

In the same year as he invented the frontispiece illustrations for the book *On Marriage,* Chodowiecki made an etching that attempted to represent the *materia plastica,* the repertory of ever changing plastic forms the artist works with. It carries the title *The Artist's Brain (Fig. 7).* This suggests that by identifying the plastic forms that have been adapted, conformed or redressed for the frontispiece, it may be possible to understand the troubling undertone of this image. The intertwining limbs of the family members and the children's poses to the right evoke a most famous image that any of his contemporaries with a little interest in the arts must have been familiar with: *Laocoon and his sons (Fig. 8).* The involuntary projection of this deadly struggle to the scene of domestic felicity might suggest that, just as Hippel did, Chodowiecki also knew or felt that family life had not only a bright, but also a dark and threatening side.

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Anna Makolkin

SARTORIAL ICONOGRAPHY AND
UNIVERSAL GENDER ENTRAPMENT

To Professor Thomas Sebeok, in memoriam

ARCHITECTONICS OF DRESSING

*How can this people expect to have good architecture
when they wear such clothes.*

William Morris

The **sartorial and vestimentary signs,** most visible within the cultural **semiosphere,** are the transcultural, transtemporal and transglobal symbolic features of Human Culture which form a very significant cultural layer, reflecting the most complex social, cultural, political, economic and historical interrelationships, and processes. The sartorial iconography derives its significatory power from the universal semiotic principle of **Symmetry,** exhibiting the familiar and **the traditional analogy** between shelter and dress, whose designs are invariably parallel. This paper will address the issue of general meanings of **sartorial signs** in their relation to architecture and simultaneously to other **cultural signs** – sociology, aesthetics, politics, economics, and ethics while capturing the changing functions during the general cultural shifts via displacement, transference, resemblance, and duplication.

1. TRACING THE ORIGINS OF VESTIMENTARY SIGNS

Contemplating about the origins of the **vestimentary signs,** Gerald Heard statednature had stripped him [man]of a decent coat, so he stole the other from animals (Heard 1924, 41).

The most basic mimetic impulse of *homo sapiens* is assuredly behind the prehistoric costume, modelled after the most natural vestimentary signs - fur coats of other species. The stone age man must have reinvented the natural costume of the neighbourhood animal species. Eventually, the skins and fur coats of animals would be replaced by the man-made robes. The thread and weaving marked a significant step in the human civilization, initiating the production of the vestimentary signs. The concentration and saturation of a **natural sign** – thread, in turn, led to another- **cultural sign** – fabric, assisting in constructing a new image of the body, or a new system of signs. Along with the costume, the reinvented natural signs – skin or fur – became **displaced signs**. The woven fabric, eventually shaped geometrically, commensurate to one's physical body, would later symbolize one's position in society. The ancient Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, or Phoenician garments, such as capes, kalasiris, aprons, robes and even loincloth's signified geometrical space, occupied by a human body. Most of these attires were uniform for people of both sexes. Very early on, clothing began to signify one's status, occupation and wealth. Layered capes and robes of the idle kings and queens, high priests and dignitar-

ies, contrasted with the semi-naked bodies of the toiling slaves and labourers. This tradition of sartorial distinction would persist through the ages, reaching highest acme in such European countries, as Italy, France and Spain. The well-dressed upper-class individuals also wanted to distinguish between themselves, i.e. robes of priests and royal family differed in their geometrical shape. The apparent similarity of draping was purely superficial, the status was indicated through the length of fabric. The triangle obviously took less then the rectangular piece, and this was the main difference between the robes of a priest and king (Köhler 1928, 73).

The remarkable resemblance between the shape of the hat of the Assyrian King – Mitre and the Mesopotamian Ziggurat – suggests the uniform geometrical imperative equally at play in architecture and costume design (Heard 1924, 44) . Marilyn Horn draws an exciting parallel between the Doric order columns and the Greek chiton of the same period, as well as the Ionic column and the Ionic chiton accordingly. The **vestimentary** and **architectural signs** signify in a strikingly similar way through the displacement of contours, lines, figures, and openings. The windowless structures in the Moslem countries correspond to the now infamous female attire – the burqa, the prescribed 'pious' clothing, completely covering a woman, leaving only mesh peepholes over the eyes. The attire, rendering a woman invisible, is symmetrical to the numerous Moslem structures, while both are influenced by the religious beliefs, prescribing the visual and other modalities The decorum of the places of worship often matches the decorative displacement in the **vestimentary signs.** Purely pragmatic functions, such as protection from climate and convenience in movement, traditionally regulate the physical space and the fabric size, which, in turn, form the secondary spatial layer, simultaneously signifying three other spaces – physical, social and symbolic. And within all of those spaces, the vestimentary sign creates a double signification system through the design of the fabric, its texture and decorum, and external writing pattern over the body.

The cultivation of the silk worm in China and Japan further advanced the vestimentary signification, with the attire, drawing attention to the pattern, painted on the fabric rather than to the bodily contour. The silk pattern and its visual appearance displaced the shape and cut of the dress to the background, "drawing full attention to the beauty of the cloth" (Horn 1968, 49). The softness of silk was exploited as a new social status signifier. Since the fabric was more expensive and time-consuming to produce , only the upper classes could afford it. In general, the vestimentary and architectural signs were subordinated to the vagaries of social semiotics. The pendulum of the social semiosis would periodically swing towards the accessibility, with the obsessive differentiation imperative, acting as a suppressing and controlling device. The wealthy, who wished to separate themselves from the poor, signified their social distinctness both through their dwelling and their dress. If the size of a dwelling, the physical space could indicate one's status, the attire could intensify the same messages. However, unlike the buildings, expandable in height, width, and solid materials, attire had its limitations. The vestimentary code could not signify through height to the same extent as a tower could. The notorious farthingales, the 15th–19th century frames in the women's dresses, with the extended natural width of a body at the hips, represented such a creative attempt to emulate the architectural sign and were widely used throughout Europe. Eventually, the impractical frame, which prevented from signifying through movement and gesture, would be abandoned altogether. The participation of women in the work force during the Industrial revolution dictated the shift in the vestimentary signs, again attesting to the symmetry between the social and aesthetic signification. Thus, the only modus of signification left was through the fabric texture, ornamentation and intricacy of the design and style, or in other words through the layered vestimentary text - underwear, outerwear, head dress, footwear, and accessories.

Since the physical ability of the body to carry and withstand this vestimentary armour was limited, the producers of the signs had to adapt to the narrow semiotic possibilities of this "second skin" and accept its limited volume. The body, wrapped into the second skin, could successfully signify only if the natural kinesics were not suppressed. Consequently, the focus of the producers of the vestimentary code was on **displacement,** as a tool and main semiotic device.

Because the body could not signify the same message of grandeur and wealth for prolonged periods, the periodic fashion change offered the possibility for displacement and production of new signs. This was a successful mechanism of the semiotic denouvement which only the upper classes could sustain. Fashion tyranny became a way of sustaining the social semiosis in favour of the wealthy and still is unchanged. The pace of displacement rather than displacement itself became the expression of the social status. Here the symmetry between the vestimentary and architectural signs breaks, because if architecture tends to preserve the sign, the clothing industry derives its impetus from destroying the old signs and displacing their semes.

2. NAKED VERSUS CLAD

The first most primitive vestimentary sign - fig leaf - stands for the earliest act of civilizing and ennobling *homo-sapiens*. Since then the naked/clad paradigm has always ruled the vestimentary code, with the diachronical history of the code revealing the cyclical oscillations in covering and uncovering the body. The naked/clad paradigm tends to be symmetrical to the public/private space division, the predominant social moral prescription, and the power of the religious institutions. Eventually, the leisurely aristocracies of the global village would modify this syntax by exposing certain body parts in public. Public entertainment within the confines of the royal domain (balls, reception, concerts etc) prescribed a certain dosage of nakedness via controlled erotic function of the dress. For instance, it was not unusual for the aristocratic females in the 15th–17th century to expose their upper body parts, drawing the attention to the neck, head , while accentuating the head ware, hair style and jewellery and extending the height. Male eroticism of the Western dress was in the vestimentary signs, covering the lower part of the body, while the female attire signalled the erotic through the designated nakedness of the upper part.

The ancient customs dictated that slaves have minimal dress both for practical work reasons and sexual exploitation. For instance, slaves, working at construction sites in ancient Egypt or Babylonia, wore comfortable "professional clothes" and the loincloth was the most suitable garment. On the other hand, the female slaves, whose primary service was catering to the erotic fantasies of the owners, required the least . Their naked bodies distinguished them from the clad bodies of their masters, who entertained their guests and themselves through the visible display of different attire. Deliberately dressing the female slaves in the most seductive way, the ancient masters reversed the semiotic relationship between a master and a slave. Instead of a master, designing the display of the erotic, it was the slave, displaying the naked body. Since very frequently slaves were foreigners, the Other was the sign of perversion or signified:

<div align="center">

Naked =   Other
                Low
                Sinful
                Barbarian
                Uncivilized

</div>

The naked/clad paradigm has been used in the military as well to establish the boundary between the protected, safely clad warriors and the unprotected passive civilians, incapable of playing the war game.

The paradoxical imperative of modernity institutionalized nakedness despite the ethos of feminism and appeals for equality. The postmodern Britney Spears mid rift and Madonna's defiant bra symbolise the parade of the eternal erotic sign and the paradoxically abused postmodern female body, the postmodern despair, confusion and fatalistic surrender to the tyranny of the time. The 20th-century style mocked the secluded private space of the past, bringing it into the public square, paradoxically reducing the semiotic effect and power of seduction, since the transparent sign had a diminished **semiovalence.** The notionally liberated postmodern woman, denouncing her enslaved sister of the past, actually stands quite powerless in her ugly clownish dress, neither loved nor admired , and envious of her more beautifully clad historical counterpart. The cult of reductionism, minimalism and the 20th abstraction in architecture affected the vestimentary code. The fondness for Picasso and Kandinsky, Levy jeans and average grey concrete block in New York and Toronto, Hong Kong or Tokyo are profoundly symmetrical and harmonious. Grey naked concrete went parallel with the blue-gray jeans.

3. GARMENT AS A CARITATIVE SIGN

Roland Barthes found another meaning of the vestimentary code - the meaning of love:

> The garment is sometimes loving, sometimes loved; we could call this the "caritative" quality of clothing. Hence, what is being signified here is the role, simultaneously maternal and childlike, that devolves upon the garment (Barthes 1983 [1967], 241).

He points out to the possibility of clothing provide *psychological insulation* for the Body. One informant, working in a clothing store, pointed to the healing or soothing power of certain soft fabrics, such as velour or silk. The touch of the fabric does create a special bond between the body and its "second skin". The *"caritative quality"* of the signifier has been extensively exploited by the fashion industry and fashion magazines, persuading to buy extra garment as an expression of self love and care towards one's own Body. The caritative quality could be expressed not only in the narcissistic manner and directed towards oneself, but towards others. The gift giving custom utilizes the Barthean meaning, expanding the canonical non-verbal communication beyond the realm of sociology and economics, and towards psychology. Garments silently intensify, repair, or initiate emotional ties with other people.

Peter Corrigan, studying sartorial relations of some Dublin families, observed a special gender marking within the garment gift giving and concluded that wives more frequently display their affection towards husbands through cardigans, socks, sweaters, pants, pyjamas, ties and underwear than in reverse (Corrigan 1989, 516). According to Corrigan, similar attitudes and patterns exist among the non-verbal display of affection between mother and children, i.e. mothers give and sons receive (Corrigan 1989, 517). Daughters and mothers reciprocate in vestimentary signification but there is an age- marking threshold, beyond which the pattern changes. Mothers cannot give satisfactory clothing gifts during a troublesome teen/age, since then signs are misinterpreted on both sides and daughters stop responding to caritative meanings and reject the selected garments on the grounds of outdatedness ("old style", "not my style"). They also reject the mother/child bond during their early and late teens when clothing, purchased and given by a mother, is interpreted as a symbol of forced and prolonged dependence, detested childhood.

The desire to be clad independently is the expression of the Self. A teenage self rejects the family link, communicated through the sartorial ceremony, seeking his/her pseudo independence by conforming to the external command of the fashion industry or peers. The sartorial signifiers of the mass media seem to exert more semiotic power than the **caritative selected signs,** coming from the close family members. It is true that females frequently exercise their control through the monopoly on clothes buying. Frequently, this is the major historic and the only control they possess within the family unit. Daughters who purchase clothes for their fathers also communicate their desire to signify through vestimentary code and practice their future prescribed gender roles. They rehearse the drama of sartorial relations and learn to receive love and affection associated with it. The **caritative signs** -garments could be divided into two major groups – made and bought. The handmade garments are more **semiovalent** in the sartorial rituals than the ones that are purchased. Today's modern liberated female who purchases garments, made by the industry, unknowingly and paradoxically exploits other female coldly and anonymously.

4. FAMILIAR SARTORIAL INDEXES

Clothes make the man.
(An old saying)

The visual power of garments, their force, seductiveness and enormous aesthetic impact have been known to people since time immemorial. The design, making, buying, selling and exchanging clothes have become an important cultural system within the system, crossing the geographical, temporal, spacial and religious boundaries. The traditional folk or ethnic garment was another method of expressing difference on a more pronounced level than merely another group, gender, or class. Since the ultimate differentiation barrier between the sartorial signs is next to impossible, various vestimentary traditions utilized the power of certain specific diversification via the sartorial displacements, claiming difference. For instance, some Croatian ethnographers, trying before the proclamation of independence to prove the uniqueness of their folk dress, pointed out to various colors used in embroidery on male and female garments of villagers, ignoring the fact that all ethnic garments of the Mediterranean region basically do not differ. Moreover, there is a surprising running **seme** in all embroidered blouses across the entire globe, from the Black and Mediterranean seas to China. The emroidered flowers and leaves repeat the same pattern in Ukraine and Poland, Bulgaria and Slovakia, Russia and Estonia, Latvia and India, Chinese provinces and Moldavia. The natural **protosign** – flower – is reinvented in a variety of familiar ways, becoming a **familiar index,** i.e. sign, leading to the other signs. Apron, a part of the functional dress of the agricultural people of Europe, Africa and Asia, is also an index or a familiar **recognizable sign** of many occupations, such as carpentry, meat cutting, baking or cooking. The length of a dress in the 20th century signalled another revolutionary change in the global vestimentary code. The long garments proved to be impractical in the post-industrial activities, and the skirts of all women in the rural and urban areas became globally shorter. Jewellery, made of precious metals or stones, is a universally recognized index of status and wealth, or, what Charles Peirce understood, as a sign, leading to other signs of greater semiovalue. From ancient Babylonia, Egypt, Phoenicia, Greece, and Crete to the modern countries of Europe, Asia, America and Africa, the precious metal is still the index of wealth. The accessibility of goods makes it frequently a **false sign.** Conformity to the prevalent fashion is also a familiar display of the sartorial signification.

The old/new paradigm is being successfully exploited by the clothing industry when the familiar vestimentary visual semes or the significatory motifs are yearly discarded as "old", "uncomfortable", "unappealing", or "unaesthetic", and the allegedly new visual modalities are introduced as authentically "appealing", "suitable", "innovative", and "beautiful". The partial success of this global campaign stems not only from the public willingness to conform due to the overpowering strength of the universal mimesis, but due to the unanimous global silent surrender. Any displacement of the familiar *seme* creates an illusion of newness while no new style is utterly new, but only partly new , but the "new old" is invariably presented as the absolutely new. The consumer embraces the new due to the "the primavera syndrome," the delight in spring, multiple rejuvenations and permanent duplication of the natural semiosphere The changing vestimentary semiotic patterns are symmetrical to the natural cycles – the seasonal shift stimulates redressing, the vestimentary vicissitudes, as well as even some behaviourial changes.

The "second skin" penetrates deep into the human unconscious, forever unwilling to accept the notion of the End. Constant changes in vestimentary semiosis and its enthusiastic mimesis extend and prolong the dreamlike state of human existence, sustained by death denial and the existential delusions of eternal Youth and Beauty. Every new layer of dress indexically points out to the symbolic rejuvenated new skin, i.e. a new cycle in the eternal movement and being.

The semiotic upheavals in the other layers of the cultural text are intricately encoded into the vestimentary code. For instance, the Venetian and Florentine nobles used to be clad in soft velour fabric, adorned by lace and precious stones, while lower classes were not allowed the same. The Jews of Venice, Florence, Pisa and Siena had to wear distinctive red or yellow hats to be distinguished from the gentiles. Similarly, when the social semiosis shifts towards democratization, the sartorial system reflects it as well – the notorious blue jeans, the best signifiers of or false signs of equality, democracy, and liberty. Formerly a professional uniform of farmers and dockers, jeans have become a false sign of pseudodemocracy, the public postmodern day masquerade costume of students, Marxist or pseudo-marxist university professors and playful businessmen, imagining the working proletariat by "dressingdown". John O'Neill wittily described this paradoxical masquerade, commenting on his own peculiar dress combination of a tie and silk shirt, and torn jeans, "I am an aristocrat at the top and a proletarian at the bottom" (1994).

A century after the post-industrial revolution, the clothes of males did not substantially change, at least, in urban Europe. Females, on the contrary, continued to signify intensely in the sartorial styles. Their active participation in the vestimentary coding process, marked by a total revolution in dress, went parallel with the sexual revolution, equal rights in the market place and political governance. The Russian 19th-century feminists asserted themselves first by their new hair styles – short hair cuts and berets. The revolution consisted in foregrounding what was previously invisible and shifting the visual focus of the style.

The general trend toward equality and democratization affected the wider manifestation of the erotic which was no longer a part of the segregated economy. The seductive quality of the attire, universally known but used only to a limited degree, was intensified in the days of what Marshall McLuhan labelled as the "tactile cool mass media", which caused the global arousal, regardless of class, occupation, and religion. The erotic message of the post modern vestimentary code is even more intensified and saturated despite the energetic parade of feminism and womens's rights movement. The controversial Madonna shocked with the erotic and semiotically displaced attire – a large cross on a semi-naked, corsetted breast of the actress and the black fishnet stocking

Cross = sign of piety, morality, religiosity
garter belt + fishnet stockings = sign of promiscuity
cross on a naked body instead of a clad one

The artist monopolized on the **recognizable signs,** which she distorted, displaced and deconstructed freely, simultaneously relying heavily on the familiar imagery to produce her own postmodern **cultural signs.** Incidentally, married Madonna who switched to writing books changed her sartorial style to fit the new social role – a business suit and no cross.

5. COOL OR HOT SIGN?

Marshall McLuhan used these familiar cultural icons (hot/cold) to draw a map of the modern media, on the one hand, and to classify the society-consumer of the very media, on the other. To him,

> there is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like telephone or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in "high definition". High definition is the state of being well filled with data
> (McLuhan 1964, 36).

McLuhan tried to access the civilizing value of versatile sign-production within the diminishing capacity of the human brain and in the context of, what he perceived as "cold," self-amputating TV medium, reducing the experience to the vulgarized and barbaric form. According to McLuhan, TV was the modern water of the technocratic Narcissus where the global tribe may see its reflection, while being turned into a numb, narcoleptic state of a non-thinking being. The best example was the American cultural text, dominated by the visual signs:

> In America, the intensely visual culture, TV has opened the doors of audile-tactile perception to the non-visual world of spoken languages and food, and the plastic arts (54).

He saw a profound symmetry between the ancient Biblical diagnosis of barbarism and the modern American cultural text. Quoting the 115th Psalm of the Hebrew text, McLuhan perfectly redescribed the modern barbaric, "cold" culture:

> Their idols are silver and gold,
> They are work of men's hands,
> They have mouths, but they speak not;
> Eyes they have, but they see not   (54–55)

This pathetic state of the modern American and global culture was attributed to TV, a metaphor of our displaced perception "where the seer is so inundated with imagery that the senses are dulled and numbed" (ibid.). Where McLuhan saw mere passivity and ineffective semiosis he could not but underestimate the actual impact and negative semiovalence of the visual. His statement, however, about the dangers of visual perception has proven to be rather prophetic:

> Once we have surrendered our senses and nervous systems to the private manipulation of those, who would try to benefit from taking a lease on our eyes and ears, and rights left. Leasing our eyes and ears and nerves to commercial interests is like handing over the common speech to a private corporation   (McLuhan 1964, 73).

The producers of vestimentary signs have empowered the postmodern **vestemes** with multiple extra meanings, having bombarded the macrotext by the visual signs that no longer signify the purely vestimentary marking code, but a powerful controlling complementary noise for the pro-

duction of other signs. The vestimentary semiotic system invades the symbolic referentiality of the macrotext, going beyond the consumption, production, exchange and renovation of the garment while the political, ethnic, racial and sexual semiotics of the macrotext is reversed and subordinated to **the vesteme.** To buy a dress from Benetton means to endorse the allegedly progressive, broad-minded liberal views since their products stand for the modern progressive humanistic thinking. Ultimately, the vestimentary code of the postmodern society masks the calculating intentions of the industry and global capital. Unlike the Renaissance artist, whose taste, elegance and creativity were behind the sartorial designs of the past, now it is the capital, sale and product-obsessed marketing strategist, who manipulates, controls and vulgarises the popular beliefs for the needs of the dominant market and the global coloniser, subordinating Culture and Art to the industry, trade, machinery and profit. Despite the feminist movement and its achievements, the postmodern woman is clothed by Gap and Gucchi, perfumed by Christian Dior and Oscar de la Renta, made-up by Marcelle and Max Factor – all of whom dictate the beauty type and the ideal presentment of the ideal woman-sign, ultimately valued only for her external gender entrapment.

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CARNAL RE-PRESENTATIONS IN ORLAN'S BODY ART. SURGICAL INTERVENTIONS SUBVERTING THE ICONOGRAPHY OF FEMININITY

Orlan is a French multimedia, interdisciplinary performance artist who, since the 1960s has used her own body to perform radical projects examining the status of the female body and feminine identity in patriarchal society and their inscription in the history of art and representation. Her latest ongoing body art performance piece, a long-term project started in 1987, aims at a complete personal deconstruction wrought through a series of highly publicized live broadcasts of cosmetic surgeries, entitled *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan, Image-New Images, Self-Hybridations, Carnal Art, Identity Alterity, This is My Body–This is My Software, I Have Given My Body to Art, Rites of Passage,* and *Successful Operation(s).*

Orlan's original goal was to create an ideal self-portrait, a computer-generated facial composite of her own design, constituted of ideal features from representations of women embodying archetypal traits of femininity in the art canon. Orlan incorporated the nose from a Fontainebleau sculpture of Diana, the mouth from Boucher's Europa, the forehead of Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, the chin of Botticelli's Venus, and the eyes of Gerard's Psyche. Besides their beauty, these female figures allegorize femininity: Diana is the huntress and adventuress, Psyche symbolizes fragility, spiritual hunger and love, Venus is fertility and corporeal beauty, and Europa is anticipation, while *Mona Lisa* stands for the hidden portrait of the artist, and enigmatic trans-sexuality (see Davis 1999, 457). The redesigned image of Saint Orlan combines the canonized icons of feminine beauty, the conventional markers of the classical Greco-Latin beauty ideal, with characteristics of madonnas, virgins and saints embodying the eternal, sublime femininity of Judeo-

Fig. 1.

Christian and baroque religious iconography (she often poses as Bernin's Saint Theresa or imitates classical representations of Mary Magdalene or the Virgin Mary). In the succeeding stages of her metamorphosis Orlan also appropriates the popular iconography of the Beauty Myth of contemporary, capitalist, consumer societies, by gaining full, voluptuous lips through collagen implants, slim ankles and slender waist via liposuction, and the largest silicone breast implants possible for her anatomy.

