

Kick

KICK
Journal of the English Student's Association "Glotta"



Publisher
University of Osijek
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Publisher address
Lorenza Jägera 9
31000 Osijek

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ISSN

2623-9558
Br. 4, 2024.

Printed by

Krešendo, Osijek

Printing run

100 copies

The journal is published once a year.
The journal uses double-blind review
The journal was published with the support of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek.

Contents

FOREWORD..... V

Kick' Editorial Board

Adapting Metatheatre for Hollywood: Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and Sam Wood's Film
Adaptation 6

Zvonimir Obradović

Common Mistakes at First Certificate..... 24

Valentina Markasović, Tomislav Romolić, Petra Sršić

Horror and Southern Gothic Elements in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*..... 54

Petra Sršić

The Tragic Character of Caddy Compson..... 71

Tomislava Čavar

Elements of Dystopia in Arctic Monkeys' *Tranquillity Base Hotel & Casino* 82

Tea Horvat

Netflix's *Shadow and Bone* (2021) 94

Valentina Markasović

On fanfiction, mass media and the pornographization of contemporary culture 99

Nikola Foršek

The Dystopia of The Wasteland in *Mad Max: Fury Road*..... 102

Josipa Čabraja

Dystopian Society in *What Happened to Monday* 106

Helena Štajdohar

Wasted Seed 111

Nikolina Vranić

My Mind Wanders..... 113

Ena Šveger

Change..... 114

Katarina Mikulić

Destruction and Desire 116

Jovana Ličina

AUTHOR'S ADRESSES 118

About *Kick*..... 119

FOREWORD

Kick's Editorial Board

“If there's a book that you want to read,
but it hasn't been written yet,
then you must write it.”
— Toni Morrison

We are incredibly happy to be able to present the fourth issue of Kick, a journal of students of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. After its long pause, it is back with more innovations and more interpretative, original works. In this issue, we celebrated originality and creativity, which comes in many forms. Therefore, we collected research papers, reviews, short stories, and poems in hopes of encouraging other colleagues to write freely and without restrictions. Our colleagues did not disappoint. In this issue, works range from research papers to reviews on popular culture and films, and there are even poems for those who want a quick and enjoyable read. Professor Matek in the last issues of Kick implored the students to write and send their works because this journal not only helps students apply their scholarly knowledge and skills gained during their studies by publishing their research, but it is also a place for students to learn about the complexities of the publishing process.

We take advantage of this chance to encourage students who are interested in editing and publishing an academic journal to join us and help us by sending your works therefore sharing your knowledge and creativity with all of us.

Adapting Metatheatre for Hollywood: Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and Sam Wood's Film Adaptation

Abstract

This paper identifies the similarities and differences between Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town* (1938) and Sam Wood's film adaptation, and it participates in a broader discussion in the field of adaptation studies. Wood's celluloid adaptation works under the de(re)composing concept of adaptation as defined by Kamilla Elliot, which means that it finds justification for its changes in the playtext itself. The paper focuses on two aspects: the Stage Manager and the scenery, and it indicates the obstacles that cinema faces when adapting metatheatre. Namely, the immediacy of the theatre makes certain metatheatrical elements "untranslatable" to the big screen. For example, while the Stage Manager in the theatre production of the play confuses the audience by speaking directly to them, its filmic equivalent is less successful because the viewer is watching something previously filmed, produced, and edited. Nonetheless, the film adaptation manages to employ a variety of metacinematic techniques like role-playing within the role and indicating the production process of the film. Finally, the alterations made in the film adaptation render a genre shift from the playtext to the film. While the playtext focuses mostly on the allegorical nature of the story, the film focuses on the story's corporeal manifestations. Thus, the film foregrounds the romance between George and Emily, which is already indicated in the paratext of the film. Foregrounding of the romance corresponds with the conventions of classical Hollywood filmmaking and the focus on a traditional romantic relationship.

Keywords: Thornton Wilder, metatheatre, Sam Wood, metacinema, Hollywood, allegory, romance

1. Introduction

Thornton Wilder was an American author, remembered today for his novels *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927) and *The Eighth Day* (1967), but most notably for his metatheatrical plays *Our Town* (1938) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). Wilder's *Our Town* (1938) has been adapted for television, theatre, and film, a true testament to the play's widespread popularity. Arguably the most popular adaptation of the playtext is found in Sam Wood's 1940 film adaptation. The film stars William Holden and Martha Scott, and it was nominated for six Academy Awards in 1941. There are many differences between the playtext and the film, the most salient being the realistic portrayal of the *mise-en-scène*, the divergent portrayal of the Stage Manager rendered by various metacinematic devices, and changing the ending of the film adaptation. This paper aims to show how Sam Wood's film differently depicts two essential metatheatrical features of the playtext: the Stage Manager and the scenery, which results in the genre shift of the adaptation.

To adequately expound on the differences and the similarities between the two media, this paper will use the terminology of adaptation studies. Adaptation studies are a relatively new field that compares two or more media (hypertexts) based on the same source (hypotext). Linda Hutcheon suggests that comparing a hypertext *à propos* its fidelity to the hypotext has been historically the most common discourse in adaptation studies; however, she contests such an approach in her book *A Theory of Adaptation* (Hutcheon 6). Similarly, many other scholars contest this view and they try to show that the adapted media should be considered independently, especially with regards to films adapted from literary texts.

Kamilla Elliot is one such scholar, and she claims that "cinema and television are semiotically richer than novels, for they employ spoken and written words and bodily gestures,

facial expressions, music, images, dance, theatre, artefacts, sound, and computer effects, and more” (196). She also offers several concepts of adaptation in which she shows the relation between a hypotext and its respective adaptations. One of the concepts is the de(re)composing concept of adaptation which presents how “infidelities represent rejections of certain parts of the ... [play] in favor of others, [but are] not total departures from [it]” (Elliott 157). Consequently, the genre shift of the film adaptation will be shown to operate under the de(re)composing concept of adaptation, which is normally applied to the adaptation process of novels; however, it will be shown that the adaptation of Wilder’s play text can also be said to operate under the same concept.

Finally, the genre shift of the film adaptation will be shown to follow similar cultural practices of the time. That is, the film adaptation, which foregrounds the romantic aspect above all else, will be shown to display features of Classical Hollywood. Thus, the final part of the paper details such practices, which ultimately gives the rationale for claiming that Sam Wood’s cinematic adaptation operates under the de(re)composing concept of adaptation.

2. Scenery

Our Town is generally performed in accordance with the instructions found in the playtext, and consequently, its theatrical adaptations present almost desolate settings: “*No curtain. No scenery*” (Wilder 7). Shortly, more stage directions follow: “*He approaches the table and chairs downstage right*” (Wilder 7), which the Stage Manager indicates to represent the doctor’s house. Shortly after these straightforward stage directions, the Stage Manager adds: “There is some scenery for those who think they have to have scenery” (Wilder 8) as he mocks the expectations of the audience regarding established theatrical conventions. Hence, such a bare setting achieves “the subversion of the basic dramatic category of reality” (Konkel 17), which contributes to the abstractness of the play. The abstractness, that is, the allegorical nature of the play, renders characters in Wilder’s play as counter-realistic manifestations rather than

concrete, corporeal individuals, despite the realistic use of costumes and everyday conversations people are used to having. Konkel further suggests that “The characterization of the citizens of Grover’s Corners is certainly realistic, as is the dialogue they speak” (24); however, the characters’ speech exhibits a large number of clichés and idioms, which further indicates that they are mere representations of existing people rather than thoroughly delineated characters. This can further be corroborated by analysing the chapters of the playtext, which are titled “Daily Life,” “Love and Marriage,” and “Death and Eternity” respectively, thus representing a cycle through which each human being passes in the course of a lifetime.

The abstractness of the characters is further reinforced by omitting props from the play, that is, the characters re-enact the performance of menial tasks without the use of material objects: “*She pulls up an imaginary window shade in her kitchen and starts to make a fire in her stove*” (Wilder 9), thus accentuating that the characters are not to be seen as realistic depictions of human beings. As Wilder puts it himself in the preface of the play, “Our claim, our hope, our despair are in the mind—not in things, not in ‘scenery’” (Wilder xxiii), and consequently the omission of objects from the stage diverts the readers’ thinking from the concrete to the allegorical nature of the play. Notwithstanding the obvious anachronism, the stage directions make it seem as if the film adaptation of the playtext would resemble something directed by Lars Von Trier or any other director of the Dogme 95 filmmaking movement; however, the adaptation’s director, Sam Wood, gives a realistic portrayal of the setting described in the playtext.¹ Konkel indicates that Wilder’s plays are characterized as both “realistic and nonrealistic, not either/or” (24), which consequently gives the rationale for alterations in Wood’s adaptation.

¹Dogme 95 is a filmmaking movement started by Danish directors Thomas Vinterberg and Lars Von Trier. It is known, among others, for its emphasis on acting and disdain for ornate settings and props.

Wood finds the realistic component already existing in Wilder's work, which he foregrounds in his adaptation and thus creates the de(re)composing type of adaptation with his film. Consequently, when the Stage Manager introduces Grover's Corners and its notable street in the adaptation—"Running right through the middle of the town is Main Street" (00:02:04 – 00:02:06)—the viewer sees a three-dimensional overview of the town in deep focus, framing the adaptation as realistic from its onset. Moreover, the playtext indicates that a train is approaching by the stage direction, "*A stage whistle is heard*" (Wilder 9), the film aptly shows an actual train approaching in the background. Through the use of dissolves (00:04:13), the camera zooms in on Main Street; the Stage Manager continues introducing Grover's Corners in voiceover and mentions the following: "here comes Joe Crowell, delivering the morning papers" (00:04:15 – 00:04:17). The scene shows the young boy throwing the papers in front of people's doors in contrast to the play, in which the stage directions explicitly state: "*JOE Crowell, Jr, eleven, starts down Main Street...hurling the **imaginary** newspapers*" (Wilder 10, emphasis added).

The stage directions in the play also indicate that the audience sees the process of rearranging the set in the theatre as the play indicates the passage of time. In Act Two, during the depiction of George and Emily's wedding, the stage directions indicate that the "*STAGEHANDS* remove the chairs, tables, and trellises from the Gibbs and Webb Houses," thus, once again, presenting the counter-realism of the play through the staging process. On the other hand, in the film, the wedding is made to look seamlessly realistic as it takes place in an actual church, and the numerous guests sit on church pews instead of ordinary chairs as in the play. The long shot at 01:04:58 indicates the location's corporeality, and shows the elaborate setting of the church; the pews with the seated guests are seen as well as the balcony of the church from where the organist plays the "Bridal Chorus." The play further underscores its fictionality in Act Three as the stage directions signal the conspicuousness of setting up the

stage for the finale of the play: “the audience has seen the STAGEHANDS arranging the stage” (Wilder 52). The third act is titled “Death and Eternity,” which is a culmination of the play’s plot; the audience once again sees ordinary chairs representing graves. Conversely, the adaptation shows an actual graveyard whose grim ambience is further reinforced by the depiction of a torrential downpour. It can be observed that “the tendency of cinema to fix narrative situations to specific people and places was inescapable” (Eldridge 37), and thus Wood’s film adaptation presents a concrete, realistic portrayal of the setting rather than the desolate setting suggested in the playtext.

3. The Stage Manager

According to Nünning and Sommer, the Stage Manager in Wilder’s play is a “modern narrator figure” (340), that is, he tells portions of the plot that are not seen by the spectators. The Stage Manager is hyperaware of the counter-realism of the play, and he is meant to continually dispel the illusion that plays normally create; he reminds the audience that they are watching a play. Konkel suggests the following: “In..[*Our Town*] Wilder requires the audience to do more than passively receive the plays. They must use their imaginations to picture Grover’s Corners” (18), and the Stage Manager is the catalyst that stimulates the audience’s participation. Hence the character of the Stage Manager needs the immediacy of the theatre performance to be fully realized, and his existence poses a considerable challenge for the adaptation process of any film. Eldridge claims that “literary scholars...stress how the theatrical staging of the play was integral to the effectiveness of Wilder’s design” (35), and thus any film adaptation is deemed to fail in transposing the essence of the play to the screen. Notwithstanding such sensible criticism, it should be noted that the film manages to transpose the metatheatrical character of the Stage Manager to a metacinematic portrayal in the film; however, to a diminished extent.

The play commences with the Stage Manager referring directly to the play that the audience is watching: “This play is called *Our Town*. It was written by Thornton Wilder;

produced and directed by A...[...]. In it you will see Miss C...[...]" (Wilder 7). The film, on the other hand, omits the self-referential beginning of the play and skips to the exposition of Grover's Corners. Despite omitting the initial self-referential aspect of the play, the Stage Manager addresses the viewer while introducing the town: "You can see the Steeple on the Congregational Church...It's a nice town, know what I mean?" (00:02:20-00:02:40). In addition to the continual use of the pronoun "you" as if he is addressing the viewer, he is framed in a medium shot for the most part of the opening scene, and is looking directly at the camera. Even though cinema lacks the immediacy of theatre, it can be said that the Stage Manager successfully indicates to the viewers that they are watching a contrived creation, which culminates when he signals to the cameraman that they ought to start: "All right [camera] operator, let's start" (00:03:10). Both the realist scenery behind the narrator and the cinematographic technique of deep focus diminish the self-referentiality of the scene and soothe the viewer. Conversely, the Stage Manager's one-minute-stare, the scarce setting of the play, and the immediacy of the performance engage the viewer more, as there are no distractions from him: "*He returns to his place by the right proscenium pillar and looks at the audience for a minute*" (Wilder 9). Moreover, the Stage Manager is presented as a godlike figure of almost biblical proportions in the film; his word sets everything in motion. Thus, when he says: "Let's start" (00:03:11-00:03:12), night changes to day, and he informs the viewer of the future: "The first automobile is going to come in about five years" (00:03:23-00:03:28). His all-knowing role is similarly corroborated in both media as he foreshadows the future of the characters in the town, namely, their tragic deaths.

4. Depicting Breaking the Fourth Wall

The play and the adaptation seem to contain at least two fictional levels: the dramatic fiction and the fictional here and now created by the Stage Manager's narration, which connects the dramatic fiction. The film adaptation contains another fictional level, as it adds a dream

sequence to alter the ending of the film (however, Emily's dream will not be examined in detail in this paper). The Stage Manager is not entirely separate from the dramatic fiction, as he takes on minor roles and communicates with the characters. However, the film adaptation manages to indicate through the use of cinematic techniques that the Stage Manager is indeed on a separate level compared to the other characters in the play. Thus, the figure of the Stage Manager, standing on top of a hilltop, is framed in a longshot before introducing the final act of the film (01:08:09-01:08:24), where he is also standing in the play: "It's on a hilltop" (Wilder 52). Therefore, he introduces the place where the graveyard is located: "This is an important part of Grover's Corners up here on this hilltop. Lots of sky, lots of clouds, often lots of sun and moon and stars. Certainly a beautiful spot up here" (01:08:54-01:09:04), similarly to Wilder's text.

Moreover, the film portrays the Stage Manager standing on hilltops or elevated areas several times in the course of the film, as he narrates the story about the town and its residents. Examples are found at the beginning and the very end of the film, compared to the playtext in which the location of the Stage Manager is not specified when opening and closing the play. The film shows the Stage Manager on the hilltop, also indicating that he knows more than other characters in the town beneath. Therefore, this indicates his status as standing alone on a separate fictional level to that of other characters in the film. His godlike quality is further enhanced with the use of an aerial shot when he foretells the future of the newspaper boy: "Want to tell you something about that boy, Joe Crowell... Yes gonna be a great engineer, Joe was. But the war broke out and he died in France" (00:07:30-00:07:42), as he quite literally gives Joe's story from the sky.