However, Orlan's project is far from a continuation of the traditional concept of femininity and beauty as constituted by the male gaze of the gender biased representational system of patriarchal society. In a carnal palimpsest performed on her own image, the masculine "ideal" image of femininity is reinscribed by new criteria of beauty beyond conventional norms – body modifications producing grotesque, carnivalesque, mutant, deformed, "un-feminine" portraits. These non-conformist surgical interventions of Orlan's oper-

ating theatre are inspired by the long-forgotten beauty criteria of pre-Columbian civilization. *Mona Lisa*'s forehead receives horn-like bumps, when cheek implants are inserted in her temples to recall the cranial protuberances, the skull deformation of the Aztecs. Her tenth operation is designed to excessively enlarge Diana's nose into the biggest physically possible to resemble Mayan culture's immense, beak-like, ceremonial nose supplement, frequent on seventh century representations of King Wapacal. *(Fig. 1.)*
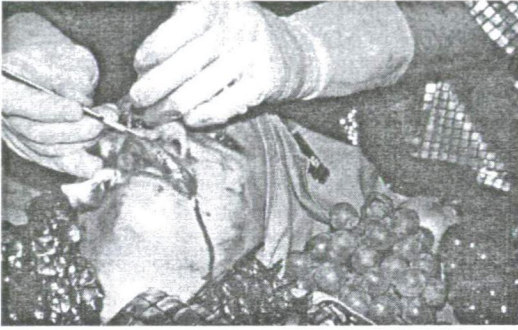

Fig. 2.

Adopting the aesthetic standards of a civilization whose vocabulary lacked a word for "beauty" (Bourgeade 1999, 24) signifies an attempt to shatter the Western "iron maiden of beauty myth" (see Wolf 1999) which forces all Western women into the mold of Barbie doll, a post-modern feminine goddess, echoing historical and classical gender stereotypes, and prescribing normatively an idealized, uniformly white, anatomically impossible, anorexic, forever young, extremely eroticized, yet immaterial, illusory body as token of femininity. Orlan's series of plastic surgery performances reveal that the dictates of the normative ideological technology of gender and body discipline work through representations perpetuating patriarchal (beauty) myths about women through an iconography carved onto the female flesh. *(Fig. 2.)* Femininity is uncovered as a cultural construct formed through representation as a voyeuristic fetish of the male gaze. Her body-work reveals that the image of the beautiful female body embraces a fundamental paradox: a woman's body painfully disciplined by the beauty industry's economic interests and patriarchal representations, tortured by diet, fitness, cosmetics, fashion and plastic surgery is an ascetic body represented as erotic and full of pleasure. Similarly, the aestheticization of the immaculate (and, thus) feminine body coincides with the pathologization of the abject female corporeality (pregnancy, menstruation, menopause) symbolizing in the collective unconscious death and decay (see Bronfen 1992). Orlan's performance elicits the "recognition of our misrecognition" (De Lauretis 1987, 124) in this antagonistically feminised subject, interpellated as beautiful by nature, when she uses her ravishing body, opened up by terrifying surgical scalpels to show that beneath the female beauty's immaculate surface we find the skull of a death's head.

In Orlan's surgical theatre cosmetic surgery is revealed as a symptom of oppression as well as an act of empowerment reappropriating modern technology for feminist ends. Orlan performs a subversion from within by using the conventional interventions of ideological body discipline to incite transgressive body modifications. Body modification, violently taking possession of one's body guarantees that the body will carry visible signs of an identity (Featherstone 2000, 2), but Orlan ironically produces an illegible, "ill-logical," meaningless (because unfeminine), open text on her body. Via the auto-deconstructive self-portrait in process, (re)constructed on the operating table, the performativity of gender is revealed *à la* Judith Butler, along with the ideological, repetitive, yet flexible nature of representation, the malleability of the physical body, the relativity of beauty and the dynamics of identity all reinforcing the possibility of feminist agency. (Ironically, Orlan's radical body modifications inscribing a feminist texture against the fashion industry's beauty prescriptions have recently been turned into the latest catwalk trend as fashion designers paid tribute to Orlan's work by making up models with the same bumps as her (Ayers 2000, 180).)

Operated under local anaesthesia, Orlan remains conscious during her performances to read to the audience theoretical, literary, psychoanalytic texts with feminist implications by Antonin Artaud, Julia Kristeva, Eugenie Lemoine Luccione, and Elisabeth Betuel Fiebig, among others. Her voice, the only thing that remains unchanged in her, refutes feminine silence and embodies female agency by consciously addressing gender politics in performances referred to as opera-tion-operas or "interventions," a polysemic word in French meaning both operations and speeches. Nevertheless, this feminine voice resists the Western (phal)logocentric, phonocentric metaphysics, as during the performance Orlan's voice is recorded to be replayed, transmitted, disseminated via multiple telecommunications channels, to be commented upon: a polyphony of the voice is created in the absence of the speaker. Orlan's carnal art becomes an experimental woman's writing, subverting the ideology written on the body by the destabilizing corporeality's "writing from the body." The body is used as a site for action, to overcome the objectification by engendering and the reduction of women into images, to disturb the ideological surveillance of material entities, and to resist women's exclusion from phallogocentric discourse. Thus, the body-text enables a female subjectivity (that had been traditionally regarded impossible exactly because of femininity's incorporated corporeality's incompatibility with subjectivity). The private body's space becomes a forum to incite public debate. The object of the private voyeurism of the male gaze becomes a public spectacle addressing female spectators as much, if not more than their male counterparts.

As the goal of Orlan's project is the examination of "the status of body in our society and its future [...] in terms of new technologies" (Davis 458), her operated body problematizes not only the disci-plined feminine body and the cor-pus of the female artist, but also the designer/ designed body. In her own *Pygmalion*, Orlan replaces the obsolete, biological, and natu-ralized body with a reinvented, mutant, robotic, "post-evolution-ary" (Featherstone 8) body. The body is challenged and reconfig-ured through technology: a cyber-cultural body-construct constitutes a hybrid self-portrait which is re-peatedly redesigned by the latest
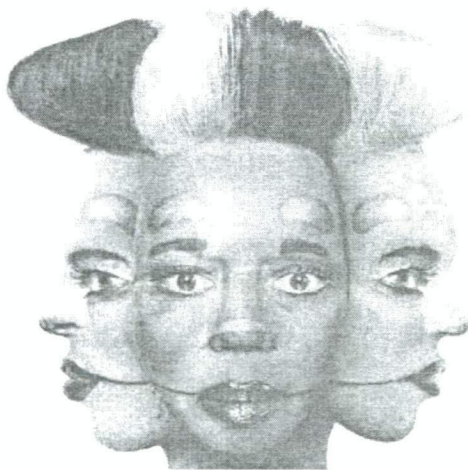
Fig. 3.

high-tech surgical and computer technology, deconstructing Orlan on the basis of computer generated digital images combining her "original" features with characteristics of (non)canonized beauty standards. Her body becoming her "software" recalls Donna Haraway's utopian cyborg, the transgressive possibilities and potent fusions of human and machine, real and virtual, dangerous and pleasurable, into monstrous mobile-mosaic-selves. The designer and designed body—a result of the cooperation of the computer machine and body machine—combines cybernetics and biology "to fight against God and DNA" (Orlan in Clarke 2000, 194). Orlan's virtual, metamorphic body-in-process embodies the Deleuzian "desiring machine body" and Artaud's "body without organs," free from physical constraints, and becoming a "memory of the future" (a phrase of Michel Serres and a subtitle of Orlan's performance-project). *(Fig. 3.)*

The open(ed) body is connected to a variety of interactive transmission networks. Its operation is videorecorded, projected on giant screens, and broadcast by live satellite to art galleries around the world. Spectators are invited to ask the artist questions throughout her operation-performance. The title *Omnipresence* highlights that despite the omnipresence of violent images (the daily broadcast of catastrophe, documented crimes, televised wars) the sight of the real, open body troubles spectators due to its *punctum*-like presence, a sight which is, in Barthesian terms: a wound, an adventure, a blind spot, a hazard breaking the polite interest, the cultural reflection and the calm aesthetic pleasure of the *studium* of conventional representation and (its) reception (Barthes 1994, 1121–1126). On the other hand, the title *Omnipresence, Image-New Images* and the operating theatre poster declaring "You have never seen such a film" call attention to the inevitable loss of immediacy, a drowning into re-presentation as the presence is mediated via images endlessly stimulating each other in a "society of spectacle" (see Debord 1992). The mediated screens in the live performance suggest that the symbolic reproducible images displace the real, and the primacy of Baudrillard's simulacrum takes over in a visual(ized) culture where there is always already representation.[1] Peggy Phelan's idea concerning the immediate presence of performance seems to be questioned, to justify Philip Auslander's views, as the "live" appears to be an artifact of recording media, a result of mediation, a piece of virtual reality. *(Fig. 4.)* Presence becomes "telepresence" (Clarke 201). As Matthew Causey highlights, the "mediated technology of representation" reveals a "mediated subjectivity" (Causey 1999, 4) paradoxically

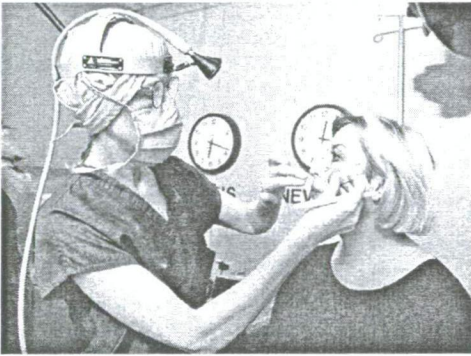Fig. 4.   Fig. 5.

embodied in a multimedia (yet carnal) performance piece. The live actor and her video image(s), multiplied, disseminated, omnipresent on screens and on the web, show that we can only see ourselves as pictures, screens, alienations, as re-presented identity-fictions. In Parveen Adams's words, "Orlan is flesh become image" (Clarke 192). Orlan looking, looked at, and seeing herself looking and looked at acts out the fragmented subject, "confronting her mediated other in technologies of reproduction" (Causey 5), claiming: "I do not suffer, except when I look at the pictures, like you" (Orlan 1998, 53, *my translation*). The subject's alienation is reinforced by the

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[1]   When Judith Butler claims – elaborating on Simone de Beauvoir's groundbreaking feminist argument "one is not born a woman, but becomes one" – that "[t]here is always already gender," she compares gender to representation, suggesting that gender, just like language, is a naturalized socio-cultural construct, which constitutes a prisonhouse that deprives the ideologically interpellated, engendered, speaking subject from the possibility of escape by being "always already there". See: Judith Butler: *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* (London: Routledge, 1990), 7.; Simone de Beauvoir: *A második nem [Le deuxième sexe.]* Trans. Görög Lívia – Somló Vera (Budapest: Gondolat, 1969), 197.

theatricalization of Orlan's body represented in the operating theatre of the artist's studio, reminiscent of the Renaissance anatomy theatres. Surgeons, like Orlan herself, are dressed in costumes of famous fashion designers (Paco Rabane, Franck Sorbier, Issey Miyake, Lan Vu) and surrounded by iconic props such as the devil's pitchfork, a giant Venus, Orlan's changing self-portrait, and even male strip-tease dancers. *(Fig. 5.)*

Strangely, Orlan aims at breaking the looking glass of the mirror phase by re-designing an ideal self-portrait of her own choice. Here she emphasizes that she does not want to look *like* Venus, *Mona Lisa*, or the Aztecs. She stresses the change, the movement, the trans-formations of her metamorphoses reflecting a shifting identity flux, a dynamic, nomadic subject at the "vanishing point of subjectivity," moving from "the tragedy of unremembered fragmentation of the real toward the (open-ended possibilities of the) virtual" (Causey 29). Although one of the last steps of the carnal performance series is to request advertising agencies to give her a new name and then apply for a legal name change, and thus a new identity, Orlan never intends to regard her project as terminated. Her post-performance gallery shows a multifaceted subject: dozens of images contrast Orlan's computer generated image (a composite of (un)conventional beauty ideals and her features) with daily photos of the artist's deformed, discolored, and bruised face recovering from surgery. Claiming that "[b]y wanting to become another, I become myself" or "I am a woman-to-woman transsexual act" (Davis 459), Orlan reminds us of a post-modern, heterogeneous subject constantly toying with the impossibility of representing her self or reconstructing her self-portrait. Orlan's portrait is all the more disturbing since it combines *Mona Lisa* and Venus's supreme beauty with the horn-like bumps of Dionyse, a horned satyr or even the Devil. The sublime melts with the grotesque, an incurable error, a troubling fault lies at the kernel of the ideal image of femininity. Thus, the multidimensional (self)portrait can be interpreted as carnivalesque. Orlan's performance shares the major attributes of the carnival described by Bakhtin as the spectacular performance of an ambiguous, playful and dynamic double worldview, transgressing (yet reinforcing) boundaries and fusing dichotomies (see Bakhtin 1968). As Orlan claims, her "work is based on the notion of 'and': the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the public and the private" (Featherstone 9). Death and (re)birth, sacred and profane, interior and exterior, self and mask combine in Orlan's grotesque body, to become an antagonistic, open, material, excessive, subversive force shattering the mirror image. In the self-hybridation of carnal art the othering of the self embodies Rimbaud's famous *credo* "Je est un autre." Orlan repeatedly quotes Eugenie Lemoine-Luccione's ideas: "[t]he skin is deceptive…in life one only has one skin…one is never what one has…I have an angel's skin but I am a jackal…a crocodile's but I am a puppy, a black skin but I am white, a woman's skin but I am a man, I never have the skin of what I am" (Orlan 1998, 60, *translation Clarke* 193). Thus, the aim
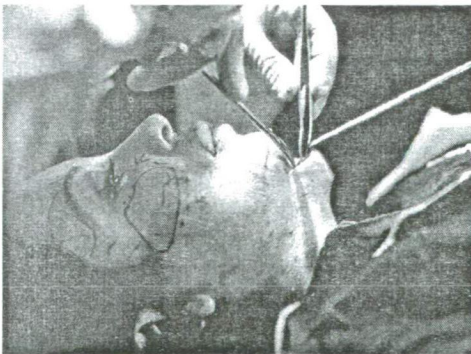
of Orlan's visual autobiographical deconstructive project may be a violent and literal realization of Paul De Man's defacement, a de- and reconfiguration of the fictionality of identity, where the heterogeneity of the self is re-, and reinscribed (De Man 1984), carved into the flesh with surgeon's knives, only to open up the scars again and again in an impossible attempt to reach the ideal, true, real portrait. In her performance she reaches back to the etymological root of the word "autopsy", aiming to "see the self," or in Orlan's case, to "see the selves." *(Fig. 6.)*

Fig. 6.

As it has been argued, the "liveness" (see Auslander 1996) of Orlan's performance is challenged by technological devices of a media-dominated and mediating culture, "always already" representing, thus inspecting and controlling, the body's threatening corporeality and immediate presence. The visualized body is fatally alienated: it is symbolized and mediated, it is theatricalized and spectacularized, it is aestheticized and banalized, irreversibly turned into a simulacrum, a re-presentation. Nevertheless, Orlan's performance seems to transcend traditional dualisms, as this symbolic body image is paradoxically also a tangible, real, carnal, material body that troubles re-presentation by its ex-static ob-scenity. The somatic, carnal art displays a bleeding, blissfully painful body opened by surgical knives, when the anaesthetized, fully conscious Orlan "speaks up in the voice of a smiling cadaver under autopsy on the dissecting table" (Orlan 1998, 68) *(translation mine)*. Like E. A. Poe's M. Valdemar, the mortal body, acting like a corpse, subjected to the clinical-artistic experiment, utters the paradoxical speech act, "*I am* dead" (see Barthes 1988), enacting an encroachment of life on death, producing a disorder of meaning. Orlan's face, prior to surgery, is marked up with black lines, as a carcass ready for the butcher's cut (Clarke 189). The open(ed) body, balancing on the borderline between life and death, subject and object, self and other, and pain and ecstasy, provokes the vertiginous horror and fascination of the uncannily Kristevian abject, threatening, yet tempting corporeality, inviting the destabilized subject to witness transgressions of forbidden limits. Orlan's carnal reincarnation performance is based on the "abjection of the subject" (Kristeva 1982, Kiss 1996, 21) by the resurrection of a perturbing corporeality, a repressed otherness that shatters the seemingly self-sufficient subject position. Needles penetrate the sacred face's flesh, scalpels slice open lips, while ears are severed from the face, skin is peeled off to reveal bones, muscles and sinews, wounds excessively shed blood. The discolored face of post-operational portrait reveals bandages, bruises, scars, swellings and deformations. Relics of body tissue, pieces of scalp with hair attached, clumps of fat, and bloody bits of gauze are framed inside reliquaries (and are sold ridiculing consumer society's attempt to tame the body into an exchangeable product). In a final step, after her death, the mummified body of the artist is planned to be displayed in a museum consecrated to the body given to art. The opened body filmed on the dissecting stage of the operating theatre is a *par excellence* example of the Freudian uncanny (Freud 1953), as it embodies the familiar body as alienated other, a dreadful puppet who has been me, a mediated, yet material, double insecurely balancing on a borderline, a technologically redesigned, reduplicated, eerily *déja-vu*, robotic automaton-body that is nevertheless bleeding. The self-hybridation series of Saint Orlan involves the paradoxical coexistence of the pain of dissolution-decomposition and the *jouissance* of disappearing, of the elimination of difference. This self-sacrificing, sovereign subject communicating with totality through the loss of its self in a rite of passage is designed in the fashion of Georges Bataille's *expérience intérieure*.

Orlan's violent carnal art, destabilizing the subject by putting it into communication with trans-linguistic corporeality, balances on the limit of representation since it treads in the footsteps of Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty. As Jacques Derrida stresses, the theatre of cruelty aims at transcending representation by being unrepresentable deathly life itself, that is also the "non-representable origin of representation" (Derrida 1974, 234). The theatre of cruelty, like Orlan's performance, rejects traditional theatre's tyranny of textuality, speech's predominance on stage, the omnipotence of the author-creator, the passive consumer, actors as interpretative slaves and the priority of representation, imitation and reproduction. Carnal theatre is based upon unrepeatable reality, the unspeakable spectacle of the violently open(ed) body shocking involved spectators by aggressive images produced by and on the body of Orlan, director, actor, spectator and text in one. As opposed to classic theatre's attempt to represent fiction as (if it were) reality, cruel carnal art pretends that real life is a piece of art, a spectacular fiction, a sacred

rite. Orlan embodies Artaud's true actor, "a being, who on stage [in a festival of cruelty is] not afraid of the true sensation of the touch of a knife and the convulsions" (Derrida 244). The performance becomes a festival incorporating the totality of art, and thus the totality of life (and death), addressing the totality of senses by combining visible images with the plasticity of installations, dance and music. Orlan's operation is a "visual and plastic materialization of speech," (Derrida 241) when, resisting Logocentrism, instead of the word becoming body, the body becomes word, (see Orlan 1998, 62) a trans-linguistic materialization of the gender political manifesto read by the dissected body during the surgery.

The palimpsest of the mediated and material body highlights the inevitability *and* insufficiency of representation's omnipresence, since, as body art reveals, there is always already an overflow, an excess, a supplement *within* that subverts representation, and paradoxically reinforces the violated limits in this inherent transgression. The snake bites its own tail: boundaries and transgression, representation and presence, always already symbolic, yet undeniably unspeakable, corporeal body must coexist. Orlan, as Derrida predicted, cannot fully realize Artaud's utopian project: the closure of representation remains impossible.

Nevertheless, representation may be subverted exactly by the excess of representation. Orlan's violent corporeal presence and the carnal acts re-appear multiplied, framed in post-operational photo-series, projected on the walls of the operating theatre, broadcast on television in museums world-wide. Bodily reality is repeatedly replayed near and far, in space and—as the recurring props of the surgical theatre, the clocks, suggest—especially in time, since Orlan's body is primarily a "body becoming" in the process of constant metamorphosis, as displayed via the sequence of images, the sliding chain of film-shots, the continuously updated documents of the open-ended project. Any portrait of the body-artist can only represent her past, a memory, a mask, what she once used to be, now an other, only an image. The present face can never be pictured. The bleeding body on the stage of the dissecting table is (t)here, present, and real, yet its screened image is always already based on its absence, on the difference between presence and representation, here and there, carnal reality and technological video projection. The narrative is based on the absence of the self. Representation can only (de)construct the story of the disappearing subject (repeatedly underlining the post-modern concepts of the meaning and subject in process and on trial, and the impossibility of autobiography). Orlan's ever-changing succession of "body-prints" recalls Andy Warhol's 1962 monochrome print of Marylin Monroe's lips multiplied by 168, in the sense that the representation in these subversive cases is not so much referential as it is allegorical, a self-conscious reflection disclosing representation, a meta-text on the dynamic tension between presence and distance (absence), between *automaton*-process and *tuché*-punctum. The point is not to question what is on the picture but the phenomenon that the same yet different image is in constant proliferation, in a *mise-en-abyme* generating a seemingly infinite series of copies, differing versions, problematizing the concept of the original. Thus, Orlan provides an ironic comment on the illusory immanence of beauty icons and on the imaginary transparency of conventional, mimetic representation.

In place of conclusion, I think it is worthwhile to examine the potential intertextual inspirations of the name, or rather trademark, of Orlan, a telling artistic pseudonym resisting the symbolic Name of the Father, yet exploiting with a wink the *Nomen est Omen* tradition for subversive ends. Pierre Mac Orlan, a French painter, writer, and composer was a contemporary and friend of Picasso, Max Jacob and Braque. He began as a member of the cubists preferring a distorted worldview, abstraction and disintegration, fragmented personal visions resisting mimetic, referential representation, and grotesque performances of the unreal realm of the circus Médrano. Charles Nodier's nineteenth century novel, *Inez de las Sierras*, is, in Tzvetan Todorov's opinion, a prominent example of fantastic fiction, located in between the marvellous and the uncanny,

based on uncertainty, playing with threatening yet tempting borderlines and impassable taboos. In the novel, Orlandine is transformed into Belzebub, while her beautiful niece Zubeida, attempting to seduce the hero, grows horn-like bumps on her forehead. Maybe—speaking of a feminist, political and personal performance—a most likely inspiring mothertext could be Virginia Woolf's novel on the gender-bending Orlando, as the metamorphosis of the picaro is acted out, performed by the heterogeneous body artist doing and undoing gender, identity and meaning on stage: the multi-faceted, ever-changing *Orlan*(s) *do* Orlando. However, Orlan's name or performance does not necessarily have a clear-cut meaning answering classic questions, and appeasing cultural anxieties. Orlan, most importantly, is a homonym for *"hors langue,"* marking all that which is beyond the speakable, beyond the representable. Therefore, instead of trying to decode the final meaning of Orlan's project, I, as a spectator, simply prefer focusing on the very process of her transformations, trying to find pleasure in my (mis)readings of her(s).

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Sabine Coelsch-Foisner

"I AM ....": ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN STEVIE SMITH'S POEMS AND DOODLES

Stevie Smith is best characterised as a carnivalesque voice, a writer in the menippean tradition as defined by Bakhtin (1984, 113). Subversive and eccentric, solitary, morbid and comic at once, she has attracted and puzzled generations of critics, who defined her identity in multiple and disparate ways: by placing her in the tradition of British light verse, by labelling her a perfect outsider in the mid-twentieth-century poetry scene – an outsider who, admittedly, was more successful than most of her peers –, or by relegating her to the status of the mad woman in the attic, i.e. Palmer's Green in her case. Every attempt to bring her poetic voice within the confines of such established categories is likely to fail. Stevie Smith was first and foremost controversial and contradictory – both as a person and as a poet,[1] constantly transgressing received modes of thought, ethics, rules of behaviour and communication, constantly breaking taboos and overstepping boundaries. Her poetry is marked by a constant effort of coming to terms with identity – with a self that assumes multiple shapes, guises, and roles, and lives in many lands and ages. The "I" is everywhere, infinitely protean and elastic, but – precisely because of its huge metamorphic potential – also on the verge of obliteration. The central impact of Smith's subversive poetics is not the creation of an alternative form of life, it is – in accordance with the Bakhtinian concept of menippea – a testing of truths, a philosophical and emotional tightrope walk between radical anarchy and the will to live. Gender, too, is a site for carnivalesque subversion, though less in the poems than in the nexus between the poems and the drawings. This nexus has been surprisingly ignored in literary criticism. It is uncomfortable and unorthodox, and seems to disrupt those gender categories in terms of which Stevie Smith's critics have approached her (the mad woman, the little girl,[2] the spinster). Moreover, her very name, derived from a male jockey, denies the divisions of a binary gender system.

The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between Smith's drawings and her poems and to show how her iconography of gender emphasises the carnivalisation of life characteristic of her work: the disruption of linearity, causality, logic, and sexed identity. The relation between text and image is one of tension and subversion rather than correspondence. Text and doodle conspire in a subtle mechanism of turning the world topsy-turvy, contesting the immutable status of self and sex. To illustrate this, I shall first focus on characteristic traits of the poems and the doodles and then explore a) parallels between the two in respect of the manner and content of representation, such as the foregrounding of the human figure, which tends to be lonely (if not autistic), the impression of plurality, the preference for caricature rather than portraiture, the stereotypical representation of gender, and b) the interpretative rifts and gaps arising from the combination of visual and textual iconography.

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[1] See my chapter "The Carnivalesque Voice in Stevie Smith's Poetry", especially the part "A Poet Between Worlds" in Coelsch-Foisner 2002, 866–70.

[2] See e.g. Rankin 1985.

THE HUMAN FIGURE IN TEXT AND IMAGE

In a typical story poem by Stevie Smith, the "I" commonly enters the text, either in the form of a narrative intrusion and an implicit or explicit analogy, or in the form of a shift from objective account towards direct speech. Either practice is liable to produce an effect of subversive dissonance and discontinuity. The voice is rarely as self-effacing as in the ballad "The Singing Cat" ("It was a little captive cat / Upon a crowded train")[3] or in her satirical "A British Song" with its remote Hardyesque echoes of a world where every creature is every other creature's foe:[4]

> It was a slender British bird
> Stood on the drinking bath
> But another came and nipped him there
> Before he could have a bath.
> Then came a great British starling, nipped the nipper and drove him away
> And sat down in the bath, and sat down in the bath. And there did stay.
> ... (*CP*, 502)

More commonly, a shift of perspective occurs from third-person narration to first-person monologue, as in "A Soldier Dear to Us" (*CP*, 525): "It was the War / I was a child ...", or in "The Forlorn Sea", where the "I" enters the story as a guest of the Princess and her fairy King: "Last week they invited me; / That is how I can tell you / They live by the forlorn sea." (*CP*, 528). In "She said ..." the speech act is introduced in the manner of a short stage direction defining the scene, setting, and sex of the speaker:

> She said as she tumbled the baby in:
> There, little baby, go sink or swim,
> I brought you into the world, what more should I do?
> Do you expect me always to be responsible for you? (*CP*, 182)

Analogies constitute a further means of effecting this transition. External happenings are turned into icons of individual experience, such as the sparrow's flight in "When the Sparrow Flies" (*CP*, 215). Cultural myths and images become existential or creative metaphors, such as the Person from Porlock, who is satirically related to the poet's own wish to end her ramblings about Coleridge's abortive act of writing "Kubla Khan" ("Thoughts about the Person from Porlock", *CP*, 385); "The Donkey" is a parable about Death's anarchy, in which the impersonal opening "It was such a pretty little donkey" merges into a personal prayer for dissolution: "I aspire to be broken up" (*CP*, 535). As we read these poems, we always effect the trajectory from outer world to inner mind, from action to witness, victim or agent, from story to storyteller. At the centre of attention there is commonly a human consciousness – a self that presents its concerns in first-person speech, revealing its psychology, thoughts, feelings, and philosophy of life. This consciousness constitutes an extra-biological facticity predicated on its freedom from the body. It is infinitely expansive, like an actress capable of slipping into every conceivable role without being dependent on the 'exterior', as the actress in the eponymous poem suggests:

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[3] James MacGibbon ed. *Stevie Smith: The Collected Poems.* [1975]. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. 367. Subsequently abbreviated to *CP*.
[4] The poem is particularly reminiscent of Hardy's "Wagtail and Baby" from *Winter Words*.

> The Actress
> I can't say I enjoyed it, but the pay was good.
> Oh how I weep and toil in this world of wood!
> Longing in the city for the pursuit of beautiful scenery,
> I earn my bread upon the Stage, amid painted greenery.
> I have a poet's mind, but a poor exterior,
> What goes on inside me is superior. (*CP*, 198)

The last line reads like a metapoetic statement about the transformative processes compounding Smith's poetic imagination. The stage is the poet's mind with an infinite cast of characters speaking their monologues, revealing love or hatred, fear or misgivings, quarrelling with God and acting out limitless fantasies. This chameleon quality of Stevie Smith's voice is reminiscent of Hesse's novel *Der Steppenwolf,* where Pablo says: "Mein Theaterchen hat so viele Logentüren, als ihr wollt, zehn oder hundert oder tausend, und hinter jeder Tür erwartet euch das, was ihr gerade sucht. Es ist ein hübsches Bilderkabinett ..." (Hesse 1980, 192) [My little theatre has as many boxes as you like, ten, a hundred, or a thousand, and behind each door you will find what you are looking for. It is a pretty picture cabinet.] (My translation). In Smith's poetic universe, there are 'ten, a hundred, or a thousand' different boxes. Significantly, Stevie Smith herself looks upon her poems as continual self-dramatisations: "The poem can claim to be about a cat but it is really about yourself". (Williams 1991, 46). This implied, unconstructed core of identity – "yourself" – is obviously not accessible without those dramatic manifestations where gender, social status and appearance come into play. Paradoxically, its ontological proof is not any one particular role, but that which silences the voice and ends its parodistic play. Hence at the opposite pole of Smith's heterogenous range of voices, there is not the single voice, but Death.

Not surprisingly, the assertion "I Am" stands at the centre of Smith's poetry, and it is likely to turn into "I am nothing", "I was", "I am no longer", or "I am not" (e.g. "I Am" *CP*, 175). The titles of fourteen poems from *The Collected Poems* are constructions of identity: "I Am", "I am a girl who loves to shoot", "I do not Speak", "If I lie down", "I had a dream ...", "I Hate This Girl", "I Like to Play with Him", "I love ... ", "I Remember", "I rode with my darling ...", "I Was so Full", "I wish". First lines starting with "I" cover more than two pages out of a total of six pages in the index, including: "I admire the Bishops of the Church of England", "I always admire a beautiful woman", "I always remember your beautiful flowers", "I am a frog", "I am dying ...", "I Am Miles, I do not die", "I am not God's little lamb", "I am that Persephone", "I am the self-appointed guardian of English literature", "I cry I cry", "I can call up old ghosts, and they will come", "I fear the ladies and gentlemen under the trees", "I feel a mortal isolation", "I feel ill ...", "I had a dream ...", "I have a happy nature", "I have no respect for you", "I'll have your heart if not by gift by knife", "I look at the bottle, when mournful I feel", "I look in the glass", "I look in the mirror", "I made Man with too many faults ...", "I married the Earl of Egremont", "I may be smelly and I may be old", "I never learnt to attract, you see", "I raised my gun", "I remember the Roman Emperor ...", "I sigh for the heavenly country", "I thought as I lay on my bed one night, I am only a passing cloud", "I want to be your pinkie", "I was a beautiful plant", "I was consumed by so much hate", "I was so full of love and joy", etc.

A mere glance at these phrases means a stroll through Stevie Smith's dramatic repertory: she is God, Muse, and Man, murderer or murderess and victim; she is little girl and old hag, spinster, mother, wife, and daughter, Wordsworth, Psyche, Dido, Venus, and Helen of Troy; she is cat, dog, and plant; she is patient, princess, lover and killer, he, she, and it. This enormous versatility and volatility, whether we look at the volume as a whole or focus on individual poems, provides the key to the disruptive and allusive quality of Smith's poetic identity. On the one hand, none of these roles complies with our expectations. God is a greedy devourer of men, a vampire or

megalomaniac, man is the object of ridicule and pity, and relationships are more often the source of sorrow and evil than of joy. Smith's aesthetic is grounded on the principle of defamiliarisation. Motifs and intentions are dissected, received ideas and cultural traditions, including constructions of gender, challenged to the point of becoming meaningless. On the other hand, the pervasive self-centredness of Smith's poems is strikingly at variance with the plurality of voices resulting from the iconographic representation of the poet's mind as a stage, onto which all kinds of characters, men and women, villains and saints are called. While obsessively asserting the "I" in the text, Smith's poems with their vocal shifts challenge notions of unity and destiny linked to Western concepts of identity: emotional continuity, sex, coherence of "I"-thoughts. The result is a centrifugal counterbalancing of accepted norms and standards, a polyglot view of the human condition. Thus the discourse of self, predicated on unity and stability, is subtly eroded by a carnivalesque plurality of shapes and stances.

The magic carpet on which the self travels to the palace by the forlorn sea, like the broomstick or fly-away hat (such devices being repeatedly employed in her poems), are props in a fantastic escape from hegemonic culture, its myths, social structures and signifying practices: "I married the Earl of Egremont" ("The Castle" *CP*, 228–9); "I rode in Egypt slowly, slowly with Captain Fairchild" ("The Ride" *CP*, 274); "The King will marry me and make me his own before all / and when I am married I shall wear my hat and walk on the palace wall." ("The Hat" *CP*, 272). This is certainly not what a newly married queen is expected to do. At the story level, magic compensates for the dullness of reality, at the structural / textual level such magic corresponds to the shift of voice in role-play, cross-dressing and cultural code-switching.

The iconography of gender in Stevie Smith's work contributes to this subversive impression, reflected in the transgressive intertextuality of "Childe Rolandine", an autobiographic sketch of a woman who (like Stevie Smith) is both an "artist" and a "secretary-typist",[5] as well as in the reversal of the wish in "The Frog Prince". The tale is told from the perspective of the frog, who doubts the benefits of shapeshifting: "I am happy, I like the life, / Can swim for many a mile", (*CP*, 406). Drowning is equally contemplated from the vantage point of both the drowning man, as in "Not Waving but Drowning", and the old smelly river-god receiving his victims. He is a cynical patriarch, autocratic, wanton and self-complacent like all male rulers and lawmakers in Smith's poetry.[6] Besides, he has a special propensity for the fair sex:

> I may be smelly, and I may be old,
> Rough in my pebbles, reedy in my pools,
> But here my fish float by I bless their swimming
> And I like the people to bathe in me, especially women.
> But I can drown the fools
> Who bathe too close to the weir, contrary to rules.
> And they take a long time drowning
> As I throw them up now and then in a spirit of clowning.
> [...]
> Once there was a lady who was too bold
> She bathed in me by the tall black cliff where the water runs cold,
> So I brought her down here
> To be my beautiful dear.
> ... ("The River-God", 238)

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[5]   "Dark was the day for Childe Rolandine the artist / When she went to work as a secretary-typist / And as she worked she sang this song / Against oppression and the rule of wrong" (*CP*, 331).

[6]   See e.g. "I am the self-apointed guardian of English literature".

"The River-God" points to a further aspect of Smith's carnivalesque poetry, in fact it almost amounts to a subversion of her own aesthetic: the ruler of the river is a carnival-god who sports with his corpses, whereas the woman is the lawbreaker and is drowned, because she swims in forbidden waters. At this point, subversion reaches its self-annihilating climax: the lawbreaker becomes the victim of her own transgression. Her assertion of difference, individuality, idiosyncrasy culminates in her death. Throughout Smith's poetry, the impulse towards asserting selfhood through monological speech is undermined by this undercurrent of self-abnegation: a longing for dissolution, an identification with death and the dead, an obsessive concern with ways of dying. This tendency is reflected in the voice pleading to be "broken" by Death's anarchy in "The Donkey", to be scattered by "Sweet Death, kind Death" in "Why do I ..." (*CP*, 508), or to be wrapped in a "mist" of forgetfulness in "Oblivion": "I cannot help but like Oblivion better / Than being a human heart and human creature ..." (*CP*, 562). Smith's protean voice needs to be seen in connection with this self-annihilating attitude, just as the surprising shifts and rifts in her poems, both on a linguistic and dramatic level, are instances of a split desire to live and not to live in this world, typical of Smith's personality. The poet-actress's masquerade proves a constant journey between the 'I' and the 'non-I', between identity and anonymity.

The focus on the speaker in the poems correlates with the focus on the figure in the doodles, with the only difference that gender is an indispensable factor in visual representations of the human body,[7] while it is often unspecified in the poems (e.g. "Mother", "My Heart was Full", *CP*, 195, "The White Thought", "In the Night" *CP*, 204), iconographic hints including hats ("The Hat" *CP*, 272, "My Hat" *CP*, 315), bags, and men, who are more often missing, lost or abandoned than forming part of the speaker's actual world. Precisely by rendering visible a figure's sex through cultural attributes of dress, custom, and social or marital status,[8] many doodles accompanying the poems subvert the unconstructed status of the self – the actress's mind, so to speak –, extending visibility to the "I" in the text. For we read the poems together with the doodles, just as listening to a poem set to music creates a different aesthetic impression than merely listening to the spoken word.

To demonstrate this, let us return to some of the poems already cited. While the self is absent from the text in "A British Song", the drawings of two birds and a female torso framing the text, fulfil a function comparable to the narrative shift from heterodiegetic to homodiegetic speech. The thoughtfully smiling woman with curly hair and hat establishes a relation between the objective animal world and the individual's mind. The doodle introduces a recipient, a woman watching and contemplating the scene. "Poet!", too, is accompanied by the doodle of a woman, which occupies more than twice the space of the text:

> Poet, thou art dead and damned,
> That speakst upon no moral text.
> I bury one that babbled but; –
> Thou art the next. Thou art the next.
> (*CP*, 170)

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[7]   However roughly sketched, the visual image hardly ever hides its sex, except for a few veiled figures, as in "Old Ghosts" (*CP*, 211), and "Grave by a Holm-Oak" (*CP*, 568). These have no sex, but they are dead bodies, ghosts and phantoms. The babyish figure in "If I lie down" is a rare example of a sexless face (*CP*, 176).

[8]   See e.g. "The White Thought" (*CP*, 204), "The Pleasures of Friendship" (*CP*, 208), "When Walking" (*CP*, 540), are just a few more examples of how the doodle establishes for the reader the female sex of the voice in the poem.

The relation between these lines and the female figure praying at the tomb is ambivalent. Is she the severe, vengeful Muse who decides on the poet's fate? And if so, does the "you" in the poem refer to the poet already buried or to the next victim; or is the praying woman herself the one awaiting the speaker's doom and praying over the remains of her predecessor? An even more striking example of how textual and visual icon merge in the decoding process is "The Donkey". Although there is no accompanying doodle, the reader's eye is caught by the rough sketch of a female figure on the opposite page and almost automatically identifies the self asking for the dissolution of its 'momentary precious' existence with this figure.

Stevie Smith's *Collected Poems* is scattered with such signposts to gender: drawings of faces or full figures, little vignettes of women wearing skirts and dresses, shawls and hats, ribbons, pigtails and bows. As we browse through the pages we are constantly met by a human figure, a face blandly staring at us, a smiling, beguiling, or crying face, a figure bending or pointing towards the text, or apparently running away from it, a figure captured in a frame, held in an embrace, a figure that seems to be saying "I am". All Smith's doodles are caricatures, whether they depict a solitary figure or show it surrounded by props and scenery, as the woman contemplating suicide in "The Reason" (*CP*, 52), or the sketch of a female figure standing on a stylised bridge and looking down a crag ("Does No Love Last?"):

> Far down below
> I see in fancy
> My body spread
> That in a frenzy
> Down I cast
> ... (*CP*, 62)

Where the figure is set in proper surroundings, Smith makes a crude attempt at perspective, which only enhances the prominent position of the human shape, e.g. the doodle accompanying "The Pleasures of Friendship" with two women tightly clasping each other as they walk in the foreground and a horizontal line with trees and sun in the background (*CP*, 208), or the drawing accompanying "Be off!", with a man and a woman depicted against a receding shoreline and cluster of trees. More frequently, we encounter a solitary figure, repeated throughout the volume with variations of posture and facial expression. Smith's figures are often fragmentary, ending at the waist, lacking feet ("Conviction", *CP*, 178, "The Broken Heart" (*CP*, 203), or metonymically reduced to the head or the face ("The Forlorn Sea", "Why do you rage?", "Yes, I know"). There are comparatively few men in Smith's doodles. The ones depicted look either aggressive or self-complacent; they are either very fat or very lean, and uniformly unpleasant and unattractive. Women form the majority of Smith's sketches.

A critic of Stevie Smith once pointed out that her imaginative world is populated by "sick minds and unhappy animals".[9] To these one must add a species of wretched women, abandoned by their lovers, crying over a frying pan, or listlessly playing the harp. The poem entitled "Wretched Woman" is a sardonic exposure of her fate, as she stands in front of an oven, pestered by a child and with tears streaming down her face:

> Wretched woman that thou art
> How thou piercest to my heart
> With thy misery and graft
> And thy lack of household craft.   (*CP*, 266)

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[9]   John Press, "Fire and Fantasy", a review of Smith's *Selected Poems*. Reference missing. The review is in the file for Stevie Smith in the Poetry Library.

Whether these poor creatures are mothers, wives or mistresses, their lot is uniformly deplorable and their lives are beyond all hope of betterment. In the doodles their bodies are haggard and worn out, and they are usually depicted in slanting or slightly bent positions, as if trying to escape or dodge their fate, or weighed down by a heavy burden. Smith's women are flat and leptosome in appearance, unwomanly but for their wardrobe and accessories. "This Englishwoman", for example, is a skinny creature with disproportionately long arms and legs, a thin extralong neck and pointed face, peaked nose, the overall impression being strengthened by the long thin umbrella she holds. The verse, recalling such masters of occasional and nursery rhymes as William Allingham and Hilaire Belloc, runs: "The Englishwoman is so refined / She has no bosom and no behind" (*CP*, 68) – refinement, like boldness, obviously subverting her sex. Most of Smith's women look unhappy and distressed, and their bodies are often oddly twisted or display symptoms of depression: head drooping or slanting sideways, sagging shoulders ("The Reason"), as if they were lacking energy – something about which Smith constantly complained herself.[10] The legs are commonly X- or O-shaped, rarely straight, the fingers long and slender, and the hair is usually wiry and untidy, frequently held together by a ribbon or covered by hats of all conceivable shapes and sizes. Minimal as Smith's drawings are, her hand exquisitely renders emotional states – fear, despair, distrust, reluctance, anguish or exhaustion, typical traits being a frowning forehead, sagging lids and eyebrows, lips firmly pressed together, and a mouth often abstracted to a downward curve.

"The Sea-widow" (*CP*, 569) and "Gnädiges Fräulein" (*CP*, 140) are prototypes of the Smithean wretched woman. Both are ageing spinsters and doomed to pining away in misery after their lovers' death or departure. Courted by Despair, the sea-widow has herself become an image of listlessness and resignation, illustrated by her S-shaped back, hanging shoulders, tousled hair, downcast eyes, expressionless mouth, and arms hanging passively down her body. Similar features betray the affliction of the "Gnädige Fräulein". What is interesting about this poem is the iconographic message contained in the layout of poem and visual icon. The title and the text are separated by two doodles: on the left-hand side a surly female figure, her face marked by lines of care and sorrow, in the right-hand top corner the bust of a man with a tropic helmet (obviously her lover that was sent "to work, beyond the Mexique Bay") and a few wavelines underneath indicating the sea. Between the figures there is empty space, bridged only by the poem in rhyming octameter tercets with its long lines running from one side of the page to the other. The thoughts described in the last stanza establish the link between the voice in the poem and the character of the young woman, as the narrator slips into her mind. The small size and location of the bust, which is at the same level as the young woman's forehead, enhance this shift from impartial narration to an empathetic penetration of her mind:

> With an, Oh, if I think of him he'll come again to me,
> And an, Oh, it was but a whim that took him o'er the sea;
> And an, Oh, for all my eyes are dim they can look lovingly.   (*CP*, 140)

The iconography of womanhood is the iconography of distress, solitude, and chagrin. It is often accompanied by symbols of death: tombstones, graves, and crosses, a bridge to jump down from, and a knife to commit suicide with.

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[10] Cf. her interview with Kay Dick 1971, 38.

THE TENSION BETWEEN VISUAL REPRESENTATION AND TEXT

We know from personal accounts and biographies that Stevie Smith insisted on having her poems printed together with her doodles, even though publishers did not always approve of this method. The fact that her drawings were sometimes chosen at random, out of biscuit boxes, as Kay Dick remembers in her memoir, is likely to discourage a reading of the poems in connection with the doodles, and so is the fact that some drawings included in Stevie Smith's sketchbook *Some are More Human Than Others* recur, in combination with different texts, in the *Collected Poems*. Yet, precisely this *impromptu* quality of the doodles has profound implications for her poetics, potentially contesting the foundations of all moral, religious, political, and social truths and re-thinking constructions of identity. Just as images are capable of being shuffled around, so are words, beliefs, and traditions. The reader constantly encounters the familiar in an unfamiliar con-text: the Person from Porlock, Lot's wife, Persephone, Eve, the Frog Prince and Helen of Troy. Moreover, as these visual icons sit on the page, they trigger an interactive process in the reader's mind. Reception is contingent on both sign systems.

Smith's doodles are placed in various positions – before or after the poem, between title and text, between lines or stanzas, in the right or left-hand margins of the text. Similar to comics or pictures with captions, their function is clearly referential. Yet, Smith's doodles subvert ekphras-tic practices as well as conventions of literary pictorialism by furnishing a 'countertext', a disrup-tive message which renders a poem ambiguous or challenges its meaning. The iconography of gender in Stevie Smith's work contributes to its anarchic impression. "Croft", a poem of nine words arranged in four rhyming monometer lines, most obviously, exploits the subversive po-tential residing in visual representations of gender:

> Aloft
> In the loft
> Sits Croft
> He is soft. (*CP*, 195)

In the space left of these lines there is a frame, almost twice the height of the printed text, with a window and a woman in a flower-patterned dress sitting on a stool or box. Something seems to have gone wrong here. As we try to establish a link between the image and the text, the mad-woman in the attic springs to mind. For once, *he* sits soft in the loft. The doodle dialogically en-gages with the lines rather than illustrating the scene described in the poem. Or, is the very con-fusion of gender, the interchangeability of male and female, a sign of softness, a denial of social norms sanctioned by society and punished with confinement in the loft?

By entering into a dialogical relationship with the text or ironically subverting its message, Smith's figures of women slumped into chairs, kneeling or lying flat on the ground, walking, jumping, praying or writing on a typewriter strengthen the menippean cast of her work. The doodles showing the face and full figure of a spinsterly woman walking her dog in "The Sad Heart" contravene the voice's wish that she had never been born: "'Tis pity that ever my mother bore me." (*CP*, 184). In "Oblivion", the sketch of a girlish face, typically carrying Stevie Smith's features, with unkempt hair and telltale hat, is equally disturbing in the light of the speaker's de-clared preference for oblivion rather than a human body:

> It was a human face in my oblivion
> A human being and a human voice
> That cried to me, Come back, come back, come back.

> But I would not, I said I would not come back.
> [...]
> I cannot help but like Oblivion better
> Than being a human heart and human creature,
> But I can wait for her, her gentle mist
>   And those sweet seas that deepen are my destiny
> And must come even if not soon. (*CP*, 562)

Analogous to her numerous poetic afterthoughts ("Thoughts about the Person from Porlock", "An Afterthought"), the doodle threatens to annihilate the voice's line of argumentation. The face is that part of the body which most obviously carries identity (physical features and emotional expression) and conveys cultural meanings (made-up mouth, long eye-lashes, hairstyle).[11] It is that part of a person's body which first captures our attention and plays a crucial role in every act of direct communication. The drawn face, central to Smith's iconography of gender, runs counter to the longing for 'Death's anarchy' expressed in many of her poems. Anticipating its submersion in a kind of pre-natal "sweet and milky sea", the self in "Oblivion" is ready to shed its identity. Significantly, nothing in the poem points to its gender. The "face" addressed in stanza one is only described as "human", i.e. without sex, whereas Oblivion *is* given a grammatical gender ("But I can wait for her, her gentle mist"). By opening up this confusion as to a binary gender system, the drawing of the girlish face looking straight at the reader restores on the visual plane the missing semiotic function of the face in the text and suggests a reading of the poem in terms of an inner battle between the lure of death and the wish of the self to preserve its shape and sex. We construct the identity of the voice iconographically rather than semantically.