The most conclusive evidence of the two separate fictional levels in the film can be found by the end of the conversation between Mrs Gibbs and Mrs Webb as the Stage Manager interrupts them: "That'll do ladies, thank you very much" (12:59-13:01). The two stop their

conversation and look absolutely bewildered at the camera as if they are not aware of its existence; they are confused by the whereabouts of the voice stopping their conversation. On the other hand, in the play, the two women simply walk off the stage like puppets moved by a master puppeteer: “*MRS GIBBS and MRS WEBB gather up their things, return into their homes and disappear*” (Wilder 16). The Stage Manager is then seen in the dramatic fictional level as he tries to provide the viewer with additional information concerning Grover’s Corners. He references the limitations of cinema in his instructions to Professor Willard: “Just a few brief words, Professor. Unfortunately our time is limited” (00:13:42-00:13:45). Upon his arrival, Professor Willard initially looks at the Stage Manager but then slowly follows suit and also looks directly to the camera. He looks absolutely flabbergasted when he notices the presence of the camera or someone observing his exposition (00:13:37-00:13:42). His bewilderment is accentuated by the medium shot, and he also references that he is fully aware of the spectators watching his exposition: “Shall I tell **them**...” (00:14:18-00:14:2, emphasis added). Thus, it can be said that he briefly crosses into the first fictional level inhabited by the Stage Manager. It is also worth noting that his confusion with the audience’s existence is not mentioned in the play; he straightforwardly starts his exposition after arriving on the stage.

Interestingly, the only person that does not look perplexed when speaking directly to the camera is Editor Webb. The Stage Manager signals: “Alright, Editor Webb, it’s your turn now” (00:15:47-00:15:49), and Mr Webb immediately commences giving the political and social report of Grover’s Corners. Furthermore, as he crosses to the fictional here and now of the film, he is portrayed as speaking from an elevated area, that is, from the second floor of the building. Moreover, the use of a low-angle shot in the film makes it seem as if Mr Webb is being watched by seated spectators in the cinema. Questions from the audience follow his exposition in both media; however, this scene can attest to the disadvantage that the cinema has compared to the theatre apropos the immediacy of the performance. While it makes a lot of sense in the play

when the actors planted in the audience ask questions related to the town, the film's cinematic equivalent lacks persuasion, but it manages to dispel, albeit briefly, the illusion of reality created in the film. The scene depicts voices asking the same questions as the ones mentioned in the playtext, and how they are edited in the film makes it seem as if the voices represent audience members shouting the questions from their seats in the cinema. The voices also seem as if they are not in the film; they seem to be further away compared to the voices of the characters in the film. However, their existence corresponds with the fictional here and now level of the play as they are addressed by the Stage Manager, and briefly by other characters like Editor Webb and Professor Willard. Eldridge finds another equivalent in the film concerning the portrayal of the fourth wall in Emily and George's wedding scene: "The wedding guests [are brought] down to the level of the seated cinema audience" (39). In both media, the wedding includes Mrs Soams' admiration for the wedding as she, presumably, voices the audience's fixation on the sacrament of matrimony: "Perfectly lovely wedding! Loveliest wedding I ever saw. Oh, I do love a good wedding, don't you? Doesn't she make a lovely bride?" (Wilder 50). However, despite transposing many metatheatrical devices of the play in the film, the shot depicting Emily and George looking at the priest (01:07:04) also indicates selective focus, that is, it blurs the seated guests, and analogously, the audience members as well. The spectators are given a background role in the film compared to the play where there is a greater importance on the audiences' participation due to the already mentioned immediacy of the performance.

5. The Genre

The final point of this paper is to show how the above-mentioned changes in the depiction of metatheatrical devices contribute to a shift in the genre of the adaptation. Konkle suggests that the play is a drama "[of] mixed genre; both comedy and tragedy" (25), and although it contains the romantic relationship between Emily and George, it does not make it the central aspect of the plot. Wood's adaptation, on the other hand, is first and foremost a

romance, a story about two people who fall in love and overcome challenges, albeit rather trivial, to be together. It is seen yet again that Wood's adaptation does not depict "infidelities" per se when compared to Wilder's play; it takes an aspect of the play, namely the romance between George and Emily, and it fully develops it in the film adaptation. Thus, both the realism of the adaptation and the romance between the two work under Elliot's de(re)composing concept of adaptation.

The romance of the adaptation can also be seen in the film's paratext, namely the film's posters and DVD covers. There is not much text on the film posters as can be seen in the appendix of this paper; however, the images seen are indeed worth a thousand words. The first one depicts George and Emily holding hands at the forefront, with the town in the background (Fig. 1). The image of them holding hands is also bigger than the image of the town situated in a circle. The second image in the appendix shows Emily coyly looking at George who stands behind her; the image of the couple is superimposed on the image of the town, and thus indicates that the romance of the two is foregrounded in Wood's film adaptation (Fig. 2). Moreover, only the names of actors depicting George and Emily are to be found on the poster, which additionally emphasizes the romance narrative as primary. The third poster shows George and Emily separated from the other characters; they are embraced and dressed for their wedding (Fig. 3). The previously mentioned posters can also be compared with the playtext's illustrations to elucidate the genre shift in the adaptation. Thus, the fourth image in the appendix and the first of the play's illustrations shows an abstract painting of several buildings situated in midst of some hilltops (Fig. 4). In addition, the second illustration of the playtext depicts a vague scenery image, which could represent any town in the world (Fig. 5). Hence, the playtext's illustrations are indicative of the play's abstractness, while the film's posters position it as a realistic, romantic story.

Classical Hollywood marks a historical period of filmmaking between the 1910s and 1960s, and it is also known as the Golden Age of Hollywood. Sam Wood's adaptation is one of many examples of Classical Hollywood, and numerous distinctive features of the period are found in the adaptation. David Bordwell gives the following definition of the films produced in that period: "The classical film has at least two lines of action, both causally linking the same group of characters. Almost invariably, one of these lines of action involves heterosexual romantic love" (16). Thus, Wood's adaptation is produced for the consumption of greater masses of the period, who expected to see, above all else, a romance: "All the adventure, all the romance, all the excitement you lack in your daily life are in— Pictures" (Advertisement for an unspecified film qtd. in Bordwell et al. xvi). Even manuals for film production of the time emphasized romance "as the theme with greatest human appeal" (Bordwell et al.16).

A good example of a scene depicting features of Classical Hollywood in the film can be seen in Act Two, which shows the moment when Emily and George's relationship begins. Bordwell asserts that "To win the love of a man or woman becomes the goal of many characters in classical films" (16), and likewise, obtaining this goal is of prime importance for the plot of Wood's film. George initiates a talk concerning their relationship, and thus shows that there is an obstacle to be resolved: "Why are you mad at me?" (00:51:32-00:51:34). Non-diegetic music heard underscores the romance in the film, as the characters hash over their problems. A dissolve indicates that the two leave for Morgan's drugstore, which is of course differently portrayed in the play: "*They advance towards the audience and make an abrupt right turn, opening the door of Morgan's drugstore*" (Wilder42). Consequently, the different portrayal of this particular scene in the film signals why it is possible to focus on the romance in the adaptation unlike in the play; because the adaptation diminishes the metatheatrical devices indicated in the playtext which undermine the realism of the scene in the play. Moreover, the most distinctive feature of Classical Hollywood found in the film is the film's revised ending;

Emily's death is shown as a dream sequence, consequently providing the film adaptation with a happy ending. Although this alteration sparked a lot of criticism, Thornton Wilder himself defends the alteration made in the film: "In the theatre, they are halfway abstractions in an allegory; in the movie they are very concrete. So insofar as the play is a generalized allegory, she dies – we die – they die; insofar as it's a concrete happening, it's not important that she dies" (qtd. in Eldridge 37), and it is this concrete, realistic feature of the characters in the adaptation that renders Wood's film a Classical Hollywood romance.

5. Conclusion

Critics of Sam Wood's film adaptation mention the divergences from the original text, seen in its realistic depiction of the *mise-en-scène*, and the different portrayal of the Stage Manager as essentially taking away from Wilder's philosophy in the play. These changes ultimately remould the tragic ending of the playtext into a Classical Hollywood happy ending found in the film. Adapting Wilder's *Our Town* for cinema illustrates the plethora of challenges film productions inevitably experience when adapting metatheatrical devices. This challenge is most notably seen in the film's inability to adequately adapt the breaking of the fourth wall. The film adaptation finds equivalents for the metatheatrical devices; however, the metacinematic devices are shown to be diminished "transpositions" of the metatheatrical devices, which can be attributed to cinema's lack of immediacy. The diminished metacinematic devices found in the film adaptation, in combination with the realistic portrayal of the *mise-en-scène*, enable a romantic rendering of the playtext that is a genre shift that can be observed in the film. Upon closer examination, both romance and realistic portrayals are to be found in the original text, and although they are not at the forefront of Wilder's text, they are not total departures from its content. Thus, this paper also aimed to show that such alterations can find their justification in the original and consequently presented that Wood's adaptation works under the de(re)composing concept of adaptation as described by Kamilla Elliot. Although the concept

originally applies only to adaptations of novels, it is shown that it can also be aptly applied to the celluloid adaptation of Wilder's playtext.

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Appendices

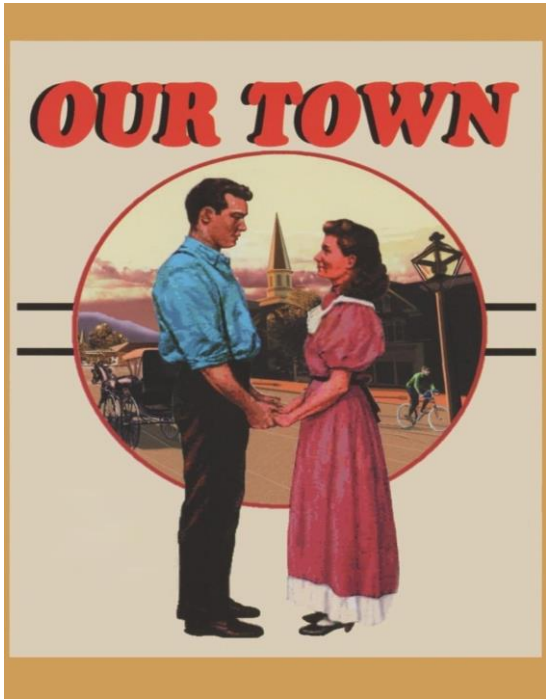


Figure 1: *Our Town* (1940) Film Poster



Figure 2: *Our Town*(1940) DVD Cover



Figure 3: *Our Town* (1940) Film Poster

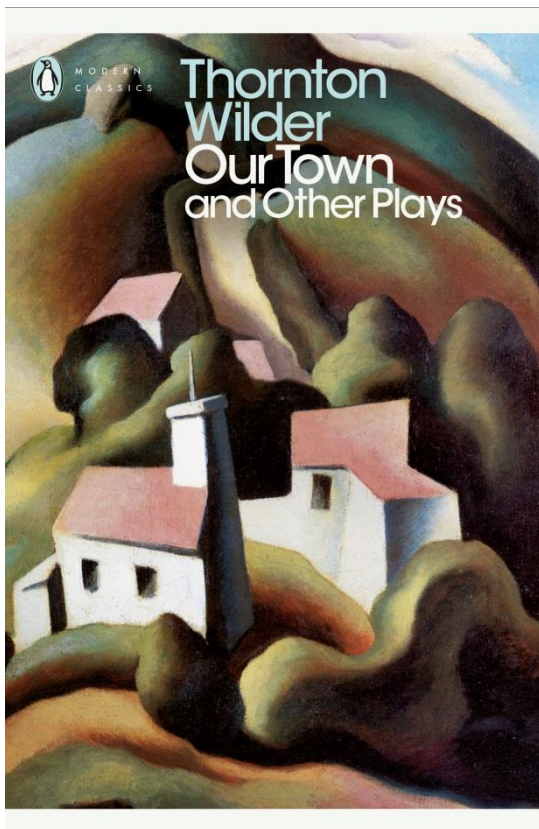


Figure 4: *Our Town* Penguin Classics 2016 Edition

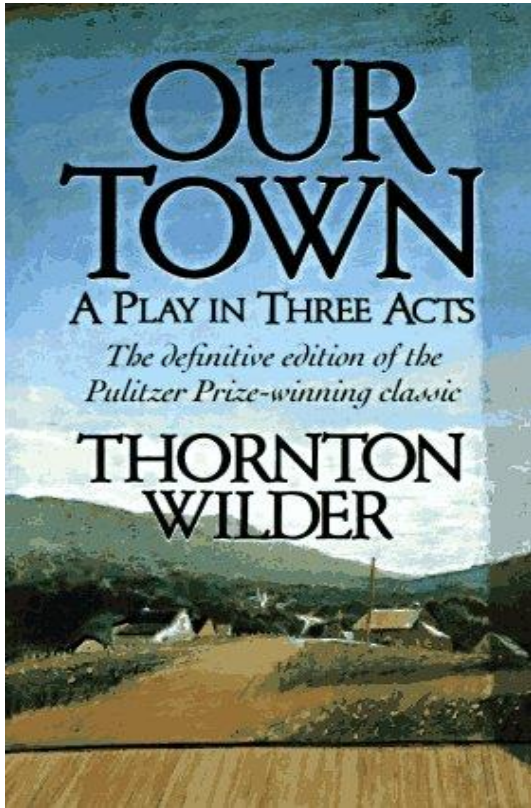


Figure 5: *Our Town* Harper Perennial 1985 Edition

Common Mistakes at First Certificate

Abstract

One of the most important aspects of language teaching is analysing learners' mistakes and errors. Students and learners who have advanced foreign/second language knowledge and are considered to be students at First Certificate often find themselves making many mistakes as well. While these mistakes do not usually impede the ability of the advanced student to speak understandably, they can show important information that could be useful for language teachers that are looking to adapt or change their language teaching methods. The central focus of this paper revolves around the results of a survey that was given to twenty students of English language and literature (most of whom are at the undergraduate level). The survey itself consists of several parts and was designed so that the researchers could find out why, how, and when certain types of mistakes are made by the mentioned subgroup of second language learners. By analysing the results of the mentioned survey, this paper will showcase and explain what kind of tasks proved difficult for the queried students. An important part of this research will also go into analysing the types of mistakes that were made in the survey. Finally, the researchers will use the collected data to advise which components of English language learning should be taught more intently.

Keywords: language, survey, task, mistake, morphology, orthography, grammar

1. Introduction

The correction of mistakes and errors² is crucial for any language teaching practice or theoretical study in studies of language teaching, language learning, and second language acquisition. From the teaching perspective, it is important to know which mistakes and errors to look out for; in other words, it is profitable to know which areas students have the most problems with to be able to better guide them in their studies. This is in agreement with Stephen Pit Corder's statement that teachers must "learn more about the way a learner learns" and that "the learner's errors will, if systematically studied, tell us something about [the learner's innate strategies]" (13). This research aims to investigate four potential problem areas by testing the students' knowledge in orthography, morphology, lexis, and syntax. The handbook *Common Mistakes at First Certificate... and how to avoid them* by Susanne Tayfoor (Cambridge University Press 2004) presents the basis for this research. The handbook prepares the students for Cambridge exams by tackling common stumbling stones that students at First Certificate may encounter. These mistakes are found in the language of students who, according to their certificate, have enough mastery of the English Language to work and live in an English-speaking environment ("First Certificate in English (FCE)"). Hence, the possible mistakes that the handbook—and this research—investigate would not impede the relaying of the intended message; in other words, these mistakes would not damage the meaning of the sentence and would probably be understood, and are therefore not as severe as the mistakes of meaning (Edge 2-5). The fluency, or the students' "unfettered flow of language production or comprehension usually without focal attention on language forms" (Brown 382) is given precedence over linguistic accuracy. Rather, these mistakes represent the finesses of the language and the nuances of the meaning that the students may have trouble with.

² A mistake could be defined as "a performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip,' in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly" (Brown 257); on the other hand, errors refer to "mistakes which individual students couldn't correct even if they were pointed out" (Edge 9). The research was conducted to spot students' mistakes, as investigating their individual, fossilized errors would go beyond the scope of this paper.