The function of the doodles is similar to that of the titles, which often bear little or no conspicuous relation to the poems, thus contributing to the marvellously centrifugal vein of Stevie Smith's poetry and casting an oblique glance at the logic of ordinary life. Publishers have wisely accounted for this technique by offering an index of titles *and* first lines (Penguin's *SP* and *CP*): "The River Deben", for example, is an imaginary encounter with death (*CP*, 48–9), and "Death in the Rose Garden" more adequately circumscribes the accompanying drawing of a crawling figure with a sword placed next to him (or her) in front of a rose garden than the actual poem: "God in Heaven, forgive my death, it lies / Not on any hand, but mine, but mine!" (*CP*, 212). Lord of its own death, the unisex figure in the doodle without dress or any iconographic symbols of gender has obviously already cast away its life and identity, while the very act of speaking suggests the opposite.

The tension between title and poem or doodle and poem suggests a 'wobbly' perspective, as Seamus Heaney observed: "there is a disconcerting wobble in the mirror she holds up to nature." (Heaney 1991, 213). In the fashion of her apparently inappropriate titles, Smith's pictures lead us beyond or away from the text, opening up its allusiveness, ambivalence and plural dimensions. Her doodles of gendered figures prove powerful devices for challenging conventions and crossing boundaries.

My last example will lead me back to my initial thesis that role-switching is central to Smith's poetics and that the resulting multiperspectivity provides a subversive undercurrent in her obsessive preoccupation with identity. The smelly river-god talking about the lady he drowned ("The River-God", *CP*, 238) – we see her lying flat on the page – reads like a direct answer to "Not Waving but Drowning", but for the shift of gender:

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[11]   See e.g. the doodle accompanying "The Reason" (*CP*, 52).

> Nobody heard him, the dead man,
> But still he lay moaning:
> I was much farther out than you thought
> And not waving but drowning. (*CP,* 303)

Interestingly enough, the accompanying doodle shows a female figure waist-deep in the water, soaking wet, her long wet hair hanging down her face. Little association can be established between her and the story of the man who drowned because people thought he was making a joke while he waved for help, except for the surrounding water. The woman does not wave, nor is she drowned. Are we to read the image as a means of establishing an analogy between the narrator's situation and the protagonist's fate? Or is she a feminine counter-image of the smelly river-god, a smelly mermaid? Precisely by obviating an unequivocal construction of the figure's identity, the added doodle is instrumental to Stevie Smith's dialogical engagement with Western concepts of identity, with philosophical and legal foundations, social and linguistic structures, as well as with ways of constructing gender. Her method of transgressing clear-cut boundaries – between reality and fantasy, life and death, man and woman – confirms her status as a menippean writer who "destroy[s] the epic and tragic wholeness of the world, [...] make[s] a breach in the stable, normal ('seemly') course of human affairs and events, [... and] free[s] human behavior from the norms and motivations that predetermine it" (Bakhtin 1984, 114, 117).

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Susanna Välimäki

GENDER, SEXUALITY, SELF-PORTRAIT – AND COUNTRY MUSIC: K.D. LANG'S *JOHNNY GET ANGRY*

Elvis lives – and she's beautiful!
(Madonna)

1. INTRODUCTION:
COUNTRY & WESTERN GOES PERFORMANCE ART

k.d. lang's *"Johnny get angry"* presents a peculiar and unconventional example of an iconographic tradition in western arts negotiating sexuality, gender, and artistry in a form of self-portrait. In lang's performance, this thematics of subjectivity and identity of an artist is addressed in a context of country music and constructed on a parodic performance – a revision and reversal – of a girlie group hit from the year 1962.[1]

k.d. lang is a Canadian-born musician, singer and song writer, who started her career in the country music scene at the beginning of 1980's with a kind of *avantgarde country* in a performance art style opposing strikingly country music's – and those of popular music in general – gender systems. Naturally "gender benders" are typical for the pop and rock culture of 1970s and 1980s in general, especially in British pop scene from David Bowie to Boy George, but most often this position has been more possible and allowed for male than female artists (despite the fact that prominent female artists with androgynous image, such as Annie Lennox for instance, did appear in the 1980s). However, gender benders were certainly not characterising the highly conservative country music scene based on a very heteronormative and normo-heterosexual gender technology.

Johnny get angry forms an essential element in the stage repertoire of lang's early avantgarde country period. It could be regarded as a kind of condensation of her *cowpunk* style (cf. Bruzzi 1997, 196). This style is characterized by the rhetorical techniques of role conflict, drag and parody, the aesthetics of crossover, hybrid, eclecticism and excessiveness, and the ideology of punk aesthetics juxtaposing different unexpected styles and uninhibitedly mixing elements from visual arts, performance, popular music and absurd.[2]

The visual and theatrical dimensions, such as stage choreography and decorations, gestures and countenances, are crucial for the performance. Therefore, in lang's reuse of *Johnny get angry* it is not that much a question of a cover version or a new interpretation of a song, than of a performance work constructed on the song in question. The work could be studied e.g. against the background of the feminist, punk and popular culture inspired performance art of 1970s and 1980s (see e.g. Roth 1983). However, I am not connecting it that much with the context of performance art in visual arts but rather with the music world. This means that the "art world" as

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[1] The song is written and composed by Hal David and Sherman Edwards, and in 1962 it was sung by Joanie Sommers.

[2] On interactions between visual (high) art and pop music in the 1980s, see e.g. Walker 1987.

the target, audience and context of the performance, is in lang's performance that of the popular music, and more specifically, that of the country music industry. Further, punk aesthetics in music was partly a reaction against the alienation of pop and rock stars from their "roots" and from the audience. It was constructed as an antithesis for artfulness and pretension and an effort to shock with iconoclastic and subversive elements, in which it has ideological connections to dada and surrealism (cf. Walker 1987, 107). The resulted paradoxical "artistic anti-art discourse on art" characterizes lang's parodizing performance too.

General characteristics of performance art suit well to lang's aesthetics resisting the conventions and systems of country music: opposing the dominant (art / country / pop music) institutions and power centralizations, blurring categories and boundaries, breaking conventions, mixed use of arts (combining different art forms, genres and traditions), collage style, crossover, avoidance of definitions, autobiographicalness, artist's body as the principal material of the work, social critique, political polemics and handling social problems in general (see e.g. Goldberg 1988 and 2003). Also the fact that *Johnny get angry* can not be found on lang's albums tells about its performance art nature. Many central elements in lang's cowpunk are elements of performance art too, such as punk, cabaret, vaudeville and musical. One example of the breakage gender conventions and blurring of sexual categories, is lang's vocal workings including styles and techniques, which traditionally have belonged to male singers, as for example, the "bodily" rockabilly vocal trickery *à la* Elvis Presley, signifying masculine sexual desire, force and defiance.

lang's *Johnny get angry* ironizes and re-values stereotypical presentations of gender, sexuality, and love. Because of its women emancipatory and homosexual messages, it has gained some attention in feminist, gender and queer theoretical music research (Burns 1997; Bruzzi 1997; Mockus 1994; Potter 1994, 192–195; McClary 2000, 157–159). However, the research has focused only on the most manifest gendered and sexual dimensions in the close context of contemporary popular music culture. Iconographic dimensions with their historicist references — e.g. in the genre of self-portrait and in the tradition of the conceptions of artist's role in the society and culture — drawing as well on the visual as on the musical arts have not been discussed. In the present article these possibilities are carried forth. lang's *Johnny get angry* is studied as a self-portrait related to the identity thematics of an artist, and as an inseparable, parallel discourse to this, the identity thematics of a female artist, of a homosexual, and of a lesbian person. The theme of being "against the norm" permeates all these topics — and subject positions — in a cumulative and intertextual way. In lang's work the question of being an artist subjected to the "system" — be it that of a society in general, artworld, or Nashville — is isomorphic to the questions of gender and sexuality. lang's *Johnny get angry* presents the ideological violence contained in the stereotypical patriarchal conceptions of gender, sex and love, with imagery of a suffering and sacrifying artist. In the present article, these themes are discussed by interpreting semiotically the topics (*topoi*) of artist and suffering, the visual and musical "texts" of the conceptions of the mythical role and destiny of the artist, in lang's preformance.[3] These "texts" and their gendered iconographies are read as parallel topics of artistic, gendered, and sexual submission, by which the representation of a victim of ideological violence is constructed. Moreover, the parodic style of lang is interpret as a vehicle of criticizing and *overcoming* the presented ideological violence. The version on which the analysis is based, is recorded in 1985 and is included in lang's video compilation *Harvest on Seven Years* (lang 1991).

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[3]   The theorization of the topics in music has been developed e.g. by Ratner (1986) and Monelle (2000). Topos theories in musicology and musical semiotics can be said to represent the study of *musical iconography*.

2. CONCEPT ART ON NASH-VAUDE-VILLE
AND THE GENRE OF CRITICAL PARODY

Eclecticism is the basic feature of lang's music. Musically – stylistically, historically, ideologically and institutionally – conflicting, often even already by their basis very hybrid genres (such as punk, country, opera, hillbilly, rockabilly and jazz among others) amalgate together into a new surprising discourse. lang plays at many levels with unexpected combinations, mixed figures, patterns and forms composed of conflicting oppositions, forming a kind of sign crimes – if using Arthur Kroker's term (see McClary 2000, 157) – especially in the gender department. This makes the music highly trangressive and subversive by its nature. This method could be described in Kristevan (1974) way as carnivalistic rhetorics having "revolutionary" potential. This technique of transgression and the pleasure it evokes, could be further examined in the light of the operations of the Freudian unconscious (e.g. Freud 1953 [1900]), such as the fusion of oppositions, condensations, and mixed figures. In lang's work we can see several rhetoric devices obeying this logic, such as *role conflict*, which means using stereotypical signs of masculinity and femininity simultaneously; *drag*, which means cross dressing; and combining opposites in general, such as acting simultaneously the opposite roles of the performer of violence and its victim. Also the central rhetorical genre of lang, the *critical parody*, is based on conflicts, opposites, and contrasts, on the simultaneity of homage (tribute) and mockery (ridicule). Precisely due to the ironic distance, lang's postmodern, historicist and encyclopedic aesthetics of parody makes use of the subversive potentials of cliché, kitch, corny and camp.

lang's appearance in overall is as well based on conflicting use of corny, clichéish and banal c&w-clothes and props associating to different decades, genres and genders. Her parodic conduct is hyper active, extravagant, campish and anarchist, and it draws on many kinds of imitations. It is based on continuous exaggeration going all the time "too far". lang differs strikingly from what has traditionally been excepted from a female country singer. She resembles rather Buddy Holly or Elvis than Tammy Wynette, Loretta Lynn or Dolly Parton. Rather than obeys, lang *unfolds* c&w-mechanisms. Be her stage clothes conventional signs of masculinity or femininity, she uses them in a parodic way, "unnaturally", in a way of drag, and thus as a counter argument to the myths of originality, authenticity and naturalness (cf. Butler 1990, 137; Bruzzi 1997, 197). lang's output seems to work as a practical equivalent of Roland Barthes's (1973 [1957]) myth analyses unfolding the ideology of the bourgeois "naturalness", or as a practical equivalent of the genealogical critique of gender ŕ la Judith Butler (1990). As Butler (1990, 137; Bruzzi 1997, 197) points out, by imitating gender, drag unfolds the imitative structure of all gender constructions. lang seems to be demonstrating what the performativity is about: imitation without an origin (cf. Butler 1990, 10–13). Lang's denaturalization of the country myths of Nashville – "the music city U.S.A." – reveals the *Nash-vaude-ville*, the constructive nature of country&western-technology (cf. Lauretis 1987).

lang's main mode of textual construction determining both the formal construction of the work and its ethos, is, as already mentioned, *the critical parody*. Critical parody, as Linda Hutcheon (1985) has it developed, means imitation of canonical texts with critical distance. This synthesis creates the provocative and unraveling power of critical parody. The main rhetoric strategies here are *inversion* (e.g. female instead of the male protagonist), ironic *transcontextualisation* and excessive exaggeration. Every code/sign/cliché is exaggerated or inverted – and thus necessarily transcontextualised – to the point of subversion. This is why critical parodic imitation brings forth rather the *differences* than the similarities. Precisely in its emphasis on the differences, lies its revising and transformative potentiality. It is imitation with difference. It presents both the law and its transgression. (Hutcheon 1985, 6, 26, 34, 76, 82.)

Parody can also be regarded as a postmodern way to launch a dialogue with the past, to get along with the anxiety of influence (Bloom 1973) by the help of ironic distance and difference. Parody's interest on the historical memory and communicative codes is critical by its nature. Parody does not only question its relation to other arts but also its own identity. It is self analysis and self commentary, and thus self parody too. Parody turns its gaze also towards its own constitution and is therefore a paradoxical genre: parody creates from by questioning itself, the producing aesthetic practice, and uses repetition as a source of freedom. (Hutcheon 1985, 2–3, 10–11, 29, 96, 111.) Parody is characterized by the consciousness about the multivoicedness of the presentation, of the "singing along and against" (cf. Greek *parodè*). Parody is self-reflective and meta-discoursive. It recognizes self-consciously and -critically its own nature and posits (its) art into the history of art. It is art about art; it could be said to imitate rather "art" than "life". (Hutcheon 1985, 1, 27, 101, 109.) This is something that essentially characterizes both parody and performance art.

3. HOMOSEXUALITY, QUEER, NORM OPPOSITION

Precisely the performance art like subtexts in lang's output function as homosexual (subculture) topics also. Research on lang's music, as well as media texts about her music, has greatly centered on the questions of sexuality and lesbianism. Although these questions are most important, here lies a danger of marginalization too, if these questions form the only noticed research horizon and signifying dimension. In that case lang's work could be easily passed by and thus neglected with a single act of categorizing to a distinct and separate *lesbian* category (cf. *women* composers, *lesbian* singers etc.). By this the transgressive and critical potential of lang can be isolated and tamed by one label and exclusion from the "rest" of the culture.

This is why I see that the critical coverage and application of the concept of queer should definitely be widely extended outside the nucleus of its theorizing in the lesbian and gay studies, for most central in the concept of queer is its norm opposing structure – without the norm be defined in any way. Here I am in accordance e.g. with William B. Turner (2000, 135). Queer can stop nowhere, for it has to queer every norm, and be defined only by its constant oppositional relation. Because of its continuous oppositional structure, queer comes close to critical parody, which is particularly evident with lang: both critical parody and queer are modes of "counter singing" (cf. Greek *parode* < *para* & *ode, odos*). The degree of participation which parody presumes makes lang's cowpunk close to radical camp too. Here I agree with Stella Bruzzi (1997, 205) in that the stylistic change which lang makes in the 1990's from unconventional and norm-opposing (queer) cowpunk to the masculinizing androgyne style (cf. *butch* and *lesbian chic*) more consistent with the main stream pop, truly means a critical loss.

In the history of western arts, arts has provided one possible, veiled and as such (in a masked mode) accepted way to present, or sublimate, homosexuality already from Leonardo to Caravaggio and from Tchaikovsky to Cole Porter. When discussing lang, the matter must however be seen the other way round too. For a lesbian artist, lesbian discourse (homosexual topics) is also a way to deal with questions of identity related to being an artist: norm and opposing norm, tradition and deviance, being admired and condemned, solitary and (art) mythical ballast, commitment to tradition both in the sense of critic and respect (cf. Bloom 1973). The topics of homosexuality (lesbianism) and artistry (cf. the positions of lesbian and artist) are parallel in lang.

4. THE PRESENTATION OF IDEOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

The parodic transcontextualisation and re-signification in lang's *Johnny get angry* develope from the conflict between lang's presentation and the original text, in the carnevalistic space set by the critical distance between the two texts. In comparison to Joanie Sommers's version, lang's tempo is tighter, hold more fierce, aggressive and auteur like. lang's trangressive revenge from the restrained singing of Sommers takes place most powerfully in the level of vocal interpreta-tion: in the modes and techniques of singing, e.g. in lang's deep vibrato representing irresistible power and in her roaring accompanied by pathetic (male) artist's gestures. Musical gestures and rules are parodically exaggerated. For example the exaggeratingly charging intro is overlong, and lang puts her soul into the parodically short guitar solo by clishéish gestures, such as fluttering lashes, and so on.

At the first time in the refrain (see B¹ in Figure 1: ''Johnny get angry, Johnny get mad'') lang presents both "Johnny" striking a blow by his fist and the victim of this violent act. By this lang constructs the marital violence and woman as its victim. At the second time (B²), she is imitating hitting with the flat of a hand. At this time, the last line *(''Show me that you really care for me'')* is characterized by subito transition to the soft tone and mode of voice, which increases the effec-tiveness of the ironic presentation of a normative heterosexual relationship as violent and subjugating women. It parodies the construction of manliness and womanhood and their rela-tionship. The effect of this critique is even more powerful if one knows that this song sung by Sommers belongs to the so called *girlie group* -music industry of the 1960's which was meant for women and which attached to the records advertisements selling hair lacquer, mascara, and lip sticks among others.

INTRO

A¹ Johnny, I said we were through
   Just to see what you would do
   You stood there and hung your head
   Made me wish that I were dead

B¹ Oh, Johnny get angry, Johnny get mad
   Give me the biggest lecture I ever had
   I want a brave man, I want a cave man
   Johnny, show me that you care, really care for me

INTERLUDE (INTRO)

A² Every time you danced with me
   You let Freddy cut in constantly
   When he does, you don't speak
   Must you always be so meek?

B² Oh, Johnny get angry, Johnny get mad
   Give me the biggest lecture I ever had
   I want a brave man, I want a cave man
   Johnny, show me that you care, really care for me

INSTRUMENTAL/GUITAR ("SOLO")

A³ Every girl wants someone who
   She can always look up to
   You know I love you, of course
   Let me know that you're the boss

B³ Oh, Johnny get angry, Johnny get mad
   Give me the biggest lecture I ever had
   I want a brave man, I want a cave man
   Johnny,

CODA (PAUSE)
show me that you care, really care for me
[... me] Johnny
Show... me...
Show me ...
Johnny, Johnny, Johnny
Show me that you care

Fig. 1. Structure and lyrics in k.d. lang's *Johnny get angry*
(words & lyrics by Hal David & Sherman Edwards).

At the third time in the refrain (B³), lang's head moves back because of the force of the "blow" and she fells to the ground crying "Johnny" with pain. A pause (tacet) follows. The pause is much longer than is normal and appropriate in popular music (or in western art music as well). It takes 45 seconds, which intensifies the parodic and ironic effect of the pathetic. This exaggerated pause begins the coda. During the tacet, lang is portraying the suffering of the victim, and on the other hand she is performing pathetic signs of repentance, of regret, such as taking her hand to her artery. Because of all these gestures of victim and of penitent, there seems to condensate alongside with the characters of the beaten woman and the beating "Johnny" (the victim and the practitioner of the violence), other sacrificial and repentance characters.

One text which rises up, is later, tragic Elvis as a fallen king of rock'n'roll, with its connotations of suffering as well as of those of camp. At the same time Elvis is figured as a sympathetic homage, and on the other hand it is put to the ironic quotation marks. Pathetic Elvis imitation as a critical parody, works both as a sign of critical distance and refers to the myth of the artist, loneliness and isolation, the bane of the fame and of the possibility of too early – and perhaps also violent – death. (Elvis is an important ghost text in Lang's output in general too.)

When the singing continues after the pause ("Show me that you care, really care for me"), lang's character is pulling her/himself together with masculine gestures such as beating her/his breast. Then suddenly – in the last word of the line ("me") – the vocal register (and discourse) shifts into the opera singing (marked with italics in the Figure). What follows is a descending lamentation in minor mode (in the compass of octave) produced with the syllables "show" and "me", and in a bel canto style – as if a tinge of Puccini. Operatic sighs and cries (*pianto* topos) are exaggerated. What we have here is a sign of death presented with a special operatic topos. The tragic fall of the protagonist is presented by referring to the tradition of the Romantic opera, where the female characters – those vocal acrobatic sopranos, mezzos and altos – are killed in the stage evening after evening, the audience going into ecstasies over getting what it desired

for – the unfolding of women (cf. Clément 1988 [1979]; McClary 1991). Against this opera death, the grand pause preceding it is understood also as a musical representation of death or of a sentence of death – a powerful (and parodically exaggerated of course) sign of death, of condemnation, judgment, of a tragic destiny in general.

After this there follows (parodically exaggerating) clichéish postlude with guitar following the melody of the verse "Show me that you care, really care for me". lang is accompanying it with sentimental gestures, such as nods and quivering eye brows. The end seems to underline that everything is performance, performative, construction. But the constructive nature of (our) reality has its most serious side, into which lang's critic of the policy of patriarchal desire is pointing at: the violence inside the ideologies, in the patterns marked as desirable and supposed as natural.

5. ECCE HOMO: SELF-PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST AS A SACRIFICE

I am suggesting lang's *Johnny get angry* as a parodic self-portrait of an artist delineated from a critical distance. This discourse going hand in hand with the feminist dimension could be named as a self portrait of an artist as a victim or sacrifice. It is related in the history of western arts to the idea (myth) of artist as a scapegoat, innocent victim, vicarious sufferer – as a misunderstood and doomed. To present oneself as a sacrifice, condemned, e.g. in the character of Christ or some martyr such as St. Sebastian, naturally has a long tradition in Western arts, from Renaissance to Romanticism and today. (In music this topic has never gained such an attention and established tradition with powerful representations as in the visual arts.) The key signifiers in lang's performance for the imagery of a self-portrait of an artist as a sacrifice are the references to Elvis and to opera. These "texts" form the most crucial hermeneutic windows (Kramer 1990, 1) in my interpretation. An artist "crucifies" herself in her works; she identifies with Christ as judged by the people. On the other hand she takes part to the Christ's passion, and on the other hand is a kind of redeemer. (Jackson 1999, 44, 50, 132 foot note 35). This subject matter has been interpreted often to have a strong homosexual and -erotic loading too. For example, Timothy Jackson (1999) has interpreted Tchaikovsky's 6. Symphony (the *Pathetique*) from this point of view as composer's self-portrait as a Christ, linking the musical topics of crucifying and judgment with composer's homosexuality.[4] As far as Tchaikovsky and lang may seem to be from each others from the point of view of the systems of genre, periodisation and institutions, they however can be interpret to have the same iconographical tradition and genre category: that of a self-portrait as sacrifice and of a confession work with strong autobiographical subtext. lang's *Johnny get angry* is a parodical and paradoxical credo of k.d.lang the artist in the age of post-modernism. In this sense it becomes compared with the biographically colored confession symphonies of the Romanticism. As it is with Tchaikovsky, also with lang the representation of sacrifice can be linked to homosexuality.

Where Tchaikovsky crucifies himself as Christ, lang does this – parodically – as Elvis and as a female protagonist of an opera (actually as a mixed figure of these two). Elvis as such is in our popular cultural imagery a Christ character: rock-Christ, the redeemer of rock'n'roll, the liberator of sexuality. Elvis is also a tragic figure, who died as a victim of superstardom, and who has also functioned as a kind of container of all the sins of rock'n'roll – a man of sorrows (and a king of glory). Christ/Elvis/(mezzo)soprano-text represents ultimate sacrifice, such as the sacrifice or

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[4] I find Jackson's analysis in general as highly problematic what it comes to biographical interpretations. The discussion of cultural topics however is most fascinating.

loss of one's own selfhood, sexual identity, or life. lang (see Starr 1995) has herself talked about Elvis as "the 20th Century Jesus who sacrificed himself in order to teach young artists what may happen to a such a public figure". lang thus represents her self-portrait as an artist through a kind of Elvis-Christ. Christ resurrected, and so lives Elvis – as Madonna (the pop star) has said referring to lang: "Elvis lives – and she's beautiful". Here, we must add: this female Elvis liberates the poor Madame Butterfly and her sisters.

When interpreting the representation of artist as homosexual imagery, the tragic destiny of an artist (Christ/Elvis/Soprano) parallels to the life of a homosexual. Homosexual passion parallels to the passion of Christ (cf. Jackson 1999, 51). Christ-Artist refers to the martyrdom-like destiny of a homosexual crucified by the society, perhaps to homosexual's suicide as doomed person. The opera topos thus works as an *ecce homo* kind of a moan: as a presentation of the pain and destiny of a victim of ideological violence.

In musical iconography, startling descending from the highest register to the lowest *(catabasis)*, which lang here performs, signifies "numbing collapse" (cf. Jackson 1999, 1, 46, 63). Here we have a topos of lamentation, a death song of a fallen hero. As it developed in the early opera of 17th century, lamentation means a moment of especially intensive expression, affective rhetorics and grand feeling. It is a vocalized cry, an extremely pathetically performed soliloquy, an emotional climax cutting the normal narrative flow and separated from the rest of the dramatic context. (Rosand 1979, 346–347) – This is how it is as well in Monteverdi as here in lang. With lang the lamentation is also linked to the popular music tradition of the *torch* song (e.g. women blues and jazz singers from 20's to 50's, singing with an intensity of a repetition compulsion about the unrequited love, such as "The Man I Love", "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man", "The Right Kind of Man" and so on.)

The general pause preceding the opera/lamentation topos is in itself already a powerful sign of tragic fate and death. In the Romantic operas, those who are lamenting and who have to die, are the virtuoso, independent and sexually seducing female characters, forming thus a threat to patriarchal (and heteronormative) system. These women are often represented in a figure of an ethnic other (e.g. Bizet or Puccini). They may also be interpret to represent a sexual other in disguise. Gender and sexuality are essential factors in the problematics of the artistic identity, and in an especial way when discussing female and a lesbian artist, because in the history of Western culture artistic and mental creativity in general have traditionally been marked as masculine, as men's business. Compared to a female artist and also to a male homosexual artist, the "otherness" (the deviance) of a lesbian artist is raised to the second – or third – power. Is there a greater threat to western patriarchal romantic-modernist myth of artist than a lesbian artist?

lang's *Johnny get angry* could be further interpret as a discussion of the fact that declaring publicly own lesbianism would mean as artistic suicide, end for the artistic career. lang herself has said that she was afraid of coming out as lesbian because she taught that maybe after that her music would not anymore be the primary thing discussed, and thereafter that she would be defined by her sexuality (her lesbianism), and not by her work. Here I am referring to lang before her official coming out which happened in 1992. In the 1980's, it still was a big taboo to be a lesbian in music scene. As a self portrait of a lesbian artist – and, in general, of a female artist who does not fit into the traditional mould reserved for women – alongside the victim/sacrificial theme, we could also speak about self-reflexion, a kind of meta discourse about the discrimination mechanisms in the country music industry and culture in general – and about exceeding it by parody. The norms and gender ideology of country music industry defining the construction of femininity parallel to those of the 19th-century opera.

6. PARODY SAVES, LESBIAN ELVIS LIBERATES

Opera topos in itself already points to the realm of parody, because opera is among the forms of art the most artificial, the most ridiculous and "unnatural" for it is a theatre piece which lines are sung in a forced manner. Further, opera topos also has a strong homosexual connotation; e.g. opera divas are a regular part of drag imagery in homosexual culture.

Further, opera topos in lang's *Johnny get angry,* in the context of rock/country/popular music, forms an anomaly, signifying a freakiness and deviation – a homosexual subtext. Also the blurring of different registers in lang's vocal presentation (e.g. rapid changes between high and low registers, and between different colors, tones and shades of voice), can be interpret as musical homo-erotic imagery, musical embracing representing lesbian desire (cf. Jackson 1999: 63).

lang's critical parody ridicules patriarchal heterosexual relationship by presenting it as violent. When the victim in lang's narration is beaded up, many kinds of subordinated and oppressed characters are condensated in the character of the victim: a woman, homosexual, lesbian, artist – whatever that represents deviancy for main stream culture and thus forms a threat for it. In most general level it is a story of what it is to be a different, to be against the norm, whatever this difference is. I would like to point out here, that the deviance, the otherness, represented in lang's piece can not be locked to homosexuality, for homosexuality can be a norm too.

lang's parodic inversion, with exaggeration and ironic transcontextualisation, puts a woman into the role of the male protagonist (the Artist, Christ, Elvis). It presents homosexuality instead of heterosexuality, and lesbianism instead of male homosexuality. By presenting the law it presents its transgression, its unfolding, and creates a pleasurable liberating effect.

Elvis means macho masculinity, patriarchal construction and conservatism, associated to the misogynist nuance of the cock rock from Elvis to Rolling Stones and further. But on the other hand Elvis is a male sex symbol, a *butch*-icon signifying strong sexual charge and radicalism (Wise 1984, 394). By imitating Elvis in the sense of an embodiment of masculine heterosexual desire and sexual revolution of the 1950's, lang figures hyper-masculinity as an alternative option of identity for a middle class stereotypical femininity. When a lesbian woman is portraying Elvis as Christ-like artist crucified by the audience or by the music industry, the performance is subversive and provides transgressive pleasure, because it is parodically inverting and transcontextualizing. The victim of ideological violence, the condemned country&western mezzo soprano, is liberated by lesbian Elvis.

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The Gendered

Filmic

Subject

Dragon Zoltán

THE DISAPPEARING BODY:
THE UNREPRESENTABLE CARNALITY
IN JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ'S
SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

In the film version of *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959) there is a body at the centre of cinematic representation that uncannily escapes being represented. Thus, this body constitutes a lack that in turn sustains the diegetic realm of the film. I will attempt to follow the traces of this body in its disappearance in order to account for its organising power in the mechanism of cinematic representation.

If we look at the history of film, the disappearance of this body in *Suddenly Last Summer* could be explained by the censorship of the Production Code Administration, as in 1959 the body of a homosexual could not be presented explicitly on the screen. We could conclude then that Tennessee Williams and Gore Vidal, who adapted Williams's play to film, were forced to forget about the most crucial elements of the story and erase all allusions to homosexuality or to the body that connotes homosexual desire. However, this is not what happened in the case of this film adaptation. Williams and Vidal, and the director of the film, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, chose to render the homosexual body as resisting representation: as a body disappearing from the film. This pacified the censors, since it seems to be a radical (self)censoring, whereas it establishes a carnal entity that exists (or more precisely, *ex-ists*) in the diegesis via its very absence. The disappearance of the body in *Suddenly Last Summer* constitutes a lack in both the visual and the narrative registers of the film, which arouses desire: the desire to see the body.

It is therefore not censorship, as censoring would mean to "reject" the topic and the body connoting the topic completely. By way of rendering the body as always already disappearing, the filmmakers "absented" it from the diegesis. This constituted a kind of "repression" in psychoanalytic terms, the rule of which is the axiomatic "return of the repressed." Repressing the signs of homosexuality instead of rejecting them forms the basis of the film, and the lack or gap constituted by this act propels narration. The kernel of the narrative stemming from the lack of the body is precisely the deprivation of its very carnality: a traumatic scene in which the carnal presence of the body is annihilated.

There is a scene at the end of a memory sequence, a flashback, revealing the true story of the uncanny death of Sebastian, the young homosexual poet. What is seen is actually Catherine's, Sebastian's cousin's visual recollection. Catherine (Elizabeth Taylor), it has to be emphasised, is not merely Sebastian's cousin, but she is also in love with him. The young neuro-surgeon, Dr. Cukrowicz (Montgomery Clift) takes the role of the analyst in this scene, while Sebastian's mother, Mrs. Venable (Katherine Hepburn) learns the truth of her son's death. The scene is presented similarly to a classical Greek theatrical performance: the chorus embraces the forefront where the traumatic event is recounted.

The visualisation of Catherine's traumatic memory is unfolds in a way that promises the sight of the body that resists becoming fully visible. Yet, the body – even though it seems to be physically present in the long flashback sequence from the beginning until the very end – *per se*

remains hidden: it is only the back of the head we might glimpse at occasionally, and the white suit that Sebastian wears. The sequence begins in a restaurant at the beach, which gets surrounded by more and more young half naked boys who play on instruments made of metal kitchen wear. The "music" gets more and more unbearable and finally Sebastian gets so irritated by the presence of the gang that he jumps up and rushes out of the restaurant, followed by Catherine and the gang. Catherine suggests they take a taxi back to the hotel, but Sebastian starts to run uphill in the empty and steep roads. The gang is after him, and finally Catherine also starts upward to help him. Sebastian's movement gets jerked halfway up the hill, as his heart begins to fail him during the chase. Eventually he reaches the top of the hill, and runs into the middle of a ruined temple only to be followed by the gang of boys who immediately jump upon him and start to tear off his clothes – and then dissect his body. It is at this moment when Catherine arrives at the entrance of the ruin. All she can do is to cry out, to cry for help – however, no one seems to hear her scream.

Catherine witnessed cannibalism on the top of the hill in Cabeza de Lobo. Cannibalism, on the one hand, is literally the incorporation of flesh, the eating or devouring of the flesh. On the other hand, it is a fantasy that causes a shift in the psychic topography of the subject. The fantasy of incorporation, according to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, in the strict sense takes effect when an object of love is lost, and the desires concerning that object have not been freed (Abraham and Torok 1994, 113). The object of love is then incorporated into the ego and buried alive there, as it were. Incorporation is thus, as Abraham explains, the refusal to reclaim as our own the part of ourselves that we placed in what we lost; [it] is the refusal to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognized as such, would effectively transform us. In fine, incorporation is the refusal to introject loss. The fantasy of incorporation reveals a gap within the psyche; it points to something that is missing just where introjection should have occurred. (op. cit., 127)

It means that the object lives on in complete secrecy, hidden even from the ego or consciousness. Nonetheless, it constitutes a gap that blocks not only further introjections (i.e., psychical enrichments, or development) but also a point that marks the moment of the traumatic loss. In the case of Catherine, there are some moments when she starts to recollect fragments of the traumatic scene, but she comes to a halt at the very beginning of the chase sequence. She remembers everything about the affection, the relationship that connected her to Sebastian, and she can even recall the chronology, but there is a gap, where she always stops short.

It can also be argued that the fantasy of incorporation has two sides: a visual and a verbal aspect. One introduces a rupture in the visual register, while the other constitutes a similar blockage in language. In the flashback sequence, Catherine's face is doubled, whereas Sebastian's is always covered or off-screen. Catherine is visible in the present and in the past. Her face in the present slips to the right bottom of the picture, giving way to the flashback in which she appears in the past. This way, she is watching herself and also replaying and re-living the scene. This visual scenario implies the Lacanian scheme of the *gaze*: the subject sees herself seeing herself. This means a radical detachment of the eye and the gaze: the look of the eye is always already preceded by another look on the side of the object. That is to say, the subject of the look is always already included (incorporated, as it were) in the picture (Lacan 1998, 67–119).

What this uncanny scenario shows us is that Catherine's act of visual incorporation as an act of witnessing has already been incorporated into the scene/seen by an "unapprehensible" (op. cit., 83) and thus imaginary gaze. This is the only logical possibility, since the scene includes Catherine's face in the present as well as what she sees. Since the gaze, according to Lacan, is always on the side of the object, we have to look for points in the image that introduce gaps, that prove to be unapprehensible. What "sticks out" this way is the skeleton on the top of the

hill at the entrance of the ruins of the ancient temple where the chase ends. This skeleton becomes uncanny on the one hand because it has the wings of an angel and, on the other hand, it appears once more in the garden of Mrs. Venable's house in New Orleans. This way, it connects the two scenes visually as an anchor for displacement.

Its reappearance also implies that the skeleton is an excess in the scopic realm: it does not belong in either frame. It is heterogeneous to both scenes, thus constitutes a rupture in the visual register of the film. It is a "bizarre" and "foreign body" that lodges in the visible only to haunt: it is a *phantom* in Abraham's definition (Abraham and Torok 1994, 175). It is a remainder of the traumatic scene, thus commemorating it while it also acts as a concealment of the rupture it caused: it is the *objet a* that introduces two moments of viewing, similarly to the deformed skull at the front of Hans Holbein's painting, *The Ambassadors*, as – based on Lacan's analysis – Parveen Adams argues (Adams 1996, 141). Since the skeleton appears at the moment of the disappearance of Sebastian's body, it becomes a signifier for it, it becomes its *objet a*, which is precisely the place of the gaze.

The point in the picture where the unapprehensible gaze dwells is in the heart of the garden. The garden was created by Sebastian upon his return from a trip where he witnessed a traumatic scene of vultures devouring new-born sea turtles. He created a garden, which is guarded by a carnivorous plant called the Venus flytrap (and later on by the mysterious skeleton). In Williams's description the garden resembles an autopsy: "There are massive tree-flowers that suggest organs of a body, torn out, still glistening with undried blood" (Williams 1968, 113). This reference cannot be missed in the knowledge of the cannibalistic scene: the garden displaces and literally re-presents Sebastian's incorporated body. The body that cannot be present (on account of its subversive homosexuality) is thus re-presented commemorating the moment of its disappearance. Moreover, the garden (i.e., Sebastian's body) incorporates the entire *mise-en-scène*, thus the secret encrypted is transmitted to the spectator.

Incorporation, as I have mentioned, is performed not merely in the visual register of the film, but also in the verbal one. I would like to recall the beginning of the flashback sequence, when Catherine talks about her role in accompanying Sebastian on his last journey. Here the filmic text corresponds to the text of the drama word by word, except for one tiny difference. Her words are taken from the dramatic text:

> Catherine: Don't you understand? I was PROCURING for him! … [Mrs. Venable] used to do it, *too*. … *Not consciously!* She didn't *know* that she was procuring for him in the smart, the fashionable places they used to go before last summer. … I knew what I was doing.
>
> (op. cit., 152)

The word "procuring" is emphasised in the text. This is a word that makes clear Sebastian's aim in travelling with either his mother or his cousin: they were used to make contacts for him with young men (ibid.). However, this over-emphasised word (in full capitals) is missing from the film version. There is a jump-cut in the part of the picture where Catherine's narrating face can be seen, which at first seems to be a flaw in the editing, but the consultation of the dramatic text reveals a process of "absenting" at its most explicit. The jump cut calls attention to the lack that intrudes the monologue. It can be said that the word "procuring" encrypts an incorporated secret that is unspeakable for some reason. While there might be implicit allusions to homosexuality hidden in this word, I wish to concentrate on a different aspect here. I suggest that the homosexual allusion here is primarily a cover for an incorporated secret encrypted in this word.

To unravel the potential meanings or secrets this word conceals, I have to turn to morphology and etymology and then to mythology. First of all, in "procure" two words can be seen: "pro" and "cure," which might be translated as "for the cure of." It immediately introduces a

Fig. 1. Guido Reni. "St Sebastian".
Pinacoteca Capitolina (Roma, Italy).
Oil on canvas, cm128x98.

mythological aspect: the myth of St. Sebastian, more precisely a largely forgotten part of the myth. Usually, St. Sebastian's story is recounted up to the point when his fellow archers tie him to a pose and shoot him with arrows. Everybody believes him to be dead, therefore they leave. However, Sebastian does not die then, as an old widow, Irene, takes him home and cures him.

The lonely Sebastian with arrows piercing his body has become a symbol for homosexuality, and is frequently used as a connotation for this (Kaye 1996, 89–98). In fact the picture of St. Sebastian hangs on the wall of Sebastian's studio, and one third of it comes to be visible for some moments in the film. According to Brian Parker, this painting by Guido Reni *(Fig. 1.)* is crucial here as not only was it immensely popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, but it was also the most favourite representation of the saint martyr in gay communities (Parker 2000). It was described by Oscar Wilde as "the most beautiful of all paintings" and "may well have influenced Williams's play indirectly via his friend the Japanese dramatist and novelist Yukio Mishima" (ibid.).

Following Parker's account on the history and influence of Reni's painting on Williams and especially on the genesis of *Suddenly Last Summer*, moreover its "return" (precisely in the form of the return of the repressed, as one third of it appears for inspection in the film) would reveal a strongly supported subtext and would also establish a well sustained iconographic background to the emergence of both the drama and the film adaptation, functioning as a kind of model for both. Tempting as it may seem, in fact Parker is mistaken: the picture that hangs on the wall of Sebastian's studio is not Reni's painting, but Sandro Boticelli's 1474 "Saint Sebastian" *(Fig. 2.)*. Although this way we lose the role of iconographic representation in the background as a central

Fig. 2. Sandro Boticelli. "Saint Sebastian" (1474). Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (Germany). Tempera on wood; cm. 195x75.

organising motif for the birth of the drama and the film (that would provide a concrete point for a dialogical analysis of the process of adaptation), the painting nevertheless is a powerful allusion and an effective way of rendering or re-presenting the unspoken myth behind or beyond the surface story of Sebastian.

Since Irene, according to the myth, saves Sebastian, the word "procure" can therefore echo the sentence "Irene cured Sebastian" from the mythical story. In *Suddenly Last Summer*, it is Catherine who attempts to "cure" Sebastian. Further etymological analysis reveals that the Latin origin of the word "procure" has two meanings: *prŏcūrō* means, on the one hand, to care for, to cure; on the other hand, to conciliate by sacrifice. It is this latter meaning that reveals the secret encrypted in the word and in Catherine's memory. The sentence "I [Catherine] was PROCURING for him" can be heard to echo "Catherine conciliated her unsatisfied desire by sacrificing Sebastian." The explicit references to the myth of St. Sebastian (the picture, the angel wings of the skeleton, La Playa San Sebastian – the name of the beach Catherine and Sebastian used to go to in Cabeza de Lobo) are all incorporated and encrypted in the word that has been absented from the filmic diegesis. Then they became transformed in the homonymic relationship into a fantasy of sacrificing the object of love that proves to be reluctant to give the desired satisfaction for the subject. This way, the trauma for Catherine is in fact her meeting the Real of her desire played out in front of her eyes on the top of the hill: Sebastian is sacrificed, he is incorporated literally, just as her fantasy of this very scene is incorporated in her verbal acts.

The aim of this sacrifice, however, is quite ambiguous here. According to Slavoj Žižek, there is something "a priori false" in sacrifice (Žižek 2001, 69). He sketches three scenarios for sacrifice, which describe three relations of the subject to the Other. The most elementary type of sacrifice relies on the notion of exchange, as the subject sacrifices to the Other something precious to him or her, so that s/he would get something even more vital to him or her in return. The next type is when the subject sacrifices something not for some gain, but merely to sustain the belief that there *is* some Other, who is able to provide answers when need be (ibid). The description of the third type is a reference to Lacan, who argues that sacrifice is "a gesture that enacts the disavowal of the impotence of the big Other" (op. cit., 70). It is precisely this last aspect that is instrumental in Catherine's fantasy: in order to sustain her desire, she has to save the object cause of her desire from unspeakable shame, she has to maintain Sebastian's honour. The more uncanny aspect of this deed is perhaps (and here is where the inauthenticity of the sacrifice lies according to Lacan) that Catherine displays the act of sacrificing Sebastian in order to convince the audience that she does not possess him any longer, i.e. that she has overcome her trauma. In other words, she sacrifices what she has never possessed, to save not only Sebastian but also – and even more importantly – her own desire. The inauthentic nature of this sacrifice that seemingly involves the embracing of the heterosexual solution to the story calls our attention to the feigned happy end: maintaining both the desire and the object (as a homosexual object) overwrites the heterosexual romance.

To return to the verbal aspect of the analysis, as a kind of "prequel" to the sacrificial scene, the steep road towards the sacrificial incorporation is also already incorporated in another homonym of "procure": this time in the Latin *prōcurrō*, to run at the front, to push forward to the front, or to run ahead. This homonym encrypts what is visualised in the chase scene. The absented word thus incorporates and encrypts the entire flashback sequence. In the presentation or visualisation of the memory sequence, thus, it is Catherine's traumatic meeting the Real of her desire that is in fact rendered figuratively. That is, the analysis of the repression (or absenting) performed on the word revealed the source of the trauma that is never explicitly presented in either the drama or the film version of *Suddenly Last Summer*. This – among the other

features I have recounted earlier – also lies at the root of the false happy ending the film version provides.

The doctor *qua* analyst remains completely blind and deaf to either the visual or the verbal signs that imply some encrypted secrets in Catherine's trauma. This is implicitly revealed at the end. The spectator learns with the appearance of Catherine that due to a trauma of sexual nature, where her cousin Sebastian was her saviour – hence her desire for him – she started to write her diary in the third person singular. As her desire remained unsatisfied, she continued to address herself that way. This unsatisfied desire is connected to Sebastian, thus her unconscious establishes a way to conciliate it via a fantasised sacrifice of the love object, precisely to save this desire, and also the honour of the object (Sebastian). This sacrifice is an unspeakable secret, thus it becomes encrypted. When the fantasy mysteriously becomes reality, the loss of the object triggers the incorporation, which causes a rupture in Catherine's psychic topography.

As Catherine addresses herself in the third person singular after the flashback sequence, I argue that the secret remained concealed in a crypt, and the gay subplot that has been absented from the very beginning still insists at the very end of the film. Thus, the happy end is but a cover for a cryptic desire that remains unsatisfied because of Sebastian's homosexuality. The disappearing body returns to haunt the spectator on and on, until the walls of the crypt are safe.

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Éva Federmayer

THE RACE MOVIE AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE NEW NEGRO WOMAN: OSCAR MICHEAUX'S *WITHIN OUR GATES* (1920)

In my discussion, I seek to explore one of the sensational discoveries in recent years, the earliest surviving feature-length film by an African American: Oscar Micheaux. As of today, Micheaux's *Within Our Gates,* released in 1920 in segregated theaters in the United States, is known as the first remaining *race movie,* which was also the most powerful black response to D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), a landmark film in celluloid history.[1] *Within Our Gates* had been lost for 70 years when its last surviving print was discovered in Spain, by Madrid's Filmoteca Espanola in the early 1990s. It had Spanish intertitles and a Spanish title: *La Negra. Within Our Gates* was restored and translated into English by the Library of Congress in 1993 and since then Micheaux's film has become one of the most exciting topics for scholars keen on exploring the wealth of African American culture in the early Modern Era. Micheaux's growing popularity is also noticeable among academics who are ambitious to challenge entrenched beliefs in the incontestable hegemony of the white film industry in the early period of the silent film and the dominance of white male culture in general, as well as among those who are eager to stand up for the necessity of ongoing canon revisions based on recently unearthed historical and cultural evidence.[2]

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[1] Griffith's influence on one of the pioneers of film theory and practice, Sergei Eisenstein, is far from being sufficiently acknowledged by Hungarian film critics. For a critical elaboration of Griffith's influence on his notion of film-making and the montage in particular, see Eisenstein's "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today" in *Film Form* (1949, 1977).

[2] Oscar Micheaux's defining presence in the history of film was famously acknowledged in 1986 by the Directors' Guild of America, honoring Oscar Micheaux, Frederico Fellini and Akira Kurosawa with the Golden Jubilee Special Award. Among a considerable number of critical reassessments of Oscar Micheaux's cultural significance, the landmark book to this date is *African-American Filmmaking and Race Cinema of the Silent Era: Oscar Micheaux and His Circle* (2001), which was written to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Micheaux's death.

My discussion of Micheaux's *Within Our Gates* is based on the hypothesis that the American race movie is the filmic discourse of the New Negro / New Negro Woman.[3] Put another way, I claim that the race film in general and Micheaux's *Within Our Gates* in particular is essentially a counter narrative articulated with the aim of revising the racist iconography of black representation in the America of the 1910s and 1920s. In the present analysis, I want to elaborate on the race, class, and gender dynamics of *Within Our Gates*, focusing on Micheaux's alternative national discourse that he pitted against the racist national discourse in Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. In doing so, I want to focus on his characters, especially on Sylvia Landry, the New Negro Woman, who is the pivotal agent of this newly evolving black revisionary narrative.