This research relies on authors such as Stephen Pit Corder, Julian Edge, and Caroline Mei Lin Ho, whose linguistic theories and suggestions for error analysis in practice this paper applies. H. Douglas Brown and Jeremy Harmer have, among others, penned comprehensive studies on language learning and teaching, and these studies, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* and *The Practice of English Language Teaching* respectively, also offer valuable insight into the theories about and approaches to errors in language acquisition. Among the published scholarly articles about error analysis, the focus can be placed on studies conducted in reference to university students at first certificate of English language (undergraduate students). For example, Magdaline Bakume Nkongho and Ernest Mbaionom (2021) deal with the structuring of English sentences by English language learners in Chad. Benjamin Amoakohene (2017), Elis Homsini Maolida and Milma Vinca Cantikka Hidayat (2021), and Tasnim Alsher (2021) analyse the errors made in more encompassing written products, such as letters and essays. Teti Suhaira, Rima Rahmaniah, and Hidayati Hidayati (2021) analyse sentences on students' posters. In Croatia, recent research has been done by Selma Elkasović (2020) on students' errors in the usage of temporal prepositions and by Gloria Vickov (2020) on students' errors in thesis abstracts.

By presenting the students with the five sets of questions and analysing their answers, this research strives to narrow down their problem areas and suggest the potential causes for their mistakes; that is, if they belong to the interlingual category, in that they are caused by mother tongue (L1) interference (Harmer 137, Brown 263-264), or the intralingual category, which refers to the overgeneralization and application of rules within the target language (Brown 264-265).

2. Methodology

2.1. Aims and research questions

As has been mentioned, this research is based on the handbook *Common Mistakes at First Certificate... and how to avoid them* by Susanne Tayfoor (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and on Stephen Pit Corder's theory of "Error Analysis", which consists of "the collection, detection, description and explanation of errors made by second language learners in the target language" (Gonzales et al. 146). The handbook offers 30 *blitz*-lessons about various parts of the English language. In this research, we decided to deal with four types of mistakes: the orthographic, the morphological, the lexical, and the syntactic. With the aim of finding out the students' ability to spot and correct mistakes, the research posed questions of which types of mistakes occur most often, why they occur, and how capable the students are in correcting the mistakes.

2.2. *Participants*

The research was conducted on third-year students of bachelor studies and first year of master studies of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek in the winter semester of the academic year of 2020/2021. The age of our test subjects ranged from 20 to 24 (1 second-year BA student, 16 third-year BA students, and 3 first-year MA students, all of whom were English double majors). The reported number of years participants spent learning English ranged from 11 to 17 years. The discrepancy between the participants may stem from individual differences and circumstances of study; namely, some students began taking English lessons in the third or fourth grade of primary school. On the other hand, the participants who listed their experience with the English language study as being of 17 years may have started learning early or may have spent more time at the Faculty than it was expected. Certainly, as the students are all officially at the same level of proficiency, it is possible and fruitful to conduct this research to gather evidence about the students' ability to perceive and correct mistakes in the chosen different types of mistakes.

2.3. *Instrument*

The research was carried out through a survey consisting of five segments. The first four contained four to seven tasks for each type of mistake. The final segment incorporated more potential mistake types and consisted of five tasks. The segments were not titled with the appropriate name of the mistake, so as to avoid drawing the students' attention to the type of mistake they need to look for. Thus, the students only saw the task instruction and the tasks themselves, in which they had to either correct the mistakes in the sentences or select the correct sentence (see appendix 1).

2.4. Procedure

The survey was adapted for an online survey tool and distributed to participants. The participants were giving their answers anonymously and solving the tasks at their own leisure, in an uncontrolled environment, without a set time limit within which they had to turn in their answers. This allows for potential dishonesty in the participants' answers, in terms of them having enough time to look up the correct answers in grammar books or online; however, the survey emphasised the anonymity of the results, so it seems improbable that students would cheat on an informal survey. After twenty students have turned in their answers, the results were collected and analysed by mistake type and organized into a table adapted from the classification proposed by Caroline Mei Lin Ho (2003) (see table 1).

3. Results

3.1. Orthographic Mistakes

In this segment of the survey, students had to discover spelling mistakes in six sentences (if there were any, that is – only one sentence did not need any correction). The sentence with the most student mistakes was the last one – “She spends the afternoons laying on the couch and reading a book.” 60% of the polled students either thought that there was no mistake or they wrongly identified the mistake in the sentence (“laying” instead of “lying”). Another sentence—“We need to remember the core principals in the country.”—had almost half of the

polled students think that it was completely correct. In all the other sentences of this task, 80% or more of the polled students correctly found the inaccuracies in them. Two of these sentences had a classic orthographic mistake that is often found among learners: mixing “your”/“you’re” and “their”/“they’re.” Students have also easily recognized the misspelling of “know” (“We all now he is guilty...”). Some problems occurred with identifying the misspelling of “principles” and confusing it with the word “principals” (the plural of “principal”).

3.2. Morphological Mistakes

The section featuring morphological mistakes consisted of seven sentences with one or more mistakes that the students had to correct. As expected, the results varied extensively; some students corrected all the mistakes, some corrected only one mistake in sentences that had more, some changed the correct words, and some did not recognize the mistakes. In the first sentence “Adam is a ten year-old-boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and playing with the neighbours kitten.” not a single student perceived the mistake “playing”/“plays” as an inflectional error where –ing is used instead of present simple third person singular –s, and chose to correct the sentence like this: Adam is a ten-year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and plays with the neighbours’ kitten. Those who corrected all the errors, 15% of the students, opted for the participle form: Adam is a ten-year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home playing with the neighbours’ kitten. Ten percent of the students said that the sentence is correct, while 75% gave mixed results, some of them specifying one or two errors and correcting them, and two students (10%) tried to correct the error but failed: Adam is a ten year-old boy. 50% of the students corrected the possessive “neighbour’s/ neighbours”, with some students listing both options and some listing only one of the two possibilities. The plural form of the possessive received 25% of the votes, whereas the singular form received 35% of the votes. That may be due to the transfer from the L1 because in Croatian people would say *susjedov* or *susjedin mačić*. To summarize, 30% corrected “ten year-old-boy” to “ten-year-old boy”, 35% “playing” to “plays”,

25% omitted “and” and kept “playing”, 50% corrected the possessive, opting for either of the two possibilities. The answers to the second sentence (“The dog ate all its food and fell asleep.”) showed somewhat more uniformity; 50% of the students recognized that the sentence is correct. 40% opted for other correct possibilities- 20% “his,” 10% “of his,” 10% “of.” One student said he did not know whether the sentence is correct or not, and one student tried and failed to correct it: “All of its’ food.” In this example, the apostrophe is not necessary because “its” is the possessive form of the pronoun. “It is in the woman’s department.” received the most uniform answer in this section of the survey. However, not all students recognized the error: “woman’s department” to “women’s department”; surprisingly, 20% of the students answered that the sentence is correct. That may be an interlingual error caused by a negative transfer since ‘women’s department’ is *ženski odjel* in Croatian, bearing no singular or plural marker. The plural marker is visible if it is framed as *odjel za žene*. 80% of the students answered correctly. The fourth sentence, “I am all out of advices for the time being, I need to take care of my life for a change.”, had surprising results. Out of twenty surveyed students, 40% said that the sentence is correct. The cause of that may be interlingual as the noun *savjet* is countable in Croatian. 45% corrected the sentence using “advice” instead of “advices”, one student corrected it by adding a countable marker “pieces of advice”, and one student did not perceive “advices” as an error, but would use a dot to separate the sentences instead of the comma, which is possible but is not the focus of the assignment. Lastly, one student tried and failed to correct the sentence by changing the second part: “I need to take care for my life for change.” This is incorrect because the indefinite article is missing in front of “change”, and “to take care of” is a set phrase that, according to Macmillan Dictionary, means to do the necessary things to help someone, to treat something carefully and to do what is necessary to deal with a person or situation (“To take care of”). The sentence “Do not forget to bring your university’s degree to the job interview.” has only one error- “university’s”. The mistake is inflectional, an addition of the

possessive 's, which is unnecessary as that is not a possessive noun, but makes a compound noun together with degree. 65% of the students corrected the mistake by removing the possessive marker. 5% offered another possible solution: just using “degree,” while one student answered “masters degree,” which is incorrect because the -s in “masters” indicates a possessive (the degree of a master) and should be written with an apostrophe-“master’s” (“Masters Degree or Master’s Degree?”). 25% answered that the sentence is correct; probably thinking that possessive form can be used in this way to indicate a specific type of degree. Sentence number six, “I know that it is insulting, but I do not have the courage to stand up to my boss.” features an inflectional mistake, caused by misinformation, and an alternating form is used. The word “insultive” is made using a suffix of adjectives (and nouns of adjectival origin) such as “active” and “destructive”. The proper form of the adjective is “insulting”. More than half of the students, 60%, corrected the sentence by replacing “insultive” with “insulting”. 30% said the sentence was correct, possibly because they have encountered the word somewhere or it sounds acceptable to them. *Wiktionary* says that “insultive” is about 0.01% as common as “insulting” and does not appear in most dictionaries (“Insultive”). One student wrote that he or she does not know, and one student did not correct “insultive”, but “have the courage” to “have courage”. This is incorrect because have the courage is a collocation (“Have the courage”). The last sentence in this section is “The prince was so good looking that I could not turn away lest he disappears from sight.” There are two mistakes in this sentence: the omission of the hyphen in “good looking” and the inflectional –s, which indicates present simple tense in “disappears”, where the form should be either “disappear” or “disappeared”. This sentence obviously puzzled the students because it got a variety of answers. 25% of the students replaced “disappears” with “disappeared”. 15% said that the sentence was correct. 15% replaced “lest” with “unless”, two of them changing the verb to the past participle, and 15% replaced it with “until”, one of them again changing the verb to the past participle. By doing so they changed the meaning of the

sentence because, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, “lest” means “in order to prevent any possibility that something will happen, for fear that” (“Lest”), indicating that the person does not wish to turn away because the other person might disappear, whereas “unless” and “until” indicate that the person will not turn away as long as the other person is still there. One student answered that he or she does not know what “lest” means. 10% corrected both mistakes, opting for both possible versions of the verb, and 10% only corrected good-looking.

3.3. Lexical Mistakes

The section regarding lexical mistakes consisted of four pairs of sentences. In each pair, one sentence was correct, while the other had one mistake in it. The only problematic sentence appeared to be the first one. Out of 20 students, three selected the option ““Susan, how are you? I haven’t seen you in a while.” “I’m not very well; I’m feeling a bit under the weather.”” as the correct one. The mistake in the sentence is the incorrect usage of the adjective “good”, where “well” should be used to denote the meaning of “in good health” (Tayfoor 27; Quirk et al. 432). The other 85% of students answered this question correctly. The following three questions, in which students decided on the correct usage between “tell” and “say,” “wish” and “hope,” and “mustn’t” and “don’t have to”, show unanimity. All students picked the correct sentence in each case.

3.4. Syntactic Mistakes

The section regarding syntactic mistakes consisted of five sentences with one or more mistakes dealing with word order and punctuation. Like in the second task, a minority of the students noticed the mistake in focus and corrected it, with most of the students changing other, correct parts of the sentences, or trying and failing to correct other parts of the sentences. A large number of students focused on only one mistake and corrected it. The first sentence in the section “In the nineteenth century the Duke of Wellington whose peerage was the reward for his victories over Napoleon was Great Britain’s greatest national hero.” has two possible

corrections: the sentence “whose peerage was the reward for his victories over Napoleon” has to be divided by commas because it is an inserted clause, whereas “In the nineteenth century” is an adverb of time that may or may not be separated by a comma when used at the beginning of a sentence. Out of twenty students, 40% opted for the version in which the adverb of time is not separated by a comma, and the inserted clause is. 25% chose the version in which commas separate both the time clause and the inserted clause. 15% said that the sentence is correct. One student said that the commas should be corrected, leaving it ambiguous as to which corrections should be made. One student said he or she does not know how to correct the sentence, one said that a comma should go after “Wellington”, and one student wrote a different version of the sentence, which is also incorrect: “Britain’s greatest national hero was Duke of Wellington, whose peerage in the 19th century was the reward for his victories over Napoleon”. The errors are the omission of the definite article in front of Duke and the time clause that should modify the main clause, not the inserted clause. The second sentence got a very uniform answer. The mistake in “He asked me where was the school cafeteria.” is the wrong construction of reported speech. In reported speech, the word order is inverted and the verb goes back a tense (Tayfor 7). 95% of the students identified the mistake and corrected it. One student wrote: “He asked me where is the school cafeteria”. The next sentence was clearly problematic for the students as it received the highest number of possible answers and most of them did not correct the mistake as necessary. The sentence “Andrew joined university on July, 2012. sometime after his sister went missing.” examined the students use of punctuation and writing dates. All the mistakes are in this part of the sentence “on July, 2012.”; the preposition “on” is used if the month is followed by the exact day, not the year, i.e. if there is clear indication of the day, if not, the preposition “in” is used. The year is not written with a period in English; rather, the sentence requires a comma because it needs to be separated from the subordinate sentence, “sometime after his sister went missing”. Lastly, there is no need for a comma to separate the

month from the year in a sentence. Out of 20 students, 10% only replaced the period with a comma. 10% added a definite article in front of university, possibly to suggest that a specific university is in question, which is not necessary in this sentence. 10% replaced “on July” with “in July”. Out of the remaining 70% of the students, all of them had different answers; one of those gave the correct answer and another wrote that the sentence is correct. The rest of the answers were a mix of playing with the date and shifting the tense from past simple to present perfect or past perfect. When recounting events in the past, it is more common to use past simple so there is no need to switch the tense of the phrase “go missing” in the text. One student wrote a very interesting answer: “Andrew joined the university in July 2012. Sometime after his sister went missing.” The date is spelled correctly, the definite article implies that there is a certain university he joined and is unnecessary, but the period after “2012” is the most important change because it is followed by a capitalized word, indicating a new sentence. The meaning of these sentences is different from the original. Whereas the original meaning is that Andrew joined university after his sister disappeared, the new meaning is that his sister went missing after he joined the university. The fourth sentence again tested punctuation and word order. In the sentence “First of all you need to buy all the ingredients for the dish. Only then you can start with the cooking preparation.” there are two mistakes: we use a comma after expressions at the beginning of a sentence like “of course,” “in my opinion,” “first of all” (Tayfoor 31) and the subject and auxiliary are inverted when “only after,” “only if,” “only then” are placed at the beginning of the sentence for rhetorical effect (“Only after, only if, only in this way ETC., not until”). Surprisingly, 15% of the students said the sentences are correct, a mistake that should not happen at their level of study. 30% answered correctly. 20% addressed the inversion and 15% added a comma after “first of all”. One student changed the first sentence into “First you need to buy all of the ingredients for the dish” which is also fine but does not give us information about the second sentence. Lastly, 15% did not succeed in correcting the mistakes. The last

sentence in this section was supposed to be simple and unambiguous: “Before discussing the Dutch advantages in early-modern northern commerce it is important to understand the disadvantages to be found in the Dutch economy.”, as the only mistake is the missing comma; the sentence order is inverted and the sentences should be separated by a comma. However, only 55% of the students added the comma, and some of those also identified “to be found” as incorrect, making it a total of 50% of those who offered a different solution for the phrase. Longman dictionary says the phrase “to be found” is used to say that something can be found somewhere (“Be to be seen/found/heard etc”). The phrase fits into the sentence and is not incorrect. 40% of the students would rather use “found” which means that the disadvantages have already been found, one student would use “that are found” and one would use “that can be found” which both have similar meanings to those discussed above. 15% of the students said the sentence is correct.

3.5. Combination of Mistakes

In this section, students had to pick which one of the two given sentences was written in the correct form. All students unanimously picked the correct choices in all five sentences.