GRIFFITH'S DISCOURSE OF WHITE AMERICA
AND ITS ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Griffith's exceedingly successful film epic, the first million-dollar movie, is about the birth, or rather, the rebirth of the American nation largely based on Thomas Dixon's popular 1905 novel, *The Clansman*, which recounts the story of the Ku Klux Klan. The film narrative hinges on the argument that racial segregation (the necessity of upholding the purity of blood, penalizing miscegenation, and prohibiting intermarriage) is inscribed into *nature*, and that the purity of the Aryan blood in America is a structural law, even a humanitarian necessity to keep the world from deteriorating into general chaos, that is, from institutional, moral, and biological confusion.

The iconic characters of this film are embedded in iconic settings representing Old Order (Pastoral South) and New Chaos (Urban North, Reconstruction South), along with an evolving Future as Past Restored. In this tapestry of Southern Order and Dignity, there is a strict hierarchy of race, class, and gender, which 'naturally' arranges itself into three groups.

White characters epitomize strength, pride, and self-control as well as physical beauty. White beauty is emblematized by young white women (Elsie Stoneman, Margaret, and Flora Cameron), the repositories of the race's aesthetic superiority.[4] All characters are members of the privileged class of the South, all of them descending from the plantation aristocracy. As is typical of orderly characters, there is a strict gender hierarchy presiding among white men and women, resulting in masculine men and feminine women. Men are either revered patriarchs (Colonel Cameron) and patriarchs-to-be (Ben Cameron), i.e. supreme guardians of women, children and slaves, or formerly revered patriarchs (Austin Stoneman). Women of the North and the South lack any individual traits except for their unconditional devotion to their men and the ideas they represent: the cause of racial purity and benevolent slavocracy, a system that they serve by feminine self-sacrifice, clandestine support of the KKK, and last but not least, by killing themselves, like little Flora, when pursued by a lecherous black Union veteran.

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[3]   I use the terms the New Negro and New Negro Woman to signify a new class of black people with education, middle class aspirations and racial pride as they first appeared in the Cleveland *Gazette* in 1895. The New Negro resurfaced in literary criticism in the 1980s to designate a specific, though contested, discourse of modern blackness. Instrumental in constructing the discourse of the New Negro Woman were Julia Anne Cooper, Frances Harper, Jessie Fauset, Elisa Johnson McDougald, Nella Larsen, and Marita O. Bonner.

[4]   For an intriguing exploration of white feminine beauty by a particular technology of lighting in early mainstream American narrative cinema and its racial and sexual implications, see Chapter 3 of Richard Dyer's *White* (1997).

Mulattos/mulattas are described as standing halfway between blacks and whites in physical beauty, though the racial balance is tilted toward black barbarism: both Silas Lynch and Lydia Brown are represented only as distorted whites. Significantly, they are intellectually gifted but deeply corrupt and greedy. The mulatto Sylas Lynch (mentored by Reconstruction politician Stoneman) and the mulatta Lydia Brown (the mistress of Stoneman) are crooked people capable of deceiving even powerful white politicians, such as Senator Stoneman of Philadelphia, who brings about moral and political chaos in pastoral South Carolina. In terms of their social position, the mulattos and mulattas are defined as not 'naturally' belonging to the privileged class (the high middle class of the North), because they are only parasites, thriving on the benevolence and weakness of white men in power. As far as their gender is concerned, they are not 'natural' women and men. This gender chaos is the inevitable consequence of their 'mixed blood'. Irrespective of their sex, they are similar in being out of control: lusting for sex with white men (or women), and for white man's power.

Phenotypically black characters form a distinctly separate group of ugly people.[5] They are also represented as 'normally' poor and part of a faceless mass in the rural South. One of the obvious reasons for their lacking individuality is that they are, in fact, not gendered, as they are still at the stage of barbarism, or put differently, at a pre-gendered stage. If occasionally gendered, they are abnormally oversexed and so motivated by uncontrollable sexual instincts, like Gus, the black rapist.

Based on these characters, Griffith's discourse heralds the birth of a new white nation which is, in fact, no more than the restoration of the old rural South by the biological reproduction of the white race through the union, that is, marriage of the South and the North, under the surveillance of the KKK. The pivotal figure of this new national discourse is Ben Cameron, the biologically and culturally superior Aryan, who is also the caretaker of the best traditions of the Old by establishing the KKK. Also in his hands is the historical destiny of America and white civilization at large, which is threatened by the tide of barbarism that Negroes, Asians, and second-class European immigrants (from the southern and eastern parts of the continent) meant to Griffith in the 1910s.

MICHEAUX'S COUNTER NARRATIVE
AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE NEW NEGRO WOMAN

Contrary to Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, representing blacks as a faceless, brutal mob, or perversely ambitious, corrupt, and lecherous mulattos, Oscar Micheaux offers the rich tapestry of a diversified black society with characters from all walks of life. From the beginning, he is intent on persuading his audience that no character has popped into this story as a figment of his imagination since they are to be regarded as representatives of specific black classes and genders. This message is conveyed by calling two of his weighty characters 'typical'. They are Sylvia Landry, the educated, middle-class woman and her step-father, the uneducated, working-class Jasper Landry.

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[5] In a recently published Hungarian study of myths and stereotypes, which is groundbreaking in its ambition to discuss the racist heritage of American culture in the light of the minsrel tradition (Virágos Zsolt-Varró Gabriella, *Jim Crow örökösei: Mítosz és sztereotípia az amerikai társadalmi tudatban és kultúrában*, 2002 / *The Heirs of Jim Crow: Myth and Stereotype in American Social Consciousness and Culture/*), there is a section dealing with D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* and Griffith's racist attitude, contending that he used white actors even for playing black characters, including black mobs (265). Indeed, Griffith's Southern race prejudice greatly affected his artistic practices, nevertheless he did use black actors, especially for black mob scenes. Typically, these black actors were, however, kept in segregated areas during the shootings.

What the young urban woman and the older farmer have in common, that is, what they typify despite all the differences in their character is a feature completely missing from Griffith: a strong black striving for bettering themselves and their community.

Micheaux's narrative turns on the interaction of a complicated social network of blacks and whites, female and male characters. Blacks are mainly diversified by class and within a social group; they are described as having predominantly positive or negative traits. Though Micheaux is partial toward the black professional middle class, he still makes a clear distinction between scheming Alma Pritchard and her idealized cousin, Sylvia Landry. Similarly, he applies a respectable, uplifting minister (Reverend Wilson) and his corrupt counterpart (Old Ned) in the plot. There are average, working-class people, such as city blacks and farmers (Sylvia's foster family, the Landrys), and their repulsive counterpart, the traditional plantation Negro (Efrem).

In addition, as a counterpoint to respectable professionals and striving poor blacks, Micheaux gives the portrait of a busy network of the black urban underground complete with thieves and gamblers (Red, Larry).

Though making use of a few stereotypes from the racist iconography of Griffith (and the minstrel show and plantation fiction tradition that Griffith tapped for his film), Oscar Micheaux's aim is strategically different even with the coon, the tom and the plantation negro. By these characters, *Within Our Gates* conveyed the message to the contemporary black audiences at 'midnight rambles' that personal weakness is partly the consequence of racist American history and partly the very cause of social troubles in black communities.

Less diversified than black society, the representation of white society also suggests sophistication and above all, a clearly discernable political message. These white characters are fewer in number and a group of them is meant to be types from the black man's perspective (benevolent northern woman, biased Southern woman, despotic Southern landowner). However, another group indicates Oscar Micheaux's more sophisticated portrayal of the dynamics of class, race, and gender than Griffith's *Birth*: the cheated poor white sharecropper killing the land owner who has formerly claimed that the law in the South is made by white men to benefit white men; the lynching party made up of poor whites, including even women and children; the white rapist from a family of slavocrats, who also turns out to be Sylvia's father. These white characters are also integral to the narrative that Micheaux recounts in his race movie with a keen eye on his people in the context of American history, calling on his audiences to consider the vital necessity of a racially integrated society to fulfill the hopes and accomplish the grand design of the founding fathers of America, the land of hopes.

Connecting the white side of American society with the black, the South with the North, the rural with the urban, the affluent class with the impoverished and the criminal, is the pivotal character, Sylvia Landry (played by Evelyn Preer). She is also described as an attractive and respectable black woman whose gender boundaries are more fluid than any of the white, black, or mulatto characters in Griffith, but at the same time, she also shares idealized aspects of femininity with Griffith's white women. Her strategic place in the film narrative is further enhanced by the fact that her character links the past to a promising future. Furthermore, she also stands at the center of two interwoven narratives, one representing an earlier popular genre, the other, a newly evolving one. I contend, that Sylvia Landry, the iconic character of a new racial discourse (also prefiguring female characters in Harlem Renaissance women's fiction, such as Jessie Redmon Fauset's heroines in *There Is Confusion, Plum Bun, Comedy: American Style),* is molded by these

two plots, the race melodrama and the opportunity narrative.[6] This double coding also accounts for apparent inconsistencies in her character.

Typical of race melodramas, Sylvia Landry is a light-skinned woman who is enveloped in mystery – as tragic mulattas would be. Well defined as she is at the beginning of the movie by her profession, her identity remains ambiguous practically until the last, flashback section of the narrative. The viewer who is interpellated as a subject by Micheaux's evoking the paraphernalia of race melodramas, is kept in suspense for more than 40 minutes of the total 78 of the film because she cannot decide whether Sylvia is a virtuous woman with a legitimate origin and respectable goals or the very opposite is true of her: she is the daughter of a sinful liaison, and her doings motivated by deception and scheming.

Similar to typical melodramatic victims beset by insurmountable difficulty and ineradicable stain, she has no clearly defined family, that is, a supportive network of kin to defend her from irreversible decline. Besides her cousin, Alma Pritchard, whom she visits on the east, no information is provided until the very end as to who her mother or father were, where her other relatives are, or, for that matter, who made possible her education. In short, until the last time jump in the movie, we have no reliable handle on the character of this charming, white-skinned woman represented *without* a family, home, and past, but *with* an impeccable wardrobe, excellent education, and conspicuously active life, all these features typical of the kept woman, the beautiful mulatta, as in William Wells Brown's *Clotel* (1853). Even the scene of her being savagely abused by a middle-aged white man derives from this melodramatic repertoire of narrative tradition, but as I will discuss later, the rape scene is reinscribed by Micheaux for a clearly different political agenda.

In spite of the narrative strategy slanted toward making Sylvia Landry reminiscent of victimized tragic mulattas in race melodramas, Oscar Micheaux eventually makes sure that his is a new kind of black narrative with which to address a specifically black audience. In other words, his heroine's story eventually unfolds as an opportunity narrative revolving around a successful black woman. Educated and independent, Sylvia is rendered as the most flexible and innovative of all the characters, black or white. When learning about her school's dire budgetary conditions, she is the only one to keep the disaster from unfolding: she goes to Boston to gain white support for black education and raises funds for her school. Back home, as the flashback section of the film demonstrates, her accounting skills and New Negro self-confidence save her step-father from the crooked white landowner. As an educated young woman, she also goes out of her way to make sure that her little brother, Emil, gets his education to advance in life. At the end of the film, after a series of vicissitudes, she not only prevents her school from closing down, but makes it prosper and expand to the benefit of a growing black community.

Having the skills and intelligence as well as dedication to her community, Sylvia is adamant and also successful in her goal to uplift her race. Oscar Micheaux's sharp focus on the New Negro Woman in this regard shares the perspective of those women writers of the late nineteenth and the turn of the century who saw the New Negro Woman "at the gateway of this new era of American civilization." As Anna Julia Cooper put it in *A Voice from the South,* it is this black woman in whose "hands must be moulded the strength, the wit, the statesmanship, the morality, all the psychic force, the social and economic intercourse of that era" (Lerner, 1972: 574).

In traditional white gender terms, say, those of Griffith, Sylvia Landry's celebrated features (her courage, self-confidence, ambition, perseverance, mobility, emotional control, ntellectual

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[6]   The notion of race melodrama and opportunity narrative informing *Within Our Gates* was applied by Jane Gaines in "Within Our Gates: From Race Melodrama to Opportunity Narrative." Though indebted to her insight, my focus is different as I elaborate on the discontinuities in Sylvia Landry's character that Gaines treats only in passing.

power, and incentive) might be regarded as masculine.[7] Yet, Sylvia Landry is emphatically de-scribed as a woman in the film. She has a refined taste, elegant clothes complete with furs, fash-ionable hats and purses. She is equipped with social skills for effective communication in the ur-ban parlor, which enables her to cope with the class and color line. She has a 'motherly' nature: playing mother and big sister to Emil and self-sacrificially throwing herself before a car in Bos-ton to rescue a little boy's life (as mothers should metaphorically sacrifice their life for their children).

Sylvia Landry is also the center of heterosexual interest in *Within Our Gates*. In less than fif-teen minutes, she is desired by three men in succession and altogether there are five men of vari-ous social, educational, and racial backgrounds who are keenly interested in her as a woman (Conrad, Larry, Rev. Wilson Jacobs, Dr Vivian, Armand Gridlestone). The first conflict of the film issues from her exceptional sexual desirability because her cousin, Alma, who is in love with Conrad, Sylvia's well-established and handsome fiancé, finds no other way to get him from Sylvia but by scheming against her. She arranges for a compromising situation involving Sylvia with a white man, having Conrad witness the ambiguous couple. Her sexual identity comes most brutally to the fore when she is nearly raped by white Armand Gridlestone. Despite this gloomy beginning, however, the film concludes with the idealized aspect of her life as a happy black wo-man: she is united with Dr Vivian, the most handsome and attractive black man out of the five, in marriage.

Sylvia's femininity, which clearly measures up to white women's, is emphasized in Micheaux's film in that she shows a great amount of sensitivity, even timidity toward males. For example, when Conrad mistakenly believes she has been unfaithful to him, with no willingness to listen to her part of the story, he begins physically abusing her by wrenching her arm, stifling her throat and throwing her to the floor. Though we need to remind ourselves of very different act-ing conventions in the silent film era when in the absence of the sound track, speech was literally spread all over the body of the actor. The extent of brutality that Sylvia has to suffer at the hands of her fiancé seems to go beyond the limit of expressive body language. Surprisingly, Sylvia does not defend herself: neither is she trying to get help nor is she retaliating.

What I assume is suggested here is her distinct womanly trait, her marked vulnerability. This comes by surprise since her highlighted feminine fragility seems to be incompatible with her in-tellectual, psychological, and even physical strength that she needs throughout the film narrative to travel great distances, fight for money, recover quickly from the psychological shock of hav-ing her money stolen in the street, and then having a car running over her body. Regardless, she always looks elegant and smiling after recovering from her ordeals.

Yet, Sylvia, the New Negro Woman's vulnerability is repeatedly emphasized in the film – not only to make her femininity measure up to any white womanly standard (even the whitest of all, Flora Cameron in Griffith), but also to put this black female vulnerability into black political dis-course. In what is to follow is a brief analysis of a long sequence of sexual and racial violence in Micheaux's race movie, centering around a rape scene. I want to argue that Micheaux instru-mentalizes the New Negro Woman's vulnerability in order to convey an effective message to his black audience about past, present, and future conditions of the American Negro in America.

This shocking sequence of multiple violence takes place in a flashback illustrating Alma's re-velatory explanation of Sylvia's past and spotless character to Dr Vivian. Accordingly, Armand Gridlestone savagely attacks Sylvia Landry in an abandoned cottage. Sylvia has just returned

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[7]   Comparing Micheaux to other black filmmakers, bell hooks credits Micheaux with a most radical per-spective, claiming that "there are infinitely more transgressive visionary images of black femaleness in the work of a filmmaker like Oscar Micheaux than there are in that of most black film directors, precisely be-cause Micheaux was not seeing through the lens of white longings and expectations" (*Reel to Real* 100).

from the marshland where her family, the Landrys, is hiding because they know their lives are in danger. Without having any evidence of the real identity of the killer, bloodthirsty whites accuse Jasper Landry of Philip Gridleston's death, so they seek to trace him down and destroy his whole family. While Sylvia is trying to collect some food and clothes for the Landrys in the cottage, the white mob find them in the marshland and as was the custom under Jim Crow, they hang and burn the innocent husband and wife. (Luckily, their young son, Emil, manages to escape on horseback).

As argued by Jane Gaines and other film scholars, this scene is exceptionally dramatic in its thematic and technical sophistication, powerfully rejecting Griffith's opinion on black violence. Whereas *Birth of a Nation* argues that the very cause of the American social chaos is the breach of 'natural law', that is, the transgression of biological and social categories between white and black, superior and inferior (dramatized in scenes of interracial sexual violence), *Within Our Gates* provides the black man's perspective, that is, a black counter narrative on this most weighty issue. Yet, Micheaux not only reverses the relations here by making a barbaric white aristocrat ravage an educated, middle class mulatta; he dramatically changes the very terms of the discourse of violence. To wit, Oscar Mischeaux is no longer satisfied with the political potentials of a narrative turning on the savvy of the black man who craftily accepts the master's terms only to appropriate his discursive space to black ends as Grandison did in Chesnutt's short story, "The Passing of Grandison", or as the representative black American did in Booker T. Washington's autobiographical narrative, *Up from Slavery*. In establishing the long sequence that represents the fight between a white male rapist and his black female victim, cross-cut to scenes of lynching the Landrys, Oscar Micheaux provides a new interpretation of interracial violence, with the following possible implication:

1. Black women are not willing Jezebels, neither are they helpless victims (like idealized little Flora in Griffith), but they fight (and have always fought) for their virtue.

2. Inherent in this is the intimation that black people, however victimized, have never been willing, or worse, contented slaves, but rebels, even capable of forming maroon communities.

3. The meticulously cross-cut scenes showing the developing drama of rape on the one hand and of lynching on the other suggest that burning black men and ravaging black women are crimes internally and historically connected. As the sequence is structured around a blazing bonfire, the two interweaving episodes of violence are emphasized, giving the intimation that the flame of the bonfire consuming black bodies and the flame of perverse sexuality ravaging the black female body are ignited by the very same racial hatred.

4. Furthermore, what is implied in this representation of racial violence is an indirect message to the black public watching this film in segregated theaters: if you do not fight back in self-defense, as Sylvia does in the abandoned cottage when attacked by a lustful white man, you might end up as inanimate objects, or even worse, pieces of coal, like her parents.

In conclusion: Oscar Micheaux's race movie, *Within Our Gates* is a powerful black response to Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, refusing Griffith's hideous black stereotypes and white supremacist message. Moreover, Micheaux's film provides an alternative discourse of national identity in a most critical period of American history, when the United States has accumulated unparalleled tensions inside and outside of its borders marked by imperialist expansion (Mexico, Cuba, Haiti), World War in Europe, white terrorism in the South, race riots in northern cities (the bloodiest

in Chicago, in 1919), an unparalleled size of immigration and black migration, all this triggering rapid structural changes in the economy and the culture of the nation.

Micheaux's answer to these shocking changes is dramatically different from Griffith's. While Griffith demands a segregated society to save civilization, Micheaux embraces the idea of a racially integrated society. While Griffith seeks nostalgically to restore a rural past, Micheaux advocates a vision of urban America. While Griffith singles out purity of (white) blood as the sole basis for human value, Micheaux considers education, individual and communal achievement as solid grounds for human distinction. Last but not least, while Griffith's supremacist narrative turns on Ben Cameron, the Aryan founder of the KKK obsessed with stamping out the sin of miscegenation, Micheaux's discourse hinges on Sylvia Landry, a respectable woman of white and black ancestry, emblematizing the American dream, newly unfolding.

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Zsolt Győri

WOMAN OVERLOOKED: THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF FATHERHOOD IN TWO FILMS BY STANLEY KUBRICK

Having first seen the title of the conference – *The Iconography of Gender* – I felt myself on an imaginary waterfront, on the border of two immensities, the solidity and stationariness of the land and the fluidity of the sea; on the narrow strip where sand fills up the water and waves bite into the land, while everything is orchestrated by an endless, perpetual gaze. Two immensities, iconography and gender: the pictorial intensity of life, and the enlivening of this intensity. It seemed most palpable to conceptualise iconography and gender as a fold, an event of multi-directional incursions resulting in the formulation of an assemblage, the mutual territory where the concepts of the two disciplines raise common problems. One of the first problems I wish to examine touches the core of both iconographical and gender studies: why speak of the ico-nography of gender and not the gender of iconography, that is, whether we identify the study of the pictorial illustration of a physical object as a gendered discourse. If we look at the vocabu-lary definition, according to which iconography is "a set of specified or traditional symbolic forms associated with the subject or theme of a stylised work of art" (American Heritage Dic-tionary), and think of the long list of artists who have contributed to the formulation of this tra-dition, we perceive iconography as the canonisation of the male artist-subject and furthermore identify iconology as the study of the history of visual arts predominated by the masculine gaze.

   With the emergence of feminist discourse this canon is re-evaluated, the conceptual frame-work of iconographical methodology is deepened with new perspectives included. In the radical critique of male art-history the most often heard voices articulate the misunderstood and often stereotypical nature of representing gender and argue for the lack of positive insight for the female subject in her encounter with theory and criticism. In their fierce battles against the phallocentric narratives of the masculine ego and for an autonomous female identity, feminist arguments, however, often degenerate and repeat the blindness of their forefathers. Whereas the initial step of feminism to understand gender through binary terminologies, such as the male-female, or the feminine-masculine dichotomies has been inevitable in pinpointing the inherent distortions of the traditional female-imagery, only few critics have recognised that such irresolv-able antagonisms are likewise misrepresentations of the forces behind the formation of identity in that they only call into being an artificial agency that can easily be included within macro-polit-ical discourses. Gender as an ideological construct and prescriptive category, a phenomenon that can be represented in the form of an identity which possesses some kind of a universal value, or essential character can likewise offer no positive insights for the individual.

   If iconography can offer such positive insights it is because of its capability to point out the constructedness of subject-representation and describe those contexts where the perceiving-subject achieves understanding of the pictorial. The following essay results from this capacity and sets forth to analyse how cinematic representation – exemplified in two films by Stanley Kubrick – reveals a narrative activity in which scopic regimes model a gender-specific social con-text, fatherhood. I shall furthermore draw up a parallelism between the formulation of father-hood on the social scale and the creation of the image of the failed father.

When some months ago our son was born I had a direct experience of how distorted the position of fatherhood is represented within the social field. Similar to other socially evoked narratives of identity, I found my previously acquired notions of fatherhood overpowering, the public expectations degenerated and I soon started to forget about them, turning instead towards the new sensations our baby provided us with. My mind was transformed into a reservoir of new percepts: there were new smells, sounds and gestures, all rendering a body unknown, opening up an unknown dimension of optical, aural, tactile stimuli to which I could only respond in a childish, naive and uncalculated way. This new affectual universe of various speeds and intensities formulating around me was a source of deterritorialisation and deconstruction, marking the rise of fatherhood as a pure form of molecular perception. These unstructured flows of sensations threw me into a state of disorganisation, that is less a static existence than a membrane, existing only in its connectivity. This condition could be best described as a kind of a fatherless fatherhood. A failure, perhaps, bur rather a hard-fought struggle with the prescriptive, regulative and consensual model of fatherhood; a kind of self-hypnosis, surely, but one activated to relive decoded, multidirectional, rhizomatic impulses, a condition similar to what Barbara M. Kennedy on Deleuzian paths has termed a subjectless subjectivity (Kennedy 2000, 95). This results in the concept of identity as a permanent mapping, an activity of creating routes out of the social corporeality of fatherhood, routes that are produced by the child in the father.

In the following I shall analyse two films by Stanley Kubrick – *Barry Lyndon* (1975) and *The Shining* (1980) giving special attention to his portrayal of fatherhood and the ways this concept is constituted and represented in cinematic narratives, in the narrativity produced by the interaction of the cinematic image, painting and photography.

William Makepeace Thackeray's picaresque novel, *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* exhibited for Kubrick a text through which he could express both his admiration for the visually inspiring painting, design and architecture of the 18th century, and, at the same time, depict the disintegration of the individual effectuated by an era enchanted by beauty. *Barry Lyndon* is the detailed portrayal of a gentlemanly rogue who travels the battlefields and parlors of 18th century Europe determined, in any way, to make a life for himself as a wealthy nobleman through seduction, gambling and dueling.

In the initial stage of the narrative Barry joins the British Army, fighting in the European theatre of the Seven Years' War from which he later deserts and is enlisted in the Prussian army, where he gets promoted to the rank of a spy. Later he becomes pupil to a Chevalier, an artist/gambler who teaches Barry how to lie, duel and seduce his way up the social latter. Barry's spectacular ascent concludes in a lustful, but loveless marriage to a wealthy countess named Lady Lyndon. Under his new name, Barry Lyndon, he settles in England with wealth and power beyond his wildest dreams, and then slowly falls into total ruin.

One of my main arguments is that Kubrick not only glorifies the new aesthetic, individual-centred sensibility of the Enlightenment era – crystallised in both its paintings, drawings and visual culture – but also criticises its superficial and dehumanizing social values and ideals and thus turns over the image, or rather pierces the surface of this image to peek into the machinery at work inside. On the most practical, methodological level Kubrick treats paintings as primary literature for the study of the period: "On Barry Lyndon I accumulated a very large picture file of drawings and paintings taken from art books. These pictures serves as reference for everything we needed to make – clothes, furniture, hard props, architecture, vehicles, etc… You have an important reason to study a subject in much greater detail than you would ever have done otherwise, and than you have the satisfaction of putting the knowledge to immediate good use." (Ciment 1983, 176)

Such practice of selection and application resulted in a visually highly saturated cinema, one which in terms of stylistic innovations depicts the events from a painter's point of view. The themes and artistic visions of the great 18th century portrait painters like Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds, George Romney and such landscape artists as Richard Wilson, George Morland and Thomas Girtin leave their mark on the overall visual style of the film. The static, symmetrical, well-weighted mise-en-scènes of the scenery, the stationary camera and the shots – in regard to both the angle and distance of framing – recall the verisimilitude of representing the natural environment as something inordinate and point towards the thematic interest of English Enlightenment painting with its emphasis on pathos, decorum and dignity. The non-involved, objective camera, as Jim Emerson has argued, portrays human beings as mere figures in the composition and does so from a critical distance, emphasising both their inability to act freely and their being overpowered by the painterly order. The family portraits reveal most clearly the dignity of the characters that becomes an allegoric pose of their inner condition, the rigidity of their subject position. The frequently reappearing zoom-outs function as the fundamental aesthetic algorithm and a distancing-effect, furthermore it becomes a metatextual signifier, as it models the very construction of mathematicised space, giving rise to the Renaissance perspective. The zoom shots, in my understanding, describe perspective as an act of tracing, an application of a ready-made experience of space. The zooming camera optically magnifies the portrayed object to contextualise it within its surrounding, giving the illusion of relating the fragmented within the universal. Similarly the painter also aims for a symbolic unity with nature. But in reality, the camera is static and through the reverse-zoom it reveals its real distance and actual non-involvement with the photographed object. The painter likewise does not fully identify with the full spectrum of sensorial stimuli generated by the landscape, but converts it according to the principles of his craft. The often reappearing zoom-out shot of the Lyndons' manor-house recalls the workings of the central perspective, the most orthodox of the Renaissance perspective, traditionally used to portray buildings. Even when the characters are positioned within natural landscapes – as in the scene depicting the family-picnic to the small lake within the borders of estate – the inner tenseness and pathos of the family members is camouflaged by their ceremonious and solemn appearance. The formalism dominating the visual style of the film must be further analysed to reveal its close ties with both the highly codified nature of class-mobility and a kind of genderless aristocracy.

The institutionalised, scientific understanding of representation concentrates on the structured and calculated nature of spatial relations. The perspective-paradigm disconnects the psychological dimensions of human perception and establishes a set of artistic, aesthetic and cultural codes that are still valid for today's apparatus-governed visual culture. The central perspective has been granted the position of being the correct, authentic means of reproducing physical, visually attainable reality; it has become a master signifier, posing both as a law, a means of control and a source of knowledge. In this sense it recalls Jacque Lacan's notion of the "Name of the Father". Under this quasi-patriarchal authority the self, or in visual terms, the picture-plane is no longer the spatial origin of unity, but that of alienation, its inherent formalism disables the portrayed objects to be themselves and consequently subordinates them under a codified system: it constructs the image as a pure surface that in truth identifies itself with the horizon of ideology rather than with a sensory subject.

The last shot of the film showing Barry climbing into a coach ends with a frozen-frame, creating a sense of infinite motionless, suggesting that the hero's failure is itself a kind of freezing, crystallising in time. The same forces of annihilation characterise the voice-over narration that always comments on Barry's actions in a negative way and foretells his doom well before its actual occurrence. As Michael Klein puts it, "the speaker is by no means definitive. Often

within a general orientation our sympathies momentarily shift from one character to another"
(Klein). The often ironic, sarcastic and wry commentaries and the information they render guide,
but at the same time manipulate the viewer's response to the images. The incommensurability
of the voice-over and the visual narrative, evident in his moral judgements which are not always
backed up by empirical proof, places the narrator in the position of an interpreter-commentator,
who no longer mediates, but constructs a narrative according to preformed intentions. Thus,
the mode of address characterising the voice-over runs parallel with that of the painter, both of
whom work up an algorithm, a framework that will regulate the construction of the subject
matter they present.

Taking into account how the paintings of the period turned toward both the realist portrayal
of everyday emotions and the elaboration of a righteous and honourable subject position on the
portraits, Barry's experience of fatherhood could be described by the clash of his longing for
intimacy and a rigid social regime, or as Hessling Willem calls it the "conflict between sponta-
neous, primary feelings and oppressive social conventions" (Hessling 2001, 271). Barry's overall
failure originates from his disability to live up to the *name of the father*, he cannot tame and accus-
tom his feelings into the socially accepted form. The only instances when his paternal authority
flings into action are the instructive spankings he gives to his step-son, Lord Bullingdon. Most
dramatic is the brutal beating during a concert that turns out to be a 'social suicide', the cause
of his future misfortunes. It is interesting to note the way this scene cracks open the calmness
and order of the image when Barry bursts with kinetic energy and discloses the energy behind
the surface. Ironically enough, the minute he takes up the agent of authority is the very moment
his hopes for a peerage and a 'proper identity' are disillusioned for good. The hybrid-fragmented
nature of his subject-position/image is likewise rendered by his two names: Redmond Barry (a
doomed Protestant in Catholic Ireland) and Barry Lyndon (first an opportunist, then an outcast
in aristocratic England). Barry not only lacks, but due to the death of both his father and son,
loses the links to both past and future; he is imprisoned by the frozen-frame in a dehumanised
presence, subordinated to the institutionalised forms of morality. The aristocratic circles Barry
longs to become a member of, just like framed portraits where the members of the aristocracy
see themselves eternalised are circles and frames of deceit, which isolate the subject from what
it is, by subordinating itself under the name and law of the father. Behind every immortalized
pose and dignified look there is the rigid and all-inspecting social order with its well-concealed
intolerance, just as beneath all of Barry's each effort to gain allies in the social sphere sends
waves of corrosion within his private sphere.

There is only one instance when Barry's experience of fatherhood and the painterly ideal of
family life are presented within one frame. We see Barry and Brian looking at a picture book, the
atmosphere is intimate, the characters are placed centre frame within a symmetrical composition.
Above them, the spectators see a beautifully ornamented, golden painting frame. A cut follows
and the next shot reveals the two figures in a top-weighted, asymmetrical composition, being
dwarfed by a colossal painting that portrays a family occasion in a true Hogarthian sense (*Mar-
riage-A-la-Mode* 1743, National Gallery, London). Kubrick does not use the zoom-out in this
scene, but the abrupt cut from a medium close-up to a long-shot, emphasising the dramatic shift
in rhythm and speed from an almost transcendental state of equilibrium to a disturbing dishar-
mony. The stark contrast is partly created by the puppet-like representation of the characters on
the painting, their artificial postures and presence overpowers father and son, dehumanise their
unity and foreshadows their ensuing fate. Brian will soon be lying on his death-bed and Barry,
swallowed up by the oedipal mechanism and peripheralised by an abnormal social morality shall
himself be fixed motionless on the canvas of monumental failures. William Hogarth and his bril-
liance as a satirist of moral follies deeply permeate Kubrick's vision of the period both in sub-

ject-matter (as in the theme of marriage for money, and the pungent details of upper-class life) and in his construction of the image, recalling Hogarth's mastery of complex scenes. The narrators' sardonic statement about the characters – "[In their death] They are all equal now" – may also be understood as a direct gesture toward Hogarthian satire and an acknowledgement of its ability to represent something that is always more than just the surface.

In the scene rendering the duel between Barry and his step-son, Lord Bullingdon, the setting, the photography and the dramaturgy reflect the close ties between the paradigm of the spectacle, the codified as well as socialised nature of duelling and Barry's tragedy encapsulated in his fatherhood. The agonisingly slow-paced scene takes place in an uncommon location, in the confined space of an abandoned chapel populated by doves. The most dominant perspective of the scene is a high-angle long, wide-angle establishing shot. This point of view that not only recalls the compositional paradigm of the central perspective, but functions as a master code of the special topography in a sense that it gives a reference point to the spectator in comprehending the spatial alterations taking place in the concluding shots. The "mathematics" of cinematography materialising in the medium-shot/close-up series, the shot-reverse shot sequences and the non-use of the moving camera give evidence of Kubrick's deep involvement of using the static spectacle as a commentary on the depicted events. Bullingdon inappeasable appetite for revenge makes him blind to Barry's gesture of firing his gun in the ground after the young man accidentally misfires his weapon. Barry's courtliness and Bullingdon's small-mindedness articulate the two characters in reversed roles, Barry tasting fatherly responsibility, Bullingdon tasting the oedipal scene, furthermore becoming the deliverer of aristocracy's final judgement on his stepfather. Both cross their own borders, the boy disregards his soberness and rationality in becoming a blood-thirsty animal, and Barry leaves his inappeasable temperament behind in pursuing self-discipline and reconciliation. Having decided not to shoot his step-son, Barry eliminates the codes of the duel, he steps out of the cover of the social order and becomes exposed: both a man freed from his past and feigned name, and one against the odds in a state of a fatherless fatherhood.

If *Barry Lyndon* speaks for Kubrick's conceptualism to use painting as both a narrative agent and a subject of the diegetic universe in order to guide the viewers' attention to the constructed nature of the visual field – a strategy Luis G. Marinar described as the autofocalising aspect of the film (Marinar 1999, 185–188) – *The Shining* proves that the cinematic image is a texture of multidimensional temporal relations. Likewise, if Barry's fate laid in his status of being a 'father without a name', the hero's ordeal in *The Shining* results from his being a 'father within the name'. The father is Jack Torrence; the name is The Overlook Hotel.

Based on Stephen King's novel by the same title, the film tells the story of Jack Torrance who gets the job of the caretaker of the Overlook Hotel closed for the winter, all through the period of which the Torrances will be the only occupants of the premises. During their stay strange things occur and Jack's son Danny – who has some clairvoyance and telepathy powers – discovers that the hotel is haunted by spirits that deter his father from writing his novel and slowly drive him crazy. When Jack meets the ghost of Dilbert Grady, the former custodian of the hotel who murdered his wife and two daughters, he suffers a complete mental breakdown and starts chasing his wife, Wendy, and son around the building with an axe. In a dramatic showdown, Wendy and Danny manage to escape from the premises alive while Jack freezes to death near the entrance of the hotel's hedge-maze.

The Shining is a modern Gothic tale of a family destined to face their innermost fears within the snowbound mountains of the Colorado Rockies. The site of their horrors, the Overlook, lies in a picturesque countryside surrounded by a pine forest, a hedge-maze and some high peaks. In the initial stage of the film Kubrick frames this scenery in an extreme long, high-angle, or

birds-eye shot, the preferred format for tourist postcards, making an indirect allusion to photography – the primary means of visual-literacy for the modern subject. In addition, the hotel is presented with emphasis on its attractiveness, elegance, suggesting a rhetoric strategy characterising marketing. The idealised expectations are soon to be dissatisfied and a more direct allusion to photography will follow. In *The Shining*, Kubrick enters the photographic-universe, or rather pushes further on the road that was called into being by the central perspective in painting, only now the apparatus (recalling the governing principle of the camera obscura) fathers a totally programmed and controlled universe. Critics such as Otto Stelzer[0] call attention to the perfection of the principles of geometrical space-consciousness, in that the photographic apparatus totally disconnects human perception and is capable of creating perfectly quantitative, mathematicised space (Stelzer 1997, 20–1). On the same topic, Vilém Flusser argues the photographic universe within its own borders is all-knowing and all-powerful, it totally peripheralises and corrects what in the Rennesaince perspective was noise, an infiltration of natural, human perception. Its automatism – a new factor in pictorial representation – transforms the world in the photographic image into a tapestry instead of a map (Flusser 1990, 9). Another crucial characteristic of the photograph is its handling of time.

Kubrick constructs his narrative along these lines and describes modern life as one totally inhibited by automatons and apparatuses that inflict their own rigid mechanisms on the individual. In the following I shall concentrate on one layer of this process of appropriation, namely the correspondences between the photographic and the psychic automata. As soon as the action moves into the hotel, the characters, likewise the spectators find themselves within huge halls, with furniture placed in perfectly geometrical shapes and furthermore within walls jammed with photographs. The black and white photos detail the long history of the place, recalling memorable events, grandiose parties and balls, and at the same time release dark memories and hidden traumas. The almost inhuman immensity of the premises with its agoraphobic halls, lounges and endless corridors consumes its dwellers and plays an important role in their incapability to turn it into a home, a shelter. The army of photographs hanging everywhere also heighten this alienating character, they signify a past totally indefinite, or as Thomas Nelson argues a past lost, but not forgotten. (Nelson 1982, 230–1) The feeling of estrangement is sensible and instead of a home the building turns into a museum, or rather a photo gallery. The concept of the home is emptied; it signifies a place that is no longer possessed only rented, where one cannot be oneself, only a caretaker, one's shadow, or ghost. Television, representing the electronic apparatus of the new visual age also gains interest in the narrative and its presence further refines the themes of alienation. The numerous scenes of the Torrances watching TV-shows and news broadcasts in the earliest version of the film emphasised the social loneliness and 'cultural claustrophobia' of the TV-viewer, who although pretends to occupy a private space, s/he is somewhere else, present only from a distance. It is however not the shining screen of the TV set that helps Jack and Danny discover an underlying reality of the image.

The phenomenon of the 'shining' is a kind of paranormal quality enabling certain people to communicate from a distance and enliven unexplainable psychic experiences. To shine is to be mediated, taken somewhere else, to be represented within another sensibility. Likewise to shine is to enter the wicked temporality of the new medium. The photograph as the product of the apparatus-memory re-presents and enlivens a past that cannot be possessed, it nevertheless disables forgetting, and it is an agent against amnesia. The act of making a photograph covers all three temporal planes of consciousness. A photograph captures a present, a momentary stop-

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[0]   Stelzer connects the invention of the photographic technique to a specific paradigm of consciousness, according to which the representational schema of optical reality is the central perspective.

page of time, which in the very next moment is already a past and does so to inform a future moment, or more precisely, to pre-determine a future moment when it will be apprehended as past. The photographic image thus works as a kind of time-machine, generating a flux of past, present and future. What Jack and Danny experience, through their ability to shine, is the deterritorialisation of objective-linear time and the construction of a temporal maze, with multiple enter and exit points, the topographic survey of subjectless subjectivity. The bondage between father and son is less an emotional tie, but the unity generated on this shared knowledge. Both of them sink down to an unknown reality, signified by the photographs on the walls and simultaneously experience the psychologically mediated stratification of the temporal plane. Jack enters the zone of hallucination and desire-fulfilment when he encounters the bartender, Grady (the former caretaker) and later the beautiful young girl in room 237. Danny, on the other hand, encounters his nightmares taking shape in his confrontation with the murdered Grady girls and in the visions of the bath of blood pouring out from the lift. Father and son both enter the image but they see two different realities. Jack – resembling the essence of existence within the photographic universe – is an automatism, his life gains meaning in the function of his illusions and daydreams, his ghostly friends stand between him and reality. Jack, who in the present is surrounded by an air of disaffection on the part of his family, is embedded in a kind of 'pastness', that is, he hopes to regain fatherhood, responsibility and tenderness in the past. His presence is a form of craving for the past, where he hopes to ease the trauma of having hurt Danny once, nevertheless his craving pushes him towards the very repetition of that confrontation. His fragmented, paranoid self is articulated in his overlooking the present, the presence of his son, the only one to comprehend the human strata of the hotel – this giant thinking automaton. Jack fails to recognize that the remorse bursting him is a shared one and can only be resolved with Danny: in the course of the self-healing opened up by the child in the father.

We have earlier hinted at the prospect to understand the hotel as a massive photograph, an imprint of thought expanding over different temporal planes. Whereas Jack's experiences of temporal existence is brought about by the disintegration of his identity and lacking of freedom (and in this sense allows the hotel to think for himself), Danny comes into contact – through the hotel's monstrous temporality – with the reality of unlocalizable relations, virtual linkages and arbitrary connections. This is the reality of transformations, the constant production of continuity between unrelated existences and forces. While the hotel hypnotizes and governs Jack, the child Danny lives a life of psycho-topological mapping, experiencing the world around him both a hostile flux, a fuzzy aggregate and a source of self-knowledge. Danny's exploration of the psycho-social territories is also a symbolical quest for the father who does not only represent order and authority, but would take part in the journeying this strangeness. The scenes showing the boy riding his bicycle along the endless corridors of the hotel reveal both his mapping reality and his loneliness in achieving it.

In his hallucinations/visions, Danny also enters the photographic universe which he reads as one reads a map or deciphers an enigma. At the bottom of the photographic universe he does not find eternal being, as his father does, but sees man as one dispossessed of its voyages, deprived of time. For this reason, the boy's visions are more alarming than his father's; Danny understands the past as a sign of danger, a prophecy according to which the future will imitate the past and a murder will take place. It is this mirroring-effect that is manifested in the word he writes on the door: 'Redrum', which read from the mirror will give 'murdeR'. As fatherhood seems more and more unattainable, Jack becomes as desperate as ever. In one of the rare instances when father and son have a bona fide conversation Danny verbalises his fears and distrust towards the hotel. He also enquires his father whether he wants them to stay. Jack's answer is definite: "I want to stay here forever and ever and ever". These are the exact words the Grady

girls have said to Danny, who realises right away that his father has been irrevocably seized by the hotel and that there is no return from his obsession. This scene ends with the two characters sitting on a bed, Jack embracing Danny, yet the whole tone provides us with the antithesis of what the mise-en-scène suggests – a snapshot of a happy and intimate family life, of a loving father and son.

After this scene the narrative, or rather the 'time-travel' speeds up and rushes headlong towards its dramatic outcome. Jack gradually comes to identify Danny as an obstacle to his plans, an obstacle that must be removed, taken care of. Danny, on the hand, considers his father a hunter who must be defeated at his own game. He escapes into the spatiality of the presence instead of the temporality of the past, leaves the building behind and starts to explore the exteriors of the hotel. He takes long walks in the huge hedge-maze with his mother and gets to know every inch of the labyrinth. Meanwhile, Jack remains almost motionless in front of his typewriter, working on his manuscript (a testimony of disintegrating authorship) and falls ever deeper into the temporal labyrinth. It is important to note that in the beginning of the scene when Wendy discovers the manuscript and their confrontation gets physical, Jack approaches her from behind the wall decorated by photos as if he was directly stepping out from the past. His almost total identification with the photographic reality nevertheless foreshadows his fate, a kind of "photographic death". Jean A Keim has argued that photography is the symbol of death in that the apparatus captures the moment for eternity. Jack is also rewarded with eternity in the double sense, in two distinct, yet related symbolic fields. After his failure to axe down Danny and Wendy in the hotel (his real scope of authority) he is forced to follow his son into the maze, where being a total stranger soon losses sight of him and in the frosty winter night freezes to death. As dawn sets in he kneels at the gate of the maze as a timeless statue, a symbolic monument of a deadly obsession. The audience – still mesmerized by this motionless figure fixed within its surrounding as if an image on the film stock – enters the hotel once again accompanied by a slow forward dolly and some tranquillising musical tones. The camera approaches a photo and we see Jack in the centre of a gay and elegant company of men and women. The camera tilts down and reads: Overlook Hotel, July 4th Ball, 1921. This is Jack final reward, gaining an eternal existence within a photographic universe, becoming part of the hotel's history, a history that deprives him of both a son and fatherhood. The history that seizes Jack is constituted upon a lack that nevertheless poses as a substitute for life, pretends that it is life. As such it recalls a model of reality that is occupied and corrupted by the limited freedom of the apparatus.

I have tried to follow a line of interpretation that takes us into the core of cinematic conceptualism in describing intensities which are common in the painting-photo representational matrix and the gender-related concept of fatherhood. The constructed nature of space in the Renaissance perspective and the temporal structure of the photograph are handled in *Barry Lyndon* and *The Shining* as identity-models, models that reflect the regulatory mechanisms overpowering the characters of the films and eventually turn the father-child relationship into a power-struggle. In the first film, it is a threatening superego in the shape of a rigid social order, in the second, an awakening unconscious that proclaims dominancy over fatherhood and empties it. Either way, Kubrick's cinematic topography sets out to link cinematic representation to its own prehistory (conveyed by painting and photography), and in addition, to decipher one of the most unnoticed fields of the iconography of gender, the fold that creates links between the images of fatherhood and the fathering of images.

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Andrea Virginás

POST(MODERNISM): NOIR TRACES IN 1990ˢ CRIME MOVIES*

PREFATORY NOTE

The paper is based on the idea that the process of paradigmatic change from modernism to postmodernism- taking for granted that such a change had indeed taken place – can be better understood if we pay attention to how the movies we categorize as "postmodern" actually construct this label themselves by generating signs and effects that can be considered "modern". One of the m ajor strategies for creating a sense of "modernism" in the movies currently chosen for analyisis[1] is the re-creation (and transcendence) of the typical visual and narrative conventions of the the American film noir genre. This one can be identified as modernist both on the basis of temporal indices – the noir cycle of Hollywood crime films was produced between 1941–1952 – and poetic principles, a constellation that allows for the equation of noir "allusions" in the movies mentioned with traces of modernism.

The women of classical noir movies are considered to embody the "essence" of the vamp and – when visualizing femme fatale figures – film histories more often than not present photographs of heroines in classical noirs. Because of this feature a huge emphasis falls on what sort of men are the heroes, the detectives in these movies, and their differences from traditional, heterosexual, macho masculinity also acquire importance. That gender-sensitive criticism has been flourishing with reference to the noir genre is no surprise[2].

In the below critical analysis I pay attention to how masculinity and femininity – understood as iconographic screen constructions based mostly on clothing and hairstyle[3] – are represented and valued in the mentioned 1990s neo-noir movies, as compared to the archetypal source of the noir genre, *The Maltese Falcon,* directed by John Huston in 1941. By this I offer a demonstration of my main argument: that of modernism being re-created within the confines of postmodernism, and of the inter-relatedness of these two paradigms – at least with reference to genre movies.

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[1]   I consider the following movies in this paper: *A Pure Formality* (1994, dir. Giuseppe Tornatore), *Fight Club* (1998, dir. David Fincher), *Memento* (2000, dir. Christopher Nolan), and *Mullholland Drive* (2000, dir. David Lynch).

[2]   Rick Altman in the Hungarian translation of the *Oxford Filmenciklopédia* mentions the genre as having been created by film critics instead of producers or the audience, a rare case in genre film history in Novell-Smith ed. 284–285.