4. Discussion

Phonetic mistakes seem to be somewhat rare in most of the example sentences, and in only one sentence did a majority of polled students fail to recognize the mistake. However, the most common problems occur with some homonyms. More specifically, if we look at the example of “lying vs. laying on the couch”, we are able to identify a linguistic trap that continues to be a problem for some students even in their advanced level of study. In other examples where phonetic mistakes are present, a large majority of students are able to successfully locate misspellings or other phonetic inaccuracies.

The large number of errors that the students did not recognize in the second task (focusing on morphological mistakes) and the fact that they decided to change the correct parts of the sentences and sometimes changed them wrongly shows the tendency to correct the most obvious mistake or the mistake they notice the first, leaving all others, and the tendency to rewrite entire sentences or parts of sentences to better suit them. The example of the latter can be found in the sixth sentence in which 35% of the students regard the word “insultive” as correct, most likely because it sounds correct. Regarding the first sentence, the students who corrected all the mistakes opted for present continuous and the –ing form of the verb rather than the present simple. Present continuous can be used when talking about something which happens again and again, but not when the sentence is divided by the conjunction “and” and the verb is not connected with the present simple of the verb be. Therefore, without removing the conjunction, present simple is the obvious solution to talk about something that happens regularly in the present (“Present Simple”). A large number of students are not familiar with the rules of hyphenation, as visible in the examples where “good looking” was only corrected by 20% of the student and 30% corrected “ten year-old-boy” to “ten-year-old boy”. One student even changed it to “ten year-old boy”, which is wrong because it implies that there are ten one-year-old boys, but the noun is left in singular so that cannot be the case. Further, the students are mostly familiar with rules regarding possessives. There is one notable exception where a student tried to correct the sentence “The dog ate all its food and fell asleep.” to “The dog ate all of its’ food and fell asleep.” by adding the unnecessary apostrophe. The fact that the students opted for several alternative correct versions of the sentence “The dog ate all (of) its/ his food and fell asleep.” might stem from the fact that “its” is a singular impersonal possessive pronoun used for animals and items (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 346), and the students prefer to use “his” because their pets are a big part of their lives. The last sentence of the morphological section “The prince was so good looking that I could not turn away lest he disappears from sight.”

shows that students are not comfortable with the meaning and usage of lesser known conjunctions such as “lest”, and would rather replace it with the more familiar conjunctions “unless” and “until”, which ultimately leads to conscious or unconscious change of the meaning of the sentence. As mentioned above, most of the mistakes and corrections the students made are influenced by their L1, that is, they are interlingual; 20% percent of the students consider “woman’s department” to be correct, probably influenced by the Croatian *ženski odjel* which has no number marker, and 50% perceive the noun “advice” as countable because it is so in Croatian (*savjet, savjeti*).

The almost complete agreement of the test subjects when it comes to selecting the correct option between two possible lexical items in pairs of sentences shows that students are familiar with general rules of using particular lexical items. Specifically, they are able to differentiate between direct and prepositional objects (“tell us” vs. **“say (it) us”*) (cf. Quirk et al. 1208-1209), the nuances of meanings of “wish” and “hope” in conditional sentences (Tayfoor 40), and how to express restriction (“mustn’t”) and the lack of necessity (“don’t have to”) (Tayfoor 16). The only task that received incorrect answers concerned the difference between the words “good” and “well” and their usage. The reason for this might stem from the definitions that the students are exposed to—it is always highlighted that “good” is an adjective and “well” is an adverb. These meanings are also listed as the most prominent in online dictionaries—*Collins Dictionary* lists “well” as an adjective the third definition available (“Well³”); *Cambridge English Dictionary* (“Well⁵”) and *Merriam-Webster* (“Well⁵”) only in the fifth definition. This might point to the lack of exposure of students to this particular usage of the adjectival “well”.

The overall analysis of the syntactic section shows that a number of students struggle with sentence formation and the rules of punctuation. In the first sentence of the task, as many as 30% of the students did not correct the necessary part of the sentence, i.e. separating the

inserted appositional clause with commas. One student wrote a different version of the sentence: “Britain’s greatest national hero was Duke of Wellington, whose peerage in the 19th century was the reward for his victories over Napoleon.” Firstly, the definite article in front of Duke is omitted. Secondly, the time clause which should modify the main clause now modifies the inserted clause and changes the entire meaning of the sentence into incorrect information.

Mistakes in the syntactic section are mostly intralingual, made due to incomplete rule application or overgeneralization, the latter being visible in the example of the first sentence, where the student mixed up the clauses probably thinking that modifying a different clause will not affect the sentence. The only mistake made in the second sentence: “He asked me where is the school cafeteria” is an example of an intralingual error made due to incomplete rule application. The student who wrote this example took into consideration the tense backshift but not the word order inversion. A specific example of an interlingual error can be found in the third sentence concerning the writing of dates in English, where 15% of the students did not perceive the period after the year “2012” as a mistake. This is a clear example of the negative transfer from the Croatian language in which years are written with periods. Moreover, the same sentence shows that some students are not comfortable with tenses expressing the past, seeing as they perceived the use of past simple in “Andrew joined university on July, 2012. sometime after his sister went missing.” as incorrect and replaced it with past perfect or present perfect. One student even reformulated the sentence and changed the chronological order of events. Further, inverted sentences and word order seem to be problematic for the students. In the fourth sentence, half of the students corrected the inverted part which means the other half are not familiar with the construction where “only after”, “only if”, “only then” are placed at the beginning of the sentence and the subject and auxiliary are inverted for rhetorical effect. The fourth sentence also shows that only 45% of the students correctly inserted a comma after the expression “first of all” at the beginning of a sentence (Tayfoor 31). The last sentence confirms

that students have problems with comma placement, i.e. clause coordination, inversion and tenses. Only 55% of the students added the necessary comma in “Before discussing the Dutch advantages in early-modern northern commerce it is important to understand the disadvantages to be found in the Dutch economy.”, whereas as many as half perceived “to be found” as incorrect and offered their own alternatives. Mistakes made regarding clause coordination and tenses are probably intralingual, made due to lack of practice, overgeneralization, and hypercorrection, as in the case of “to be found” in the last sentence.

In the final task, the students managed to solve it with 100% accuracy. It seems that the main reason for this is due to the fact that there is a choice between two sentences. The problematic part of the sentence is obvious, which is not the case in tasks where students had to find the mistakes on their own. Even though this task had a combination of mistakes, it seems that students have an easier time with tasks in which they have to pick the correct sentence out of two choices (as seen with similar results in task 3). Tasks in which they have to discover the mistakes on their own seem to give them a bit more trouble.

5. Conclusion

Conducting this research and analysing its results casts light on the areas in which students have problems. Namely, we can conclude that students generally do not struggle with recognizing orthographic mistakes. However, it seems that the spelling of some specific verb forms (like the confusion between “lying” and “laying”) causes some confusion. Students have significantly more problems with morphology. In these tasks, they sometimes opt to correct parts that are correct. This, in turn, results in producing incorrect language even in those parts of the sentences that were not the target of this task. On the other hand, students do not seem to be making numerous lexical mistakes and they are able to deploy appropriate language with regard to the context of the sentence. The situation seems to be worse in terms of the application of syntactic rules – the task testing the students’ ability to correctly formulate sentences and to

punctuate received mixed results. This probably stems from the students' incomplete rule application or overgeneralization. It can be said that students tend to notice the obvious mistakes and not look further into the sentence and its syntax or the morphology of the words in it. The research survey did not include the name of the mistake type, so students were left to their own devices in terms of finding and correcting the mistakes; that is, they did not know what kind of a mistake—or mistakes—they needed to look for. Therefore, the results of the survey are more authentic than they would have been otherwise. It must also be highlighted that students showed more competence in solving the tasks in which they only had to decide between two offered sentences. More problems arose in the open-answer tasks. Noticeably, when the students do not know or are unsure about the correct answer, they use a coping strategy, or rather, avoidance strategy, in which they rewrite the sentence or its componential parts into structures they are familiar with. Although this shows commendable skills in manipulating language to suit the users' needs, it must be kept in mind that the problem areas remain unattended.

While further research is necessary on topics such as analyses of different types of mistakes, L1 influence in Croatian speakers of English, and their intralingual mistakes, some suggestions and guidelines for future teaching of English can be made. Namely, even if the contemporary classrooms utilise methods and approaches that rely on a balance of fluency and accuracy, such as the communicative language teaching and the natural approach, rather than employing the somewhat stricter grammar-translation method on its own, the students' attention must be more focused on morphology and syntax. The task-based language instruction calls for a variety of task types, and this research shows that close-ended tasks in which students are given options are useful for illustrating mistakes. While this research gave students two options to choose from, the same principle may be applied to, for example, multiple choice questions or odd-one-out tasks. On the other hand, tasks in which students have to find and correct the mistakes themselves may serve as a lead-in for a more comprehensive analysis of the problem

area (mistake) being tackled. Both types of tasks could be introduced in diagnostic tests so that the instructor is familiarised with mistakes done by a particular study group in general. Additionally, a given student's language production could be monitored through a more extensive survey and/or over a longer period of time to take note of their errors and to tackle those problem areas individually.

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Appendices

1. The Survey

Common Mistakes at First Certificate

Dear colleagues,

we invite you to take part in our online survey for our Error Analysis course. There are five sets of questions.

The survey is completely anonymous and we will not share any of your personal data.

Your age

The faculty you attend

Your study group

Current year of study (e.g. 1st year of BA studies)

How many years have you been studying English so far?

Correcting the sentences

Read the sentences and decide if they are right or wrong. Correct the mistakes in the space below the sentences. If there are no mistakes in the sentences, you can say that is correct, or mark it with / or X.

1. We all now he is guilty, the only one who believes him is his lawyer and his family.
2. Last night I met your mother. She said you're grades have improved.
3. Are we sure that this is their dog?
4. We need to remember the core principals of our country.
5. Why don't you take a sit right over there?
6. She spends the afternoons laying on the couch and reading a book.

Correcting the sentences

Read the sentences and correct the mistakes in them.

1. Adam is a ten year-old-boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and playing with the neighbours kitten.
2. The dog ate all its food and fell asleep.
3. It is in the woman's department.

4. I am all out of advices for the time being, I need to take care of my life for a change.
5. Do not forget to bring your university's degree to the job interview.
6. I know that it is insulting, but I do not have the courage to stand up to my boss.
7. The prince was so good looking that I could not turn away lest he disappears from sight.

Choose the correct sentence

Read through the pairs of sentences and tick the correct one!

1.
“Susan, how are you? I haven't seen you in a while.” “I'm not very good; I'm feeling a bit under the weather.”
“Susan, how are you? I haven't seen you in a while.” “I'm not very well; I'm feeling a bit under the weather.”
2.
“You have been lying to us long enough! Tell us the truth already!”
“You have been lying to us long enough! Say us the truth already!”
3.
I wish I could go to the cinema with you.
I hope I could go to the cinema with you.
4.
I decided to make today a cheat day and order a pizza. I mustn't eat healthily all the time!
I decided to make today a cheat day and order a pizza. I don't have to eat healthily all the time!

Correct the sentences

Correct the mistakes in the sentences.

1. In the nineteenth century the Duke of Wellington whose peerage was the reward for his victories over Napoleon was Great Britain's greatest national hero.
2. He asked me where was the school cafeteria.
3. Andrew joined university on July, 2012. sometime after his sister went missing.
4. First of all you need to buy all the ingredients for the dish. Only then you can start with the cooking preparation.

5. Before discussing the Dutch advantages in early-modern northern commerce it is important to understand the disadvantages to be found in the Dutch economy.

Tick the correct sentence.

Choose which sentence is the correct one and tick it.

1.
The view from our hotel window is breathtaking.
The view from our hotel window is breath-taking.
2.
Do you think they're planning on doing something about it?
Do you think their planning on doing something about it?
3.
According to our sources, the missing man was found a few minutes ago.
Regarding our sources, the missing man was found a few minutes ago.
4.
He thinks that he should get a better paying for his work.
He thinks that he should get a better payment for his work.
5.
The king's arrival to the small city was its biggest happening in recent history.
The king's arrival to the small city was its biggest event in recent history.

Thank you for your participation!

2. Table 1

Error Analysis Table

Common Mistakes at First Certificate		
Identification of error	Definition and classification of error	Explanation of rule
Orthographic Mistakes		

<p>“We all now he is guilty, the only one who believes him is his lawyer and his family.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Misspelling of similarly pronounced words with different meanings – adverb in the place where the proper verb should go (know).</p>	<p>Now means <i>at the present time</i> when used as an adverb, while know means <i>to perceive the truth or factuality of; to be certain of or that</i> when used as a verb.</p> <p>“We all know he is guilty, the only one who believes him is his lawyer and his family.”</p>
<p>“Last night I met your mother. She said you’re grades have improved.”</p> <p>4 students (20%)</p>	<p>Addition - incorrect spelling of adjective</p>	<p>Your is a possessive adjective, while you’re is a contraction of you are.</p> <p>“Last night I met your mother. She said your grades have improved.”</p>
<p>“We need to remember the core principals of our country.”</p> <p>8 students (40%)</p>	<p>Inappropriate noun (homonym)</p>	<p>principle = a rule, a law, a guideline, or a fact.</p> <p>principal = the headmaster of a school or a person who’s in charge of certain things in a company.</p> <p>“We need to remember the core principles of our country.”</p>
<p>“Why don’t you take a sit right over there?”</p> <p>3 students (15%)</p>	<p>Inappropriate verb form</p>	<p>Both sit/seat are used as verbs here: the definition of <u>sit</u> is to be in a position in which the body is upright and resting on the buttocks either on a seat or on the ground, while the verb <u>seat</u> means to make something/someone sit</p> <p>“Why don’t you take a seat right over there?”</p>

<p>“She spends the afternoons laying on the couch and reading a book.”</p> <p>12 students (60%)</p>	<p>Incorrect verb form due to similarities in conjugation (homonym)</p>	<p>Confusion due to conjugating two different meanings of lie (be in or assume a horizontal or resting position on a supporting surface; to speak falsely on purpose)</p> <p>“She spends the afternoons lying on the couch and reading a book.”</p>
<p>Morphological Mistakes</p>		
<p>“Adam is a ten year-old-boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and playing with the neighbours kitten.”</p> <p>10 students (50%)</p>	<p>Misordering of the hyphen</p>	<p>If the “phrase x-year-old” precedes a noun that it is modifying (boy), only the phrase is hyphenated, not the noun.</p> <p>“Adam is a ten-year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and plays with the neighbours’ kitten.”</p>
<p>“Adam is a ten year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and playing with the neighbours kitten.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Omission of the hyphen</p>	<p>If the phrase x-year-old precedes a noun that it is modifying (boy), the number of the years must also be hyphenated, so as not to change the meaning of the phrase.</p> <p>“Adam is a ten-year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and plays with the neighbours’ kitten.”</p>
<p>“Adam is a ten year-old-boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and playing with the neighbours kitten.”</p> <p>8 students (40%)</p>	<p>Inappropriate verb form</p>	<p>Present simple is used to talk about something that happens regularly in the present. The proper suffix is not –ing, but third person past simple –s.</p> <p>“Adam is a ten-year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and plays with the neighbours’ kitten.”</p>

<p>“Adam is a ten year-old-boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and playing with the neighbours kitten.”</p> <p>10 students (50%)</p>	<p>Omission of the possessive indicator- apostrophe</p>	<p>We use an apostrophe to show the possessive, -’s with singular nouns and –s’ with plural. Either version is acceptable.</p> <p>“Adam is a ten-year-old boy. Every afternoon, he is at home and plays with the neighbours’/neighbour’s kitten.”</p>
<p>“The dog ate all of its’ food and fell asleep.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Unnecessary insertion of the possessive indicator- apostrophe</p>	<p>We do not use an apostrophe with possessive forms such as “its’”.</p> <p>The dog ate all of its food and fell asleep.</p>
<p>“It is in the woman’s department.”</p> <p>4 students (20%)</p>	<p>Wrong combination - singular form of the descriptive genitive</p>	<p>The plural form of the noun “woman” is used to make descriptive genitive when it functions as a modifier of the noun “department” meaning “a department for women”.</p> <p>“It is in the women’s department.”</p>
<p>“I am all out of advices for the time being, I need to take care of my life for a change.”</p> <p>10 students (50%)</p>	<p>Unnecessary addition of the plural marker -s</p>	<p>“Advice” is an uncountable noun; it has no plural form.</p> <p>“I am all out of advice for the time being, I need to take care of my life for a change.”</p>
<p>“I am all out of advices for the time being, I need to take care for my life for change.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Inappropriate preposition</p>	<p>“To take care of” is a set phrase meaning “to do the necessary things to help someone, to treat something carefully and to do what is necessary to deal with a person or situation.”</p>

		“I am all out of advice for the time being, I need to take care of my life for a change.”
“I am all out of advices for the time being, I need to take care for my life for change.” 1 student (5%)	Omission of the indefinite article	“For a change” is an idiom meaning “as something different from what is usual”. “I am all out of advice for the time being, I need to take care of my life for a change.”
“Do not forget to bring your university’s degree to the job interview.” 5 students (25%)	Unnecessary addition of the possessive marker ’s	“University degree” is a phrase in which “university” determines the type of degree “Do not forget to bring your university degree to the job interview.”
“Do not forget to bring your masters degree to the job interview.” 1 student (5%)	Omission of the possessive indicator- apostrophe	The -s in “masters” should indicate a possessive (the degree of a master) and should be written with an apostrophe. “Do not forget to bring your master’s degree to the job interview.”
“I know that it is insultive , but I do not have the courage to stand up to my boss.” 8 students (40%)	Wrong word construction	The adjective of the noun <i>insult</i> is made of the root “insult”+ “-ing”. “I know that it is insulting , but I do not have the courage to stand up to my boss.”

<p>“I know that it is insulting, but I do not have courage to stand up to my boss.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Omission of the definite article</p>	<p>“Have the courage” is a collocation.</p> <p>“I know that it is insulting, but I do not have the courage to stand up to my boss.”</p>
<p>“The prince was so good looking that I could not turn away lest he disappears from sight.”</p> <p>15 students (75%)</p>	<p>Omission of the hyphen</p>	<p>“Good-looking” is an adjective spelled with a hyphen.</p> <p>“The prince was so good-looking that I could not turn away lest he disappeared/dissappear from sight.”</p>
<p>“The prince was so good looking that I could not turn away lest he disappears from sight.”</p> <p>10 students (50%)</p>	<p>Wrong clause construction</p>	<p>The clause introduced by “lest” is usually in the subjunctive mood, using past simple or bare infinitive.</p> <p>“The prince was so good-looking that I could not turn away lest he disappeared/disappear from sight.”</p>
<p>Lexical Mistakes</p>		
<p>“Susan, how are you? I haven’t seen you in a while.” “I’m not very good; I’m feeling a bit under the weather.”</p> <p>3 students (15%)</p>	<p>Confused meaning of adjectives</p>	<p>The word “well” is an adverb, but can be used in the specific meaning of “in good health” as an adjective.</p> <p>“Susan, how are you? I haven’t seen you in a while.” “I’m not very well; I’m feeling a bit under the weather.”</p>
<p>Syntactic Mistakes</p>		

<p>“In the nineteenth century, the Duke of Wellington whose peerage was the reward for his victories over Napoleon was Great Britain’s greatest national hero.”</p> <p>7 students (35%)</p>	<p>Omission of commas</p>	<p>An inserted clause needs to be separated by commas.</p> <p>“In the nineteenth century, the Duke of Wellington, whose peerage was the reward for his victories over Napoleon, was Great Britain’s greatest national hero.”</p>
<p>“Britain’s greatest national hero was Duke of Wellington, whose peerage in the 19th century was the reward for his victories over Napoleon.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Omission of the definite article</p>	<p>The definite article is used with titles such as <i>Queen</i>, <i>King</i>, and <i>President</i>.</p> <p>“Britain’s greatest national hero was the Duke of Wellington, whose peerage in the 19th century was the reward for his victories over Napoleon.”</p>
<p>“Britain’s greatest national hero was Duke of Wellington, whose peerage in the 19th century was the reward for his victories over Napoleon.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Sentence structure- inappropriate construction</p>	<p>The time clause should modify the main clause, not the inserted one.</p> <p>“In the nineteenth century the Duke of Wellington, whose peerage was the reward for his victories over Napoleon, was Great Britain’s greatest national hero.”</p>
<p>“He asked me where was the school cafeteria.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Inappropriate construction of reported speech</p>	<p>In reported speech, the word order is inverted- the verb goes to the end of the sentence, and the verb goes back a tense.</p> <p>“He asked me where the school cafeteria was.”</p>
<p>“Andrew joined university on July, 2012. sometime</p>	<p>Inappropriate preposition</p>	<p>The preposition “on” is used if the month is followed by the exact day, i.e. if there is clear indication of the day, if</p>

<p>after his sister went missing.”</p> <p>10 students (50%)</p>		<p>not, the preposition in is used.</p> <p>“Andrew joined university in July, 2012, sometime after his sister went missing.”</p>
<p>“Andrew joined university on July, 2012. sometime after his sister went missing.”</p> <p>7 students (35%)</p>	<p>Unnecessary insertion of a full stop</p>	<p>The year is not written with a full stop in English.</p> <p>“Andrew joined university in July, 2012, sometime after his sister went missing.”</p>
<p>“Andrew joined university on July, 2012. sometime after his sister went missing.”</p> <p>7 students (35%)</p>	<p>Omission of a comma</p>	<p>Nonrestrictive clauses are separated by commas.</p> <p>“Andrew joined university in July, 2012, sometime after his sister went missing.”</p>
<p>“Andrew joined the university in July 2012. Sometime after his sister went missing.”</p> <p>1 student (5%)</p>	<p>Sentence structure</p>	<p>When this non-restrictive clause is turned into an independent sentence, the chronological order of events changes.</p> <p>“Andrew joined university in July, 2012, sometime after his sister went missing.”</p>
<p>“First of all you need to buy all the ingredients for the dish. Only then you can start with the cooking preparation.”</p> <p>11 students (55%)</p>	<p>Omission of a comma</p>	<p>We use a comma after expressions at the beginning of a sentence like <i>of course</i>, <i>in my opinion</i>, <i>first of all</i>.</p> <p>“First of all, you need to buy all the ingredients for the dish. Only then can you start with the cooking preparation.”</p>
<p>“First of all you need to buy all the ingredients for the dish. Only then you can start with the cooking preparation.”</p>	<p>Misordering</p>	<p>When <i>only after</i>, <i>only if</i>, <i>only then</i> are placed at the beginning of the sentence for rhetorical effect, the subject and auxiliary are inverted.</p>

10 students (50%)		“First of all, you need to buy all the ingredients for the dish. Only then can you start with the cooking preparation.”
“Before discussing the Dutch advantages in early-modern northern commerce it is important to understand the disadvantages to be found in the Dutch economy.” 9 students (45%)	Omission of a comma	Inverted clauses need to be separated by commas. “Before discussing the Dutch advantages in early-modern northern commerce, it is important to understand the disadvantages to be found in the Dutch economy.”
Combination of Mistakes		
/	/	/

Horror and Southern Gothic Elements in Toni Morrison's

Beloved

Abstract

Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* is based on a story of an escaped slave and deals with the difficult topics of slavery and its effects, humanity, and the disfigurement of humanity. These topics are portrayed by using horror and Southern Gothic elements. This paper portrays and analyses the use of those elements and their role in the novel. It first presents the Southern Gothic and horror genres and continues with the exploration of different aspects of the novel, such as the atmosphere of suspense, the murdering mother, the haunted house, the embodiment of the ghost, and the issues of personifying and feeding the pain. The paper shows how Morrison uses those elements to present how slavery disfigured and transfigured the Black person and the Black people and how the scars of slavery run deep. The Gothic and horror elements she utilizes serve to emphasize those scars and provoke feelings of sorrow, uneasiness, anguish, and dread in the reader.

Key words: *Beloved*, Toni Morrison, Southern Gothic, horror, slavery

1. Introduction

Banned by certain schools in the USA due to its content being labelled inappropriate and too explicit for young people, *Beloved* was written by Toni Morrison in 1987. The quality and importance of the novel were recognized by many and the novel won the Pulitzer Prize for

Fiction in 1988 and was adapted as a movie of the same name in 1998. The novel is based on the story of an escaped slave Margaret Garner who was – due to the Fugitive Slave Act (1850) which mandated the return of runaway slaves – found by her former master and who killed one of her children and tried to kill the others, rather than let them live as slaves. Similarly, *Beloved* centres on an African-American family in the postbellum period who have recently escaped slavery and now live in Ohio. The mother, Sethe, killed her two-year-old little girl eighteen years ago to save her from slavery and now she and her daughter Denver live with the consequences. Even though the novel can perhaps best be termed as historical fiction, it is a hybrid of multiple literary genres, a novel that can be designated as horror fiction and classified in the Sothern Gothic genre as well.

The central topic of dealing with the past, which in *Beloved* is the burden of slavery, is commonly found in horror and Southern Gothic fiction, and it is additionally highlighted with the use of horror elements such as the atmosphere of suspense, the murdering mother, and a haunted house. This paper portrays and analyses the use of those elements and their role in the novel. The analysis provides the reader with a deeper understanding of why Morrison includes them in her novel - she needs to express the full weight of the burden of slavery and make the reader feel the consequences of its impact. While a substantial amount of research has been conducted on the novel, so much that more than two decades ago Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu claimed that a virtual industry of *Beloved* scholarship has evolved (59), there are fewer works dealing closely and solely with Southern Gothic and horror elements. The reason for this may be that most researchers agree that the elements of horror and “weirdness are so fleeting that they constitute an insignificant feature of the overall narrative” (786), an opinion proposed by S. T. Joshi in his *Unutterable Horror: A History of Supernatural Fiction*. There are plenty of works dealing with the topics of ghosts and slavery, albeit not from a horror perspective, such

as Elizabeth B. House's "Toni Morrison's Ghost: The Beloved Who is not Beloved" and Christina Bieber Lake's "The Demonic in Service of the Divine: Toni Morrison's *Beloved*."

2. Southern Gothic Genre

The Southern Gothic genre developed from the Gothic, a genre that employs "dark and picturesque scenery, startling and melodramatic narrative devices and an overall atmosphere of exoticism, mystery, fear, and dread" ("Gothic Literature"). The Gothic genre developed in the eighteenth century. Gothic stories explore "contradictions and unease in social conventions" (Wisker 148), but, as Goddu states, differ in characteristics and topics due to their intimate connection to the culture that produces them (qtd. in Lloyd 80). This connection is evident in the American South, where the way the "Gothic registers trauma's lingering effects has thus produced distinctive and peculiar results" (Lloyd 81). Southern Gothic arises from the South's often violent and traumatic history (Street and Crow 2), it is uniquely rooted in its tensions and aberrations (Ærvold Bjerre 1), most of them emanating from the institution of slavery and all it entailed.

Elements of a Gothic depiction of the South—"a benighted landscape, heavy with history and haunted by the ghosts of slavery" (qtd. in Lloyd 80)—started appearing during the antebellum and postbellum nineteenth century with authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain. Flannery O'Connor identifies the "dark and divisive romance novels" of traditional Gothics, the comic-grotesque tradition, and elements of naturalism as literary predecessors to the modern Southern Gothic (Boyd 315). The melding of their characteristics—dealing with failures of the Southern Gothic honour code and distorted family relationships, the clash between violence and humour characteristic of the grotesque, and naturalistic presentation of the fundamental urges and violent actions of primitive characters—is recognizable in the works

of modern Southern Gothic writers such as William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, and Tennessee Williams (Boyd 315). Several “characteristics of Southern Gothic which include the presence of irrational, horrific, and transgressive thoughts, desires, and impulses; grotesque characters; dark humour, and an overall angst-ridden sense of alienation” (Ærvold Bjerre 1) can be found in the novel *Beloved*. Davison states that *Beloved* is a work of the Southern Gothic by virtue of its ideological focus and subject matter (63) and the paper points out different Southern Gothic elements Morrison utilizes to present a story of an escaped slave to the readers. However, since dealing with the trauma of slavery is the topic of the novel, trauma is the most explored element that underlines the others.

3. Horror Genre

Likewise a branch of Gothic writing, horror started its formation as a specific genre in the first half of the nineteenth century with Sir Walter Scott’s “Wandering Willie’s Tale”, an episode from the novel *Redgauntlet* (1824), which has been described as the first horror short story (Nevins 19). The genre further developed with writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Dickens and some modern significant horror genre representatives are Stephen King, Clive Barker, and Anne Rice. Horror uses many Gothic formulae but is more likely to use violence, terror, and bodily harm to provoke feelings of dread, revulsion, fear, horror, or terror (Wisker 8). Michasiw states that while terror seeks to evoke by suggestion and suspense, horror produces disgust and has an appetite for sudden variation and the grotesque (qtd. in Bloom 3). Morrison utilizes both terror and horror in her novel.

Furthermore, horror exhibits what is paradoxically both desired and feared. It uses ‘the uncanny’ - the intrusion of the unfamiliar when the familiar is expected to dramatize that which is normally unthinkable and repressed (Wisker 8). Monsters regarded as abnormal - demons, ghosts, and monsters- are in most cases embodied projections of repressed feelings, urges, and experiences. In Morrison’s novel, the house is haunted by the ghost of Sethe’s third child. The

ghost and its personification may be labelled as literal monsters. They are abnormal occurrences that elicit fear and revulsion. Whilst white slave owners are portrayed as cruel, Morrison makes an interesting choice by not depicting them as equally monstrously as the ghost, even though they caused more pain, fear, and suffering to the African-American slaves than monsters usually do in horror fiction.

4. The Atmosphere of Suspense

The first major Southern Gothic trait of the novel is the atmosphere of suspense, heaviness, and alienation, achieved in various ways, the first of which is the time frame of the novel. The chronological timeline is disturbed by the retrospection the novel abundantly indulges in. Morrison uses retrospection to slowly reveal traumatic events. As the novel progresses, it becomes evident that the characters' repression of these traumatic events is what makes them haunted, ultimately even by a ghost, which symbolizes this pain and suffering. As stated, the memories of the past offer an insight into the characters' troubled lives and "facilitate an increase of intensity as more and more information is added to particular characters' stories" (Łobodziec105).

The author starts with disclosing details about Sethe's troubled past such as the brutal rape—"After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it" (Morrison 17)—and continues with the story of the lashing Sethe was subjected to. Similar violent scenes are interspersed throughout the novel and they create a chilling setting. There are multiple mentions of blood, an explicit Gothic and horror element (Tu 130), which serves as an emotional amplifier. The red colour of blood marks a notion of intensity (Bast 1071), red being the colour of pain and suffering, and influences the readers' emotions of dread and anguish. By slowly revealing the traumatic parts of the characters' pasts in often violent flashbacks and episodes, Morrison builds up the atmosphere of tension and suspense.

The slow build-up of intensity reaches its peaks when the readers are surprised with startling turns of events, such as the appearance of the physical manifestation of the ghost, which makes them wonder how the novel further progresses. Moreover, the atmosphere of suspense is solidified by the characters' crippled sense of time. Trauma possesses their psyche "with a sense of continuity with the past" (Łobodziec 106); pain and shame of memory keep them in a loop where the past and the present mix and suffering is the only fixed element of their lives.

5. The Murdering Mother

The aforementioned suffering is caused by events such as the murder, the aftermath of which is described in the middle of the novel and features the literary trope of a murdering mother. One of the best examples of the trope is featured in the myth that was the inspiration for Euripides' play *Medea*. However, Medea killed her offspring out of revenge for being scorned by her husband Jason, whereas Sethe intends to kill her children because she believes that in her situation killing them is equal to saving them from a life of slavery she had to endure. Stamp Paid, an old friend of the family, describes the murder scene from the point of view of a person barging into the barn in time to save the youngest child. Therefore, the murder itself is not specifically described, only the resulting gruesome scene: "Inside, two boys bled in the sawdust and dirt at the feet of a nigger woman holding a blood-soaked child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other. She did not look at them; she simply swung the baby toward the wall planks, missed and tried to connect a second time" (Morrison 149).

Sethe's act inspires disgust in the eyes of the community. Her desire to save her children ends in infanticide, transforming Sethe into a grotesque character alienated from the community, members of which then start to avoid house number 124. Moreover, Sethe starts to inspire fear in her own daughter, who dreads her mother might kill her too by cutting off her head: "That when she cuts it off it'll be done right; it won't hurt. After she does it I lie there for

a minute with just my head. Then she carries it downstairs to braid my hair. I try not to cry but it hurts so much to comb it” (206). Denver’s fear of her mother portrays the strain Sethe’s former actions placed on their family. Those same actions result in the appearance of the ghost, the fear of which made Sethe’s two sons, Buglar and Howard, leave home by the time they were thirteen. There is no mention in the novel of Sethe trying to chase the ghost away in order to provide a safe environment for her other children. Furthermore, when Sethe tries to remember Buglar and Howard, her memories are muddled due to everything she suffered and she can never clearly recall them, only certain details about them.

Moreover, when Sethe is finally free, she cannot dedicate herself to the role of the mother because her past left deep wounds and she is unable to let go of it and protect her other children in the present. Motherhood remains unattainable for Sethe, just as it had been while she was a slave. Enslaved women rarely, if ever, got to experience motherhood as it is meant to be. Instead, they had to rear their children like cattle and they were often taken from them at a young age. The normality of everyday life, of familiarity and what it is supposed to be, is inverted in the *peculiar* institution of slavery. A mother is not a mother, she is here to breed and provide offspring for the white master. When the men raped Sethe and took her milk, they stole the only nourishment she could provide for her child. Based on this, it is possible to conclude she was not allowed to be a mother. All she had to give, the milk and even her children, went to her master. Therefore, life in slavery makes Sethe the complete opposite of a loving mother, if we judge her by deed only, or the ultimate embodiment of one, if we consider her motivation and love. When she kills her daughter, Sethe believes she is freeing her child from a life of pain and suffering, ensuring her innocent soul remains free, released from her body and the constraints others put upon it.

6. The Haunted House

A common motif in Gothic and horror fiction, the haunted house is introduced at the very beginning of the novel: “124 was spiteful. Full of a baby’s venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims” (Morrison 3). The house is the primary setting of the novel and Morrison presents it as being inseparable from the ghost. The presence of the ghost is what changes the house, an otherwise mundane place, into a portal through which the living encounter the realm of the supernatural (Grider 143). A house is usually chosen as a setting for the haunting because “the intrusion of a threatening, otherworldly force in that otherwise safe setting is terrifying to consider” (Grider 143). However, 124 has not always been haunted. In horror and Gothic fiction, haunted houses are usually described as having a long history, marking events from the thriving of the family to its degeneration, whereas in *Beloved*, Sethe’s family are not ancient dwellers of the house. Denver’s grandmother, Baby Suggs, is the first generation of the family to move there. House number 124 reverberates with the motions the family goes through. When Baby Suggs moves in, it becomes a sanctuary and a gathering place for Black people in need of support. However, Sethe’s act changes that, shutting the family and the house from the outside world:

Before 124 and everybody in it had closed down, veiled over and shut away; before it had become the plaything of spirits and the home of the chafed, 124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised and soothed. Where not one but two pots simmered on the stove; where the lamp burned all night long. Strangers rested there while children tried on their shoes. Messages were left there, for whoever needed them was sure to stop in one day soon. (Morrison 87)

Ever since “the Misery (which is what he [Stamp Paid] called Sethe’s rough response to the Fugitive Bill)” (Morrison 171), the house has been haunted by the ghost of Sethe’s baby.

Further, Carroll states that “haunted houses are generally haunted by the sins of the former inhabitants” (98). In *Beloved*, it is Sethe’s sin, the murder of her third child, that causes the ghost to appear. The *Encyclopaedia of Fantasy and Horror Fiction* states that “ghosts come in many forms, usually insubstantial though sometimes capable of moving solid objects and even in a few cases physically manifested and palpable” (D’ Ammassa 132). The ghost of 124 is a baby which “wasn’t even two years old when she died. Too little to understand” (Morrison 4). Therefore, the ghost behaves like a baby or a toddler would: wilfully and demanding attention. It is firstly presented as the cause Sethe’s two sons ran away: “Neither boy waited to see more; another kettleful of chickpeas smoking in a heap on the floor; soda crackers crumbled and strewn in a line next to the door-sill” (Morrison 3). Visible here is the ruckus poltergeists usually cause in the homes they haunt. They are ghosts who want revenge for the injustice done to them: “Who would have thought that a little old baby could harbour so much rage?” (Morrison 5).

There is ample mention of how the ghost is feeling. It is “not evil. But not sad either.” ‘What then?’ ‘Rebuked. Lonely and rebuked’” (Morrison 13). The ghost is expressing its feelings physically, obstructing everyday life in the house with its tantrums and actions. It intrudes in the lives of the residents, making life difficult or, in the case of Sethe’s sons, impossible there. There are eerie descriptions when Denver hears the baby ghost crawling up the stairs or “when the baby’s spirit picked up Here Boy and slammed him into the wall hard enough to break two of his legs and dislocate his eye” (12), and finally when the ghost, in a white dress, is kneeling next to Sethe while she is praying and embracing her. Sethe and Denver attempt to negotiate with the ghost; however, the ghost’s dominance in 124 is only interrupted by Paul D, who manages to chase the ghost away by “shouting...wrecking everything, screaming back at the screaming house. “You want to fight, come on! God damn it! She got enough without you...The quaking slowed to an occasional lurch, but Paul D did not stop

whipping the table around until everything was rock quiet” (18). Paul D evidently tries to lessen the burden on Sethe’s and his own shoulders since Beloved can be interpreted as an embodiment of collective memory. The only possible way he can think of to deal with the traumatic, violent past, the powerlessness of a slave, is to act, rage and strike back, fight against the pain and simultaneously express it.

Along with being an embodiment of collective memory, the ghost also represents the burden of the past and the trauma Sethe went through. Lloyd states that the “traumatic event is something that is too overwhelming and unprecedented to assimilate into consciousness, and thus its presence is only felt belatedly, in flashbacks and dreams” (81). In the novel, the traumatic event is too overwhelming for its presence to only be felt in flashbacks and dreams. Instead, it is manifested as a ghost of the victim. The ghost’s physical intrusions into Sethe’s daily life act as a constant reminder of what she has done, and the fact Sethe and Denver only try to negotiate with the ghost, but never to banish it, shows that Sethe is unwilling and unable to let go of the past. Moreover, the ghost is not the only presence haunting the house. When Stamp Paid came closer to the house, he heard voices: “he kept on through the voices and tried once more to knock at the door of 124. This time, although he couldn’t cipher but one word, he believed he knew who spoke them. The people of the broken necks, of fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons. What a roaring” (181). In Southern Gothic literature, the house represents the decay of the white family and the values of the Old South they embody, such as pride and belief in the rectitude of slavery (Davison 56). The house in *Beloved* contradicts those Old Southern values. At first, it is a sanctuary for those in need of help or support, rather than a home white people built with money made from slave labour. Instead of being a house they wish to escape from, it is a home former slaves and those in need run towards. However, as time passes, the house changes. Just as the burden of the past is pressing down on Sethe, so it does on the house; it becomes shut away from the world, tortured by memories,

ghosts, and spirits of those who suffered and lost their lives on account of the whites. The voices Stamp Paid hears belong to those who have been wronged and silenced. Here, their suffering is not silenced; they are roaring, demanding satisfaction for what was done to them. By including the ghost and other Gothic and horror elements, Morrison succeeds in portraying the deep wounds slavery leaves on people.

7. The Embodiment of the Ghost

Unlike most other horror fiction where the action will end once the ghost is banished, Morrison decides to render it in a different manner. The ghost returns as a young woman two years older than Denver, the same age that the child would have been had it survived. When scaring the residents of the house does not work, the ghost changes its strategy and comes back as a young woman. Firstly, it is not disclosed that the confused and slightly unhinged young woman who appears at their house is the embodied ghost of the child Sethe killed. That fact makes the gradual discovery of her identity extra horrifying. Having never been named, the ghost of the little girl picks out the one word she had access to, the writing on her tombstone, as her name: Beloved. At first, Beloved, no longer incorporeal, goes through an adjustment period. Her voice is raw and she spends four days sleeping, only waking up for short moments, and then resting and gathering strength. Beloved states that “this place is heavy” (56), which means she has difficulties adjusting to being corporeal and trapped in a human body. It might also indicate that she senses the presence of “the people of the broken necks” (181) and the trauma they represent. Paul D says that Beloved “acts sick, sounds sick, but she don’t look sick. Good skin, bright eyes and strong as a bull” (67). She is able to pick up the rocking chair alone and her voice remains gravelly and has a strange cadence to it. Even though Beloved is now corporeal, she retains the strength of the ghost and is not able to fully adjust her behaviour to match the people around her.

While Beloved sleeps, Denver takes care of her and discovers she is the ghost of the baby Sethe murdered by seeing the scar on her neck and noting her behaviour around Sethe which, at first, was expectant and doting. Beloved asks Sethe questions about her past and patiently listens to her talk. In contrast with her loving behaviour towards Sethe, and a presumption that she might have lost her telepathic powers when she gained a body, Beloved tries to strangle Sethe on the clearing Baby Suggs used to preach at: “The fingers touching the back of her neck were stronger now—the strokes bolder as though Baby Suggs were gathering strength... Harder, harder, the fingers moved slowly... Sethe was actually more surprised than frightened to find that she was being strangled” (Morrison 96). Beloved’s complex behaviour towards Sethe indicates that she wants to get to know her, but also that she still feels the deep rage the ghost felt.

Paul D. comments upon Beloved’s strange countenance and from that point on, Beloved’s presence disrupts the household. She exhibits sexual desire and seduces Paul D in the shed, which resonates with the way slaves had to copulate: “Slaves’ sexual desire is deformed and thus is presented by Morrison in a form of unconventional Gothic description” (Tu 132). Morrison decides to give Beloved a voice and portray her consciousness. Beloved’s thoughts are incoherent, a fact amplified by Morrison’s use of free interior monologue that shows cases the senselessness of Beloved’s mind: “the woman is there with the face I want the face that is mine they fall into the sea which is the colour of the bread ...if I had the teeth of the man who died on my face I would bite the circle around her neck bite it away I know she does not like it” (Morrison 211). However, Morrison uses this monologue that mentions the experience of slaves during the Middle Passage and Beloved’s desire for a return to transcend the time frame of the novel and “suggest an expectation and hope for selfhood long repressed under colonial history” (Tu 131). Moreover, the fact that Beloved was never properly named testifies

to her role as a representative of “repressed collective memory of a violated group” (qtd. in Hart 120), ‘the sixty million and more’.

The gathering of local Black women who pray and holler in front of the house to chase Beloved away can be viewed as a ritual model of a healing process, a formal event in which some activities such as songs or dances are endowed with the power to shape reality (Krumholz 396). Before they chase her away, Beloved appears in the doorway having “taken the shape of a pregnant woman, naked and smiling in the heat of the afternoon sun” (Morrison 261). Impregnating a ghost who symbolizes the suffering of slaves is the final grotesque inversion in the novel. The smile on Beloved’s face and her proud countenance is, interestingly enough, “in direct contrast to the distorted selfness the fugitive slave women have long sustained” (Tu 133). However, as a pregnant woman, a grotesque ghost, the symbol of collective memory and suffering, Beloved can go no further. The local women gather to support and lend their strength to Sethe and they chase the pain away. The ending of the novel is contrasted to a Southern Gothic or a horror genre ending. The fact that Beloved is gone provides hope for the remaining characters. Denver is starting her life in the community, and Paul D tries to convince Sethe to take care of herself.

8. Feeding the Pain

Customarily, in horror fiction “the haunted must deal with a ghost who is the personification of the guilt or remorse they have been holding inside themselves...a complex and interesting protagonist...is forced to battle both the supernatural and his own self” (Hennigh Clausen and Siegel Spratford 26). Whereas Beloved is, in a way, a personification of the guilt Sethe is feeling, Sethe is not fighting her anymore but fulfils her every wish. Beloved desires attention and care from Sethe and in time becomes so gluttonous that she “never gets enough of anything: lullabies, new stitches, the bottom of the cake bowl, the top of the milk” (Morrison 240). Denver is the one to notice that they were “themselves beribboned, decked-out, limp and

starving but locked in a love that wore everybody out” (243). Sethe gives Beloved everything to prove she loves her and to earn forgiveness. However, ghosts are vengeful, even embodied, they feed upon those who wronged them and Beloved would eventually have killed Sethe, which corresponds with the horror trope of a monster seeking to destroy one’s identity (Carroll 43).

The bigger Beloved got, the smaller Sethe became; the brighter Beloved’s eyes, the more those eyes that used never to look away became slits of sleeplessness. Sethe no longer combed her hair or splashed her face with water. She sat in the chair licking her lips like a chastised child while Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it. And the older woman yielded it up without a murmur. (Morrison 250)

Beloved represents the past that never goes away and slowly consumes Sethe. Moreover, the natural order of things in which parents care for their children and watch them grow is inverted and deconstructed into a story of the child killing its mother, dehumanising her and eradicating her sense of autonomy (Davison 64). In a sense, Beloved is eating away at Sethe, and this trope of the cannibalistic child and that of the murdering mother are two extremes of the familial relationship. However, Beloved’s cannibalistic impulse can be equated with the slaves’ terrible journey across the Atlantic, the cannibal trope serving as a replication of white oppression (Hichri 197). White people used the cannibalism rhetoric to present Black people as savages in need of salvation from their cannibalistic ways. However, it was them who were gluttonous in their hunger for more slaves and they ‘consumed’ Black people, body and soul. Sethe wants to give everything to the child she has never got a chance to raise. Representing Beloved in such a grotesque way elicits repugnance and strangeness in a reader and functions as a parody, a critique of the system of slavery that rarely allowed slave women to raise their children.

9. Conclusion

To conclude, horror and Southern Gothic elements are used in the novel mainly to emphasize the deep scars slavery has left on the Black people. The old family house, which is also a haunted house, is actually haunted by the ghost of Sethe's child, Beloved. The ghost becomes corporeal and morphs into a literary trope of the cannibalistic child. The murdering mother and the cannibalistic child emphasize the degradation and inversion of familial bonds caused by slavery. Sethe killed Beloved out of love, but she took away her life and Beloved wants to relive it and is greedy for all she has missed and all Sethe has to give.

The horror fiction trope of a ghost and the embodiment of it "manifest how slavery and racism at their cruellest level disfigure a black slave like Sethe" (Tu 130). The violator is burdened by the impossible memory of inherited guilt and the victim by the just as impossible memory of inherited trauma. Sethe experiences both and they manifest in the form of Beloved, who portrays indelible scars violence inflicted on an entire race. Sethe is haunted by a past that is elusive yet somehow more tangible than the present. She represents the struggle of slaves to claim ownership of their freed selves (Morrison 95), and build a life absolved from the ghosts of the past. The stifling, haunting atmosphere of the novel leaves a lasting impression and makes the reader contemplate slavery in a manner different from the historical perspective. They perceive it as a horror story, which it truly was.

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The Tragic Character of Caddy Compson

Abstract

At the core of *The Sound and the Fury*'s fragmented narrative lies the tragic story of Caddy Compson, told from multiple points of view over the span of several decades. Yet, since the novel primarily focuses on the consequences Caddy's actions have on her family, specifically her brothers, and Caddy herself is never directly given a voice in the narrative, she is often overlooked by readers and literary critics. This paper will analyse her as the tragic heroine of *The Sound and the Fury*, namely how she perfectly fits into Aristotle's archetype of an excessively prideful person with heroic qualities who experiences a terrible downfall due to their tragic flaw. In order to prove this, it will trace her tragic characteristics throughout the novel: her nobility, hubris, fatal flaw (*hamartia*), fall from grace (*peripeteia*), self-realization (*anagnorisis*), *catharsis*, and finally her tragic ending. Caddy was aware of the inevitability of her tragic fate, and knowingly resigned herself to it. Thus, her story is potentially the most tragic of all the Compsons.

Key words: Caddy Compson, Compson family, tragic hero, Willaim Faulkner, Southern literature, *The Sound and the Fury*

Introduction

Faulkner himself stated that *The Sound and the Fury* is "a tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter" (qtd. in Tanaka 1). Despite the fact that she was never directly given a voice in the narrative, Caddy is still the driving force behind all its events. "Caddy's life is a cohesive force in the novel. . . She is the central concern of each brother, and the telling of her story is the common purpose of each section" (Baum 187) — she is the only human connection

of Benjy's life, the focus of Quentin's thoughts, and the perceived ruination of Jason's plans. Even the novel's structure chronologically follows her life's journey:

Because the past is as immediate to Benjy as the present, he reveals Caddy's personality as a child, and his section logically comes first. With an ever-present concern for chastity and honour, Quentin is best suited to tell of Caddy's adolescence and loss of innocence. His section therefore follows Benjy's. . . Jason then, fittingly enough, tells the story of Caddy's adulthood, her divorce and her relationship with her daughter. . . The final section of the novel comments on life without Caddy. (Baum 187)

While the tragedy of her story is often overlooked in favour of those of her brothers, most prominently Benjy and Quentin, Caddy perfectly fits Aristotle's archetype of a person "of noble birth, with heroic qualities whose fortunes change due to a tragic flaw or mistake that ultimately brings about the tragic hero's terrible, excessive downfall" (Hogue). As Faulkner put it, Caddy was "doomed and knew it" (*Appendix 6*) — doomed to have her life dictated by the South's oppressive gender ideologies, and doomed once more to be aware of it, yet unable to stop or change her story's tragic unfolding. Thus, she "accepted the doom without either seeking or fleeing it" (Faulkner, *Appendix 6*), and unwittingly took the rest of her family with her.

1. Nobility

In Aristotle's time, being of noble birth was synonymous with being virtuous (Hogue), so ancient tragedies depicted the heroes of higher social status. Modern tragic heroes can come from any social background as long as they possess heroic qualities. Caddy fits both of these categories by having both the nobility of birth and character. She is born into Southern aristocracy, which effectively makes her the "nobility" of the American South, even if her family's dwindling wealth and moral decay mean it is in name only. More importantly,

“Caddy’s most important and distinctive quality is unselfish love. She is the only Compson who loves without thought for self and with genuine desire for happiness of others, especially for her two innocent brothers, Benjy and Quentin” (Baum 188). This makes her easily the most virtuous member of the Compson family, gaining sympathy of the readers, which then turns to pity once her family and society shun her, and the end of her story sees her alone and unloved, “cold, serene and damned” (Faulkner, *Appendix 12*).

2. Excessive Pride or *Hubris*

Furthermore, Caddy displays a staggering amount of what Southern society would deem as *hubris*. From an early age, “Caddy always tended to rival for priority” (Liu and Wang 566), content to argue with any figure of authority, and do as she likes with no fear of repercussion. She takes Quentin threatening her not to take her dress off as a challenge, and when the children have to eat in the kitchen during Damuddy’s funeral she exclaims: “I don’t care...I’ll walk right in the parlour. I’ll walk right in the dining room and eat supper” (Faulkner, *The Sound* 24). She is also quite assertive, insisting her brothers “mind her,” and at one point even telling their mother “Hush, Mother...You go upstairs and lay down, so you can be sick” (Faulkner, *The Sound* 57). This rebellious, if slightly spiteful nature, observed in a man would be seen as a mark of strong character, and tolerated, if not encouraged. However, Southern society upheld two vastly different sets of gender-based standards, and the same traits in a woman were seen as excessive pride and self-confidence. Caddy’s own mother considered her desire to compete with her brothers by receiving an education to be “vanity and false pride” (Faulkner, *The Sound* 207), showing that in the social context Caddy was born into her desire for agency was regarded as simple arrogance, and her youth’s recklessness as irreparable *hubris*.

However, it is important to consider how these traits originated. The Compson children were “in no way offered love by their parents” (Tanaka 7), who are irreparably marked by the fall of the Old South. Their mother desperately clings to the ideas of Southern Womanhood,

insisting: “I’m a lady. You might not believe that from my offspring, but I am” (Faulkner, *The Sound* 236). She is too self-absorbed to treat motherhood as anything more than an “empty formality” (Takeuchi 33) or provide the siblings with any kind of emotional support. Their father is a somewhat warmer parent, but still an inadequate one. Witnessing the disintegration of the old ways has turned him into a cynical alcoholic, and he passively observes the world around him while life passes him by. Their negligence forces Caddy into a role of a pseudo-mother at a young age, most obviously shown in her relationship with Benjy—“only thing that held him into any sort of reality, into the world at all, was the trust that he had for his sister, that he knew that she loved him and would defend him” (Tanaka 2). Yet, because she is constantly left to do as she pleases, and never suffers any consequences for it, Caddy grows up with an ignorant belief that she can go on in that fashion as an adult. This later leads to her becoming pregnant out of wedlock and, combined with the vindictive attitude of Southern society eventually sees Caddy go from an affectionate, free-spirited girl to a cold shell of a woman posing next to a Nazi officer, with no home or family.

3. Fatal Flaw or *Hamartia*

Caddy’s *hamartia* or fatal flaw stems from two aspects: external and internal. Her external “doom” lies in the fact that she as a “female descendant of a declined aristocratic family is burdened with the myth of the Southern lady. . . [i]n the patriarchal culture of the American South, [where] women were both held in contempt and placed on a pedestal” (Jie), as well as in “the general state of lovelessness into which all the Compson children were born without any choice on their part” (Bowling qtd. in Baum 190). Her internal flaw is, ironically, her very virtue—her selflessness and compassion, of which those around her take advantage without reciprocating until it is all gone.

3.1. External Hamartia

As Joan Williams has pointed out, the Mississippi class system created very restrictive rules and roles for women (Takeuchi 7), which Caddy both failed and refused to fit into. Due to the projection of these values onto her body and personhood, she is condemned by both her family and society for the most natural behaviours, mainly her sexual curiosity and exploration during puberty. Since in such a society a woman's "virtue stood for family's fame and deep-rooted traditional value" (Liu and Wang 560), those Caddy loves best believe they have the right to claim ownership of her, imposing on her the harsh social conventions with little concern for her own happiness or wellbeing:

When Caddy defies the convention and tries to assert her selfhood, all male members show openly their disapproval. The father poses himself as a victim by becoming an alcoholic. To Quentin, his sister's virginity is more important than her happiness as the family honour is supported by her maidenhood. . . Jason in his childhood already shows his disapproval when Caddy at 14 begins to be interested in her appearance. As a grown-up, his cruelty towards Caddy and his niece shows that he is a true misogynist. Even Benjy, the brother with the mentality of a three-year-old, is a strict guardian of Caddy's chastity. He cries furiously each time Caddy does not "smell like trees." All her brothers, each in his own way, try to control Caddy, to "isolate [her] out of the loud world". . . Such male condemnation in the family about Caddy's natural growth and her sexual awareness finally transforms Caddy from an active and courageous little girl full of curiosity about the world into a guilt-ridden person reduced into total silence. (Jie)

Her mother is especially vindictive, seeing how Caddy's more progressive spirit directly clashes with her conservative ideas of being a Southern belle (Takeuchi 34). "Mr. Compson recognizes the irreversibility of the collapse of Southern tradition, tacitly permitting his daughter's liberty"

(Takeuchi 35), but he does not do anything to support her either. Ultimately, they all blame Caddy for the family's misfortune, failing to see how she, as all Faulkner's women, is not herself at the source of feminine evil but is instead the victim of codes and standards of behaviour which are deleterious to her (Chabrier 78).

3.2. *Internal Hamartia*

Caddy's other fatal flaw is found within her character:

Ironically enough, those qualities in her character that are admirable are the ones which lead to her fall: her complete selflessness which leads her to be indifferent to her virginity and to what happens to her; her willingness to put other person's interest first; and her great desire to communicate love. She is too selfless for the world she is in, because all that the world, in the form of Jason and Dalton, knows how to do is take advantage of that selflessness. . . This world is not "the right place for love" for Caddy. In a family which needs tenderness and compassion as urgently as do the Compsons, the destruction of such a capacity for love is a terrifying waste. (Baum 190)

Caddy is essentially too selfless for her own good. The love she hands out so freely is neither appreciated nor reciprocated. Instead, those who receive it see it merely as a resource to be used for their own purposes until it dries up.

4. **Tragic Downfall or *Peripeteia***

Caddy's fall—her *peripeteia*, is quick and steep. In the tradition of a tragic hero, she experiences a sudden tragic turn of events, which is also the central event of *The Sound and the Fury* as a whole. In the complete reversal of her perceived invincibility, she becomes pregnant out of wedlock, and finally accepts the blame for all her "sins." She passively gives in to her

mother's insistence to "find a husband for her" (Faulkner, *The Sound* 86), and allows herself to be married to a man she does not love. Her resignation is made obvious when she tells Quentin: "I've got to marry somebody" (Faulkner, *The Sound* 94) on her wedding day, indicating how little she cares for her husband-to-be. After Herbert finds out the child she is carrying is not his and divorces her, she gives up her right as a mother, believing that she is not the right kind of mother to "keep" her daughter (Jie). In one swift move, she goes from being the darling of a wealthy and respectable family to a disgraced woman forced to give up her daughter because she recognizes that "thrown entirely on her own, Caddy could do little but become a mistress or a prostitute, and she did not want her daughter to become a part of such a life" (Baum 194). Her fall from grace is complete when she is forced to give up Quentin: "Caddy is disowned by Caroline and feels pain and guilt for her own inability to fulfil her responsibility as a 'mother'; moreover, based on her own childhood experiences, she keenly senses her daughter's sadness and loneliness" (Takeuchi 41).

5. Self-realization or *Anagnorisis*

Caddy's marriage to Herbert is also her moment of self-realization—her *anagnorisis*. Whether guilty or not, she recognizes the consequences of her actions, and chooses to take responsibility:

She cares nothing for Herbert, but her concern for Benjy and her father has convinced her that marrying Herbert is the only thing she can do... By marrying Herbert, Caddy hopes she will enable her father to stop worrying about her and to stop drinking. Then he will not die in a year, and Benjy will not have to be sent to Jackson...the marriage is really one of her most selfless acts. (Baum 193)

This, however, proves fruitless—Herbert divorces her, her father drinks himself to death, Quentin commits suicide, and she has to leave her daughter and Benjy at the mercy of

Jason, who she knows never had a drop of warm blood in him (Faulkner, *The Sound* 167). After that, Caddy's tragic fate is sealed, because "once she accepts her fate as a woman of evil who is responsible for the decline of the family and the deaths and unhappiness of the men in the house, there is no way for her to turn back" (Jie).

6. *Catharsis*

Caddy's *catharsis* begins with the giving up of her daughter and reaches its climax once she confronts Jason at the shop. By leaving baby Quentin with the Compsons, Caddy actually acts as a parent should—putting her own pain and desires aside to act in her daughter's best interest. Yet, she never forgets her, and her love for Quentin is evident in the checks she keeps sending Jason despite suspecting he is tricking her, as well as in Jason's comment that she "sort of jumped forward" (Faulkner, *The Sound* 164) as soon as she glimpsed the baby, noting how "[w]hen we turned the corner she was still running [after the carriage]" (Faulkner, *The Sound* 165). Once she realizes how powerless she is in her desperate attempts to ensure her daughter's happiness, she reacts as someone trying to process a severely traumatic event: "'No,' she says, then she begun to laugh and to try to hold it back all at the same time. 'No. I have nothing at stake,' she says, making that noise, putting her hands to her mouth. 'Nuh-nuh-nothing,' she says" (Faulkner, *The Sound* 168).

The reason for her laughter is that she cannot endure the true weight of the loss of her home; moreover, the emptiness of her life has resurfaced from the depths of her mind. . . Her behaviour was one factor that contributed to her brother's suicide and her father's alcoholism and death; her mother disowned her and forbade her from meeting with her daughter; and her younger brother hates her and repeatedly torments her daughter. When she acknowledges this series of causes and effects, despair and sadness overflow and are, paradoxically, released through laughter. (Takeuchi 42)

In that moment, Caddy Compson realizes there is nothing left for her to lose.

7. The Tragic Ending

Finally, the end of Caddy's story is certainly a tragic one. The last we are told of her is that she "[v]anished in Paris with the German occupation, 1940" (Faulkner, *Appendix 7*), twice divorced and childless. She, who has always been so tender and caring to those around her, never got to be a mother to a child of her own, or have a true family to show her love she had been denied. The tragedy of her character lies in its deterioration: "Caddy has changed from a loving, innocent young girl to a feverish, anxious woman" (Baum 190), to a Nazi's mistress, looking "ageless and beautiful, cold serene and damned" (Faulkner, *Appendix 12*). As Baum puts it:

Caddy is damned because she has become cold, empty-eyed and passionless. . . She has lost her capacity for love, and Dilsey's comment "What a sinful waste..." is the most apt summary of her tragedy. Even selfless love can result in the destruction of the person who practices it. The wasteful loss of Caddy's great capacity for compassion and sacrifice makes her fate the most unbearable and tragic doom in *The Sound and the Fury*. (195)

Thus, even though she may not be dead, it matters little, as Caddy "doesn't want to be saved hasn't anything anymore worth being saved for nothing worth being lost that she can lose" (Faulkner, *Appendix 11*).

Conclusion

To summarize, *The Sound and the Fury* is, in its essence, the account of the tragic life of Caddy Compson. Noble by both birth and character, she was doomed from the moment she was born a woman in the Southern patriarchal society and a daughter of a loveless, decaying family, as well as by her own selfless nature. Her conviction that she was somehow above the

social conventions led to her out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and the South's vindictive double standards made her into a social pariah, with no place to call home and nobody to love her. She took responsibility for her actions, attempting to minimise their damage by passively allowing her family to marry her off to Herbert, but after the attempted cover-up failed her fall from grace was complete—she was shunned by her family, left to fend for herself, and forced to give up her daughter to the same people who withheld love from her when she was a child. Throughout the novel, we witness these blows slowly transform her from the innocent girl freely using her immeasurable capacity for love to a cold shell of a woman, dead in everything but body. The story of Caddy Compson thus becomes a story of death—the death of innocence, the death of family, and the death of love. The most beautiful soul of *The Sound and the Fury*, the one Faulkner in interviews called his darling, is the bearer of the saddest, possibly most tragic fate of all in the novel. Thus, the world she leaves behind is marked not by her selfless love, but its absence, and as Dilsey had put it—what a sinful waste (Faulkner, *The Sound* 77).

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Elements of Dystopia in Arctic Monkeys' *Tranquillity Base*

Hotel & Casino

Abstract

Tranquillity Base Hotel & Casino, the world-famous English rock band Arctic Monkeys' sixth studio album, with some of its song lyrics and topics stemming from science fiction, exhibits dystopian features. It focuses on certain aspects of modern life, such as the relationship of humans with technology and religion, obsession with the end of the world, overload of information, and extreme reliance on electronic devices, which are slowly leading to a state of dystopia. Even though the album varies in song topics, the dystopian influence has a presence in the overall concept. Being set on an undisclosed location on the Moon and with a Las Vegas-like atmosphere, the album pulls together fictional elements with day-to-day struggles and advances of humankind. The band's frontman and founder Alex Turner's song writing is, as always, very layered, sophisticated, and it lends to lengthy analysis and interpretation. These dystopian topics and influences are quite nuanced and subtle, meaning that they require a certain level of analysis. This paper will exemplify these dystopian instances in the band's song lyrics.

Keywords: Arctic Monkeys, *Tranquillity Base Hotel & Casino*, dystopia, music, song lyrics

Tranquillity Base Hotel & Casino, the sixth studio album by the Arctic Monkeys, came out in 2018 and presented to the listener a popular dystopian topic such as the relationship of humans and technology, through which a fear of losing people's inherent human qualities is expressed. According to Claeys, a dystopia is an inverted and negative version of utopia, that is, the opposite of an imaginary good place (155). The title itself introduces the topic since Tranquillity Base, one part of the title, references an actual location on the Moon, that is, the iconic moment in human history – the Moon landing. Namely, the title of the album connects outer space with the everyday world, it introduces regular events happening on a surreal location. It twists reality by making it unsettling and unpleasant, putting together two concepts that completely clash with each other – everyday life on a surreal location which is quite hard to imagine, even in today's modern world. Tranquillity Base, the main location of the album is the exact place on the Moon where Neil Armstrong first set foot (Smith), and it is connected with a sort of Las Vegas-like phenomenon of a hotel with an adjacent casino. The casino and the hotel both represent non-places, as Augé would define them, marked by transience and lacking localized culture (28). This allows for the listener to, simply by reading the title, be able to speculate about some of the major topics of the album, such as the development of technology, gentrification, or possible life on another planet. This is just one of the many ways through which Alex Turner, the band's songwriter and frontman, uses dystopia as a motif in his writing of the album.

Having set the tone via the album title, Turner begins to further develop the aforementioned topics, in some songs more than in others. In the first track of the album, "Star Treatment," Turner mentions Orwell's famous dystopian novel *1984* by contrasting it with 2019, the year that the album came out, "1984, 2019" (Turner "Star Treatment" 8). In an interview with OOR magazine, Turner sheds some light on the reason as to why he decided to refer to *1984*. This was his way of showing appreciation for science fiction, but also of showing

that, despite people raving about this book, they did not realise that a mild version of the world in 1984 was, and still is, forming around them (Engelshoeven 22). The lyric preceding the one about 1984, “Everybody’s on a barge / Floating down the endless stream of great TV” (Turner “Star Treatment” 6-7), by using the metaphor of a barge, compares the human race to cargo being transported, mindlessly, following the media and excessive consumption. With this motif, people are likened to sheep or cattle, which is mindlessly following their leader or the shepherd. This is a critique of modern society which shows how simple it is nowadays to sway certain people to believe anything just because it is presented on a mass media outlet such as television. Sometimes, unaware of the fact that they are being led in a certain direction, people tend to not understand the amount of subliminal messaging and information they receive on a daily basis, since it is delivered in an attractive package such as mass media, smartphones, television, and so on. From ridiculous hoaxes, for example, one with Bill Gates where he is pictured holding a sign which instructs people to share the photo on their Facebook profiles and it will result in Gates promptly sending them 5,000 dollars to actual fake news. A case in point is a story that circulated around the Internet in 2016 which led people to believe that Pope Francis was endorsing the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump (“Fake News”).

Massive information consumption through various media channels is found in another song which deals with this particular dystopian theme: “Four Out of Five,” the sixth song on the album (Dombal). In it, Turner writes about putting a taqueria on the roof of his imaginary hotel and casino, and it receiving rave reviews, that is, four stars out of five, as the title suggests. This is another way in which Turner connects the real with the surreal, “I put a taqueria on the roof, it was well reviewed” (“Four Out of Five” 8). For it all to be even more surreal, Turner decided to mention Clavius, one of the Moon’s larger craters, saying how it is also being populated, and around it “Cute new places keep on popping up” (7). Ironically, the name of the taqueria, as the songwriter states, is Information Action Ratio. This is a reference to Neil

Postman's concept by the same name, which is based on the fact that there is an overload of information in the world today, as presented in his work, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. The main idea of the concept is that before the modern age and telegraphy, people were able to control what they wanted to share and what they wanted to know, but nowadays information is given about questions that were never asked in the first place; people are being bombarded by information, no matter how (un)necessary it is (Postman 69).

Another motif presented in this song is gentrification, "Since the exodus, it's all getting gentrified" (7). Here, Turner emphasizes the fact that in modern society everything becomes gentrified, and that there is a strong possibility that the same will happen during the colonisation of the Moon. For him, gentrification is a negative process as it implies class division and exploitation. Referencing a taqueria on the roof of a luxurious establishment such as Tranquillity Base Hotel and Casino, the song shows how the upper classes take advantage of the unprivileged, more precisely minorities, not only by using them as cheap workforce, but also by exploiting their culture. In particular, this could also be seen as a political commentary on the situation in the United States, that is, on their relationship with immigrants, mainly the ones coming from Mexico. This type of class division is one of the main themes of dystopia – the 'others' or the unwanted people become removed and isolated from society.

Another obvious dystopian topic covered in three of the album's songs is the relationship of humans and technology. The first song dealing with this topic is "The World's First Ever Monster Truck Front Flip." Turner writes about technological advances and how one can conquer the world with just one push of a button, how everything is possible and available. In this song, the motif is subtly presented in the opening lyrics, "You push the button and we'll do the rest / The exotic sound of data storage / Nothing like it, first thing in the morning" (1-2). It is obvious that the songwriter is trying to convey the dystopian nature of the modern world

in which technologization reduces human contact. The first thing most people do right after waking up is grabbing their phones instead of talking to another person face to face. Whether they are looking at social media, reading and responding to e-mails, or simply turning off their alarm clocks, the dependence on technology is immense. Another way of showcasing dystopia here is calling the sound of data storage “exotic.” One can assume that the songwriter is referencing any sort of sound coming from a technological device, since every use of it results in some kind of storing of data. Calling it exotic, Turner is being ironic, making it seem as if this sound is something different and unusual, but it has become a part of people’s daily lives.

The second song out of the three, “Batphone,” deals with a similar topic, mainly with the major use of mobile devices. It could be concluded that this song is the most dystopian in its heavy reference to the dystopian view of modern living enhanced by the use of technological devices. The main focus of the lyrics is the usage of smartphones and life as seen through them. There is an air of irony in the opening lyrics of the song, “I want an interesting synonym / To describe this thing / That you say we’re all grandfathered in / I’ll use the search engine” (1-3). Turner is trying to understand why he is glued to his smartphone, and he decided to search for the answer by looking it up on that exact same device. With this, he is able to show the constant loop humanity is currently stuck in – everything is accessible and everything must be accessed and answered immediately, even if it is not necessary or important. Yet, there is still no answer to the main question of why this is all happening. He is trying to understand how all of this came to be, and why there was not enough disagreement; where did all of this compliance come from, how did humanity simply accept that this is now the new mode of living. As Matek states in “Dreaming of electric sheep: technology and the construction of human identity”, whatever our identity is composed of, it is certain that it will change together with the world we live in (72). It is impossible for humanity to remain the same, to not develop or stagnate, but what Turner is saying here is that humanity is losing its natural urges. There is almost a subtle

presence of the writer's disappointment in humanity primarily because of the complicit behaviour overtaking the natural desire of the human race to explore, rebel and be unique; he is disappointed in the fact that there was no explicit disagreement, everyone simply accepted the changes, no matter how good or bad they were. Another possible interpretation of this line is that people need a search engine, such as Google, to further express their thoughts because they are not capable in doing so on their own, they lack the language. As Turner describes it, he wants to explain something, he needs a synonym, but he has to use a search engine to help him.

In the following lines, Turner once again focuses on the overuse of mobile devices, "Have I told you all about the time that I got sucked into a hole / Through a handheld device?" (7-8). This particular motif appears in all of the songs on the album, which leads to believe that the songwriter finds this aspect of modern life the most dystopian of all. Today, almost every single person on the planet owns a cellular device, be it a smartphone or not. According to statistics, there are 6.64 billion (83.07%) smartphone and 7.26 billion (90.72%) mobile phone users in the world today (Turner, Ash). Everyone is connected to the Internet in one way or another; and everyone is subject to the vast wave of information coming their way. In the aforementioned line, Turner shows the dystopian nature of these devices by comparing them to "a [black] hole" – by using this metaphorical expression, he is highlighting how a device, or overall technology, has the ability to affect human nature – it makes people docile. As Foucault defines it, a docile body can be manipulated and shaped as easily as a piece of clay (135). They are disinterested in anything else but in that what is in front of them at that moment in time and easily swayed into believing and mindlessly following anyone or anything. Not only does the song shed light on the biggest issue of all, by being completely focused on technology, it also shares a new way of looking at life in general, seeing it as a "spectator sport" (Turner, "Batphone" 5). This metaphor used to describe today's life could be linked to the major popularity of "vloggers" or people sharing their lives on social media such as You Tube,

Instagram, Facebook, and Tik Tok. It is a sort of spectator sport because all one does is watch and follow the people they are interested in. Important parts of life are being overshadowed by the petty things that do not matter, and major life and world events are almost fading into the background of day-to-day life.

The third and final song out of the group is “Science Fiction.” Even though its title encourages the listener to believe that the song will primarily deal with science fiction as a genre, it is once again multidimensional in its interpretation. When viewed from a dystopian perspective of the relationship of man and technology, the most prominent line of the song is the bridge, “Got the world on a wire / In my little mirror, mirror on the wall / In the pocket of my raincoat” (Turner 13-14). The songwriter is most obviously referring to a mobile device; it is usually carried in the pocket of someone’s jacket or a purse, wherever it can be easily accessible. The part of the line where Turner refers to the “little mirror on the wall” could be an instance of intertextuality, that is, referencing the popular fairy tale *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, and the evil queen’s memorable speech. This is a possible mention of vanity caused by social media often used on a smartphone. As previously stated, life has become a spectator sport, and the mirror through which we view ourselves and the people around us is our phone. It has taken the place of a mirror, but in another way. There is no hiding when looking at a mirror because it is the only thing that reflects the truth, and nowadays, the truth is the hardest to cope with. By using a phone as a mirror, the person can control their image, not only theirs, but also the way that they view the world as a whole, and the people in it. This is similar to Charlie Brooker’s *Black Mirror*, a dystopian TV series which focuses on the abuse of technology by using the metaphor of a mirror, a black mirror, which exemplifies all of the screens surrounding us, such as our smartphone screens, TVs, computer screens, and so on (Brooker). Even Brooker himself, in the book *Inside Black Mirror* which came out in 2018, said how in the 2010s “the worst thing anyone said about Twitter was that it was full of people

wasting their lunch breaks” (12). Nowadays, the *Black Mirror* dystopias are, according to Brooker, manifesting themselves in the real world, smartphones are twice as addictive as cigarettes, and various atrocities are a normal daily occurrence on our social media timelines (12).

Apart from modern-day issues such as the advancement of technology and loss of humanity, the album also mentions some of the more general topics in terms of dystopia. The first topic of this kind is religion. The dystopian view of religion and its relationship with humans is covered in the album’s third song, “American Sports.” With the advance of technology, the relationship of people with God has changed: the holy mass is now broadcast; there is a huge variety of religious applications to be downloaded, and many other outlets through which faith can be expressed and followed. The specific instance Turner focuses on is a new kind of communication with God, “Emergency battery pack, just in time for my weekly chat / With God on videocall” (7-8). Videocall, a way of communicating via image and sound is now being used as a means of communication with a Higher Being. This can be connected to Matek’s work in which she writes about the new religion in Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Mercerism. Namely, that new religion appeared when an empathy box, an electronic device, was invented, which directly links religion, or a feeling of belonging to the human race to technology (Matek 85-86). In the context of the song, this empathy box is a smartphone. By using this metaphor, Turner is able to show the disconnect of people with not only reality, but with regular day-to-day life. It is not enough to follow a certain religion, today it is necessary to receive an exorbitant amount of information, to be bombarded with anything and everything available; even being religious takes on a new form. Another instance of multiple meanings is present in this line as well, this could also be a way of expressing the marketability of faith in contemporary society. The songwriter receives an “emergency battery pack” and is now able to have his videocall with God. This “battery pack” could refer to the

charging, or even purchasing of a cell phone, or even of paying an amount of money to be able to join in on this videocall. When reading and listening to this line, the songwriter is absolutely unphased with the fact that he is about to chat with a Higher Being, he finds it as something perfectly normal.

The second more general dystopian topic is the apocalypse, or the end of the world. As Riven Barton states in her work, this obsession with the apocalypse is often accompanied by a shift in thought; a loss of belief in the former way of living is present, traditional values are being turned away from, and there is an overall shift in the way that people perceive life (5-6). Turner's song, "One Point Perspective", deals with the issue of apocalypse as a dystopian motif: "Oh, just as the apocalypse finally gets prioritised" (8-9). Turner writes about the apocalypse being prioritised, meaning that a fatalistic view of life is the one that is most present in modern-day society. The apocalypse has always been a major theme in every possible part of human life, but in the more recent years it has indeed become prioritised and increasingly mentioned and discussed. As Barton suggests, the apocalyptic, dystopian view of the world is something that comes naturally, since it is usually provoked by technological and cultural changes and advancement. What is interesting is specifically that fatalistic approach, and Barton explains that it is also very obvious to follow, since there is a large difference between the actual results of a new era and its predictions and goals, so it is only expected for people to become disappointed and for a lack of faith in humanity to appear (6).

Tranquillity Base Hotel & Casino is a multi-layered dystopian commentary on the world today. The interesting aspect of this album is that, even though it has a dystopian approach to the modern world, it still does not describe it as fatalistically as some classic dystopian works, such as Orwell's *1984*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, or even Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* do. All of these works make sure to highlight the disappointment with the human race, which is the one to blame, the one who allowed all of the "bad" to happen. This album is a social

commentary on what the songwriter finds interesting and observes in his own and in the life of others. Unlike other albums covering this topic such as, the 1974 David Bowie's *Diamond Dogs* or My Chemical Romance's *Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys*, a concept album with a dystopian theme that came out in 2010, *Tranquillity Base Hotel & Casino* simply describes Turner's observations of the world as it is today, it does not imagine and present a whole new dystopian, post-apocalyptic world.

In conclusion, it is obvious that this album references dystopia in most of its songs by following the influence of classic dystopian literature. Turner treats traditional dystopian themes and puts them in a contemporary context by referring to smartphones and information overload pointing to the genre's continuous relevance.

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Reviews and Opinion Works

Netflix's *Shadow and Bone* (2021)

* * *

Shadow and Bone is a streaming television show developed for Netflix that aired on 23 April 2021. This fantasy show is based on the plot and characters authored by Leigh Bardugo, a contemporary Israeli-American writer. Specifically, the show follows the narrative of *Shadow and Bone* (2012), the first book in the trilogy of the same name, with its sequels being *Siege and Storm* (2013) and *Ruin and Rising* (2014). The show also includes characters from Bardugo's duology consisting of *Six of Crows* (2015) and *Crooked Kingdom* (2016). Netflix's show follows Alina Starkov, a cartographer for the military of her country, Ravka, as she discovers her Grisha powers. She turns out to be a rare type of Grisha, who are people with special abilities. Depending of the area they control, they belong to the order of Corporalki, those who control the body, Etherealki, who have powers over the natural elements, and Matherialki, who manipulate composite material. Alina has the ability to summon light – a power never before seen in Ravka and one crucial to destroying the Fold, a strip of unnatural darkness and desolation that has split the country into East Ravka and West Ravka. Alina is brought to the capital and trained under the patronage of General Aleksander Kirigan. Meanwhile, a bounty