[3]   It is the framework created by Stella Bruzzi in her valuable *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* that I follow: "My fundamental premise [is], that clothing exists as a discourse not wholly dependent on the structures of narrative and character for signification (...)", xvi.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT FILM NOIR

Film noir is a widely researched sub-genre within cinema thrillers based on detection and episte-mological and/or identity mysteries. A historical as well as a stylistic formation, it condenses many of the characteristics of cinematic modernism[4]. The classical film noir canon is constituted of forty/fifty low-budget productions of Hollywood studios, B-movies made between 1941–1952,[5] movies that owe much to European cinematic traditions like German Expressionism, an important modernist/avantgarde artistic current. European expatriate directors, for example Edward Dmytryk, Fritz Lang, Robert Siodmak and Billy Wilder directed many film noirs, not to speak about the contributing art-directors or camera-operators with a European film background. The canonization of this crime cycle began with the attention of 1940–50s French film critics, who "used the phrase to refer to a new wave of cynical and stylized American movies that appeared across several genres, including caper films, detective films, gangster films and thrillers" (Blanford et al., 97–8).

The common narrative pattern of the film noir involves as major characters an alienated hero, who is usually a private detective living on the edge of the law, and a femme fatale. There is also a network of minor characters, who nonetheless play a prominent role and most of whom are morally ambivalent and somehow interrelated (cf. Buckland, 91–100). Two other important features of film noir, complicated narratives and the foregrounding of a narrator, which results in the dazzling use of voice-overs and flashbacks, also contributed to the generic arsenal. The highly subjective, unreliable, constantly modified, many-perspective film narrative is usually told by the male characters while on a visual level it is the women who dominate the pictures.

Besides these narrative and thematic ingredients, classical film noir examples also exhibited a specific visual style, not unrelated to their being low budget movies filmed on black-white film and in settings easily produced. These were 1940/50s American urban settings or claustrophobic interiors, where lighting, shades and the composition or constellation of the objects present gained a high importance. In the formulation of two film critics

> [a]bove all it is the constant opposition of areas of light and dark that characterizes film noir cinematography. Small areas of light seem on the verge of being completely overwhelmed by the darkness that threatens them from all sides. Thus faces are shot low-key, interior sets are always dark, with foreboding shadow patterns lacing the walls, and exteriors that are shot "night-for-night (Place-Peterson, 330).

This is an influence of German Expressionist cinema, and the gesture was interpreted by Frank Krutnik as a conscious effort to raise the status of noir thrillers, already differentiated by their self-reflexive relationship with 1930s gangster and caper films or horror movies (21–2). Many commentators see these methods as contributing to the sensual beauty and independence of the women in film noirs, as well as conveying the powerlessness and lack of control on the part of the male characters. As summarized by Janey Place: the women "are overwhelmingly the compositional focus, generally centre frame and/or in the foreground, or pulling focus to them in the background. They control camera movement […]" (45).

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[4]   Actually cinema as a technology of reproduction is so inherently linked to modernity as a historical/social period, that one might wonder whether the expression "cinematic modernism" is not a tautology in itself.

[5]   Films like *The Maltese Falcon* (1941, dir. John Huston), *Double Indemnity* (1944, dir. Billy Wilder), *Mildred Pierce* (1945, dir. Michael Curtiz), *The Big Sleep* (1946, dir. Howard Hawks), *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947, dir. Orson Welles), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950, dir. Billy Wilder).

All these characteristics are essential factors in building a thematic universe where misunderstandings, mysteries and problematic solutions prevail, despite the fact that the film noir is a detection-centered genre. The tension between the quest and its elusive fulfillment results in fragile power/knowledge relations, not least in terms of gender identities.

CHANGING ICONOGRAPHIES

Classical Hollywood crime genres – and particularly film noir – are renowned for their strong visual style. These conventions – concerning the environment, the setting, but also the look, the dress and space for movement of the heroes – are typical and formalized, deeply related to the gender and sexual orientation of the noir characters. Three relevant gender and icon categories can be easily established and analyzed from *The Maltese Falcon* (1941, dir. John Huston) on to the late 1990s *A Pure Formality, Fight Club, Memento* and *Mullholland Drive*: women, men, and un/questioned heterosexual bonding possibilities.

The Girls

What can we observe regarding women and actresses appearing in modernist, classical film noirs and in postmodernist neo-noirs respectively? If we think of classical noirs, like *The Maltese Falcon, Mildred Peirce* (1945, dir. Michael Curtiz) or *Laura* (1944, dir. Otto Preminger), what strikes one immediately is the variety of female types. Very different role possibilities, requiring various iconographic representations, were open for actresses in these films. In *The Maltese Falcon* we have Sam Spade, the private detective – played by Humphrey Bogart – flirting with his "good girl, but hard on men"-type secretary, Effie, with the sad and troubling wife of his detective-partner, Iva, and naturally with the mysterious, corrupt vamp, Brigid O'Shaughnessy (Mary Astor's performance). With small alterations, we find this female triptych in Curtiz' well-known melodramatic noir, *Mildred Pierce*: a sad, troubled mother (Joan Crawford's Oscar-winning performance), her sharp-tongued associate and her rotten daughter, Veda.

If we take a look at the late 1990s neo-noir examples, it is striking how the female role possibilities have considerably diminished and altered. In *Fight Club*, Marla Singer is the only woman who makes appearance and has anything to do with the male heroes. She is a versatile figure, but, since her versatility and shape-shifting is a result of a lack of identity rather than a will to play roles and deceive the male figures, she can be considered as an ironic variant, a caricature of the determined, cunning women in classical noir movies. Marla is a vamp, a hysterical liar, a cheap prostitute, a futuristic person, and this multiplicity bars the possibility for any iconic power in her case, this being powerfully conditioned by the display of constant, repeatable features. The Marla Singer-character exposes the blind spot of the mechanism of constructing memorable femme fatales by blurring the features of this sole female figure – who, by the way, should relate to men confessing rather openly the existence and necessity of homosociality[6]. Given her undefined look and much-too-close male companions, no wonder that Marla's "generic duty" of impersonating a femme fatale is doomed to failure by definition.

There is only one woman to whom Leonard Shelby, the detecting hero in *Memento*, relates, because his murdered wife and the clever, but cruel waitress, Natalie, played by Carrie-Ann

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[6]   A question I deal with on the following pages.

Moss, might be equated[7]. The trick Natalie plays on the detecting hero equals the lies Brigid tells Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*, but Natalie is not punished for her deeds as Brigid is. While Brigid/Mary Astor has the narrative and iconic possibility for negative excellence – the closing sequence with her tragic face covered with shadow-bars is a most memorable one – Natalie/ Carrie-Ann Moss is an evasive presence. Both women literally exploit the weakness of the detecting hero, but the differences between them appear clearly when comparing their iconic images.

Designer line and high fashion were the contexts created by the iconic women characters in classical noirs. Hats, robes, furs, flowers and pompous home-clothing, meticulously created hairstyles characterize Mary Astor as Brigid O'Shaughnessy or Joan Crawford as Mildred Pierce. Even the lesser female roles, or rather the actresses who interpret them, exhibit a careful clothing and hairstyle. Classical noir women have elegant, slender bodies and movements, stilettos are never missing accessories. In comparison, women in late 1990s crime movies reworking the noir tradition have undergone major changes, even bigger than their male counterparts. Natalie in *Memento* is played by Carrie-Ann Moss, an actress who has since then become a major icon of the *Matrix* universe: an androgynous woman, with a perfect body and wearing a black leather outfit. In Christopher Nolan's film, she appears dressed in the simplest possible manner: wearing a blue sleeveless shirt, a short, girlish skirt and with an everyday, street-hairstyle. The only element that draws our attention to the way she looks and thus is reminiscent of the classical heroines in noir detection movies is her jewelry: earrings and necklace of turquoise color. However, thanks to its color, Natalie's jewelry gradually blends with the overall blue ("color of memory") of the film, losing its status as a clear reference to the icon of the beautiful but dangerous woman in noir crime movies. A similar homogenizing strategy is discernible in the iconic construction of the blonde heroine, Betty, in *Mullholland Drive*: with her everyday, functional clothing she (the actress Naomi Watts) is not unlike most viewers watching her on the screen.

Compared to Natalie, the sole female character in *Fight Club* is even lower on the scale ranging from exquisite beauty and noir elegance on to ridiculous, cheap taste or even kitsch clothing. Although this stylistic register is not unknown in the noir world – see for example Joel Cairo, played by Peter Lorre in *The Maltese Falcon* –, it is never attributed to the woman "belonging" to the questing hero. Marla Singer (played by Helena Bonham-Carter), Durden's disillusioned female variant, is ridiculed in countless ways, although her efforts to reach the "very bottom" of acceptable life (excessive smoking, cynicism, extreme poverty, and attempts of suicide) are recognized as an "invariable quality" in a world constantly in change. She differs so much in her looks, motivations and even language from both male figures that it is as if she were the member of a totally alien civilization, with whom the sole common ground might be established while making love. The extremely weird, distasteful, slightly gloomy look situates her as a fallen, but not a fascinating woman.

While Natalie in *Memento* or Betty in *Mullholland Drive* narrows the noir glamour towards a down-to-earth stylistic register, Marla Singer in *Fight Club* approaches the "vanishing point" of memorable noir femininity – due to the "void identity" on which her performances rest. Thus, on the evidence of these films, from important, differentiated screen-identities women throughout the noir tradition become marginal, negative or featureless (exactly because they have so many "features", like Marla Singer) characters.

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[7]   In a sequence the detecting hero, Leonard Shelby is shown dreaming about his wife and when he awakes, the woman who lies besides him turns out to be Natalie, the waitress.

Tough counterparts

Parallel to this tendency, male role possibilities – from a dominating detective figure and several shadowy characters in *The Maltese Falcon,* the archetypal source for the noir genre – in the contemporary crime movies under examination evolve into a dual structure, with two equally important men participating in the process of quest. From unsure, easily deceived persons, men can be seen to become shrewder, and multiply in their number – seemingly a counterbalance for women's non-presence. In a sense, this is a return to an earlier period of the crime and detective genre, with Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson detecting together. We can think of Leonard Shelby (Guy Pearce) and Teddy (Joe Pantoliano) in *Memento,* or Tyler Durden (Edward Norton) and his alter ego (Brad Pitt) in *Fight Club.*

Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor perform perhaps their best-known duet in John Huston's cult film. By the time of *The Maltese Falcon* both had an established screen-persona – Bogart in cynical, smaller gangster roles and even comedies, Mary Astor as a comedienne, but also as an actress with considerable sex appeal, as Molly Haskell writes in her *From Reverence to Rape*[8]. In this movie they both recall, but also deviate from the 1930s Hollywood gangster and crime movie tradition – an aim to be performed by each and every screen criminal or pursuer according to Stella Bruzzi (68). Bogart in his suit, hat, trenchcoat, cigarette outfit is the stereotypical detective – while the gun is not an integral component of his look. Instead, he is the one who disarms characters, from crooks to policemen.

In comparison to Bogart as Sam Spade the detecting figure played by Guy Pearce in *Memento* does wear a suit and an assorted shirt, but he does not have a tie or a hat, and no trenchcoat either. He does not smoke, but he carries and uses a gun or different items suitable for fighting. The same iconic arrangement characterizes the naďve, entrapped film-director – the equivalent of Cary Grant in *North by Northwest* (1959, dir. Alfred Hitchcock)– Adam Kesher (Justin Theroux) in *Mullholland Drive:* designer suit, shirt and boots, golf-stick, expensive car, but no cigarette, trenchcoat, hat or tie[9]. A narrative about the revolt of a young corporate worker against Capitalism, *Fight Club* uses all these iconic elements of the crime, gangster and noir genre in a slightly altered sense. By throwing away his tie and lighting a cigarette, as well as repudiating his designer suit – an enslaving capitalist product –, Tyler Durden/Edward Norton thinks he is breaking free from his world previously determined by Versace or Calvin Klein, the well-known, stylish brands.

In the changes concerning the look of male detecting heroes we can observe the alterations of fashion: hats, ties or trenchcoats are clearly outdated, thus important and simple elements by which an atmosphere of mystery or simply shadows could be created, are lost. In consequence, the face and eyes of actors – as surfaces that create mystery – receive stronger emphasis. Suits deviate more from the ideal of neutral respectability: this process can be best illustrated by the two personalities Leonard Shelby has in *Memento.* As a respectable insurance agent, in the black and white parts of the movie, Shelby's suit, shirt and tie, or his hairstyle distantly remind one of the pin-up screen-Bogart in the role of Sam Spade. But when Shelby metamorphoses into a detecting hero, the features he loses are precisely those that made him similar to a classical detective: the well tailored suit and the respectable square look. The new,

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[8]   Cf. Haskell 189–230.

[9]   Although it is questionable whether Adam Kesher has any semblance to classical noir male detectives, his role as a film-director dominated by an evil film-producing corporation not repelling any means to make the director obey them is similar to many detecting men confronting a faceless power. And since he is the only male lead in a mystery story recalling noir elements, his iconic construction is important by all means, all the more so as it is comparable to the masculine figures in the other examined movies.

more relaxed, light-coloured – or in the case of Adam Kesher, disturbingly black – suit, the lack of cigarette and hat, and certainly the trendy car are the iconic elements that define our 1990s neo-noir detecting male heroes.

While in the case of male lead characters the iconic repertoire is changed, but nevertheless complete (car, car-mirror, car-window instead of cigarette and hat), in recent noir movies female figures are deprived of the traditional elegance, and instead are conferred a look of everyday (bad)taste, without any positive iconic power.

The third way

The only movie analyzed that defies my categorization is *Mullholland Drive*, where women not only appear in a great variety, but they also bond in manner just latently coded in classical noir crime movies. The lesbian love relation thematized on all the narrative levels exemplifies the third tendency in the gender representations within the noir and the neo-noir tradition: the emergence of queer possibilities.

In *The Maltese Falcon* it is the character of Joel Cairo played by Peter Lorre who allows for a queered reading due to its meticulous dressing, fragility and much too-nice manners. While it is true that this is another instance of the "criminalization" of non-heterosexual behaviour in crime movies, Cairo being a member of the criminal gang, we must also observe that no one in *The Maltese Falcon* is devoid of the "touch of evil": Sam Spade, the detective is as much involved in shadowy matters as the two slow policemen. In Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce* the relationship between Mildred, the successful businesswoman and her unmarried secretary does not exclude a lesbian subtext, but there are no explicit signs of it, except long glances through the cigarette smoke.

It is in this generic tradition that the narrative and visual construction of the main heroines in *Mullholland Drive* acquires a special status. Rita, the mysterious femme fatale and Betty, the naïve blonde actress fall in love and their erotic scenes are among the most daring ones we could see in recent crime movies using the noir tradition and meant for a mainstream audience. It is hard not to see in their couple – especially in the light of the sequence when Rita "chooses" her name – a logical outcome of the process along which non-heterosexual gendered behaviour was hinted at in the cycle of classical noir movies, but never explicitly thematized. And this in spite of the fact that the genre was deeply immersed in examining "proper", "suitable" gendered reactions.

Homosexual bonding is also suggested to the informed viewer in *Memento*, by such iconic elements of a simplified homosexual code-system as tattoos, elegance, or naked male bodies. Not to speak about the "intertextual queerness" established by Guy Pearce's memorable previous role as a drag queen in the Australian movie, *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994, dir. Stephan Elliott)... Nevertheless, as in *Fight Club,* homosexuality still remains an implied meaning, although in David Fincher's movie the re-definition of phallic masculinity with the exclusion of women and female features is mentioned. "We're a generation of men raised by women. I'm wondering if another woman is really the answer we need", says the imagined Tyler in the movie, uncannily echoing Jessica Benjamin's late 1980s theoretical model of male psychosexual development, a model inspired by Freudian theory.

Benjamin's argument, based on object-relation theory, points to the "hardships" of forming a viable masculine subjectivity: "[i]nitially all infants feel themselves to be like their mothers. But boys discover that they cannot grow up to become her; they can only have her" (75). She understands masculine identity as a secondary phenomenon, resulting from overcoming the primary identification with the mother. That is why, she says, it is extremely hard for boys to distinguish between becoming a separate person and becoming a masculine person, thus in this process of disidentification the mother is often not seen as another subject to be recognized, but an object.

One might argue that this type of masculine attitude may be considered as a constant "cultural code" attached to the film noir genre. Late 1990s films stretch it to the extreme by negating the traditional glamour of noir women and by putting more emphasis on the "masculine" matters, such as aggression, mental work, beautiful lesbian bodies, or the need for homosociality[10].

NOIR TRACES

In *Mullholland Drive,* we encounter a most memorable filmic site where a still-image becomes the store of personal memory and identity, parallel with the evocation of a film noir universe. In the opening sequences, the character played by Laura Elena Harring appears as a glamorous woman wearing a black evening dress, who is the victim of a terrible car-accident. Losing her consciousness and memory, she finds refuge in a beautiful villa, the house of a rich Hollywood actress. Surprised in the bathroom by Betty, the missing actress's niece from the province, naked and bewildered, the mysterious woman cannot tell her name to Betty. While drying herself, she sees from the mirror (a metaphor of fractured identity) a poster of one of the most famous noir crime movies, *Gilda* (1942, dir. Charles Vidor), starring Rita Hayworth, the poster presenting the well-known, almost iconographic portrait of the actress-as-Gilda, the duplicitous femme fatale. In desperation, she introduces herself as Rita.

On the level of the narration, this is a perfectly motivated element: where else should one see a movie heroine's image if not in an actress's house? The Lynch heroine borrows from the fascinating blonde star of classical 1940s crime Hollywood her name, and also the iconic radiance and role-trajectory of Gilda/Rita Hayworth. The collisions of movie poster and movie narrative, of mirroring a genre and adhering to it, are strongly self-reflexive moments in *Mullholland Drive,* an attitude "repeated" by the amnesiac heroine when she decides to call herself Rita (Hayworth) from now on. The much acclaimed, historical star persona of the Spanish-origin actress reverberates in the movie *Gilda* where she plays the part of a singer-dancer-performer, and the problems of being an actress (in Hollywood) constitute the nodal points in the multiple narrative spaces of *Mullholland Drive* as well. The regain of her psychic integrity is accompanied by unconscious moments of remembering Spanish sentences for Rita in *Mullholland Drive:* this feature is conditioned by the pre-image of her screen persona, the 1940s Hollywood-star who until 1937 wore the name Margarita Cansino and adopted "Rita Hayworth" after that year. A moment of tribute to the noir tradition by David Lynch, the sequence is a plausible illustration of how noir iconography lives on: by the conscious re-appropriation of successors.

The moment of adopting Rita's name is the emphatic point of the process that involves film noir generic allusions and film history as a meta-context of interpretation[11], and can be considered a performance of the turn from modernist crime film poetics and gendered identity to a postmodernist phase. A fragmented narrative structure, with objects, names and actors serving as linking elements instead of causal or logical relations – which, no matter how complicated the story, still prevail in classical noirs – characterizes the movie of David Lynch. And even if her heroine seems to be modeled after the heterosexual beauty on show for the male gaze, a role she is playing for the director Adam Kesher, Rita, as a woman in *Mullholland Drive,* is primarily de-

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[10]   This type of masculine behaviour is to be detected in crime thrillers such as *Heat* (1995, dir. Michael Mann) or the *Hannibal*-trilogy as well.

[11]   Just to mention a few: Sunset Boulevard (a reference name/street for the heroines in search) is also the title of Billy Wilder's melodramatic noir (1952) starring Gloria Swanson as the old and nostalgic actress; Dolores del Rio (the singer in the Club Silencio) was an acclaimed musical-actress of the 1930s Hollywood.

fined by being in love with a blonde actress. Betty Elms, the novice from Ontario – or Diane Selwyn, the second-rate Hollywood "worker" – occupies the position of Sam Spade/ Humphrey Bogart or Philip Marlowe/Robert Mitchum in the classical noir gender-matrix. Entering in the middle of a mysterious affair, s/he begins to investigate and falls in love with her object of research, whom she must (try to) kill, in a manner not too different from Sam Spade – who promises Brigid O'Shaughnessy in *The Maltese Falcon* that "her precious neck" will have to suffer. Far from being simple inversions, these changes recall and re-interpret the modernist canon of filmed crime, engendering a fictional world that is as much dependent on noir narrative formulas and cultural codes (such as patriarchal and heterosexual gendered behaviour) as it is trying to leave them behind.

This practice is echoed in a sequence of Giuseppe Tornatore's filmed metaphysical detective story, *A Pure Formality*: the hero searching for the memory of his own suicide looks at a huge mass of photographs, all supposedly having been taken by him when he was still alive. Among amateur shots of holidays and friends, a photo of Humphrey Bogart (black suit, slicked hair, mysterious aura) appears, without any functional role in the narrative of the hero's search for his own memory. A *noir* crime context having been previously created by alluding to Bogart ("Exact time is to be told by Humphrey Bogart as well?" the arrested writer asks his guards), and by employing some utterly stylized noir visual solutions, this photographic moment is similar in its construction and effect to the discussed sequence in *Mullholland Drive*.

In Tornatore's movie the noir conventions re-appear in a totally masculine universe: in a sense, here we see the other extreme of the balanced patriarchal and heterosexual crime story. The hero in search for his memory is a writer in mid-life and creativity crisis, the police officer leading the quest being a self-assured detective in love with literature. As if gendered identity did not matter, the two men (and the male guards on duty) conduct endless discussions about highly intellectual topics: novels, narrative structures, or the workings of memory. No hints of non-heterosexual bonding either, *A Pure Formality* speaks about questions of gender by this utter lack of questions of gender. In this context, the name and photo of Humphrey Bogart are the cultural codes for a masculine identity that – despite the obvious problems occurring already in classical noirs – is still more functional than that of Onoff's, the writer, can.ever be. As for the police officer (played by) Roman Polanski, he is no copycat of Sam Spade: he does not smoke and by the end of the movie we have the strong impression that he is a quotation from one of the writer's books.

The mechanism of both sequences can be described from a film stylistical perspective if we refer back to Noel Carroll's discussion of the use of genres as symbols. Writing about Paul Scharder's 1978 movie, *Blue Collar*, Carroll mentions that "the images grow ominously dark while the story still seems comic and high-spirited. *Blue Collar* starts to look like a *film noir* (...) before the tension in the plot begins to build. But you feel the allusion strongly, and, sure enough, as time goes on, the stylistic reference turns out to have a premonition of things to come" (69). The mode the noir atmosphere and style invade Peter Schrader's film can be said to be typical in the light of the techniques of allusion identified above in *A Pure Formality* or *Mullholland Drive* as well. Forcing one to employ strategies of understanding conditioned by genre film history, both movies recall elements belonging to a previous paradigm and present their story by strongly relying on the viewers being familiar with noir gen(d)eric identities. Such examples can be understood as being results of the turn from modernism to postmodernism having happened – at least in crime genres.

CODA

Given the attention paid to "gender problems" in classical film noirs, its constant re-cycling from Roman Polanski's 1974 *Chinatown* to David Lynch's 2000 *Mullholland Drive* should be also considered in the wider context created by feminism and queer identity movements and the social changes in the gender roles over the last few decades. As a matter of fact, Jane Place sees as symptomatic the interest in and popularity of these films as "narratives in which male fears are concretised in sexually aggressive women who must be destroyed" (54). And in dangerously close men-to-men or women-to-women relationships, it might be added. I would argue therefore that the film noir's origin as a modernist popular genre (also) dramatizing (post) World War II anxieties about changing gender relations is closely related to its patterns of reappearance in a postmodern context. Film noir allusions can be seen as constituting a metafilmic signifier in postmodern crime films, a signifier capable of highlighting elements of crime modernism for the sake of transcending them, but also emphasizing the thematic of changing gendered behaviour, of non-patriarchal or non-heterosexual, "ambivalent" sexual and gender conducts[12].

Unearthing, undressing the mechanism of media and modes of representation widely used earlier and gradually losing some of their importance with the passing of time might be compared to the phenomenon identified by Ingeborg Hoesterey in postmodern(ist) art practices. She writes that "[t]he gesture of exhibiting, of foregrounding the structures of mediation of older art to viewers of a different mentality and cultural makeup, is typical for most enterprises of the postmodern sensibility" (29). This visible "archeology" allows for what I call a "freezing" of previous/modernist features within the analyzed body of written or filmed texts that consider or offer themselves as postmodern.

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[12] A phenomenon to be observed in other films: *The Crying Game* (1992, dir. Neil Jordan), *Pulp Fiction* (1994, dir. Quentin Tarantino), *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001, dir. Joel and Ethan Coen).

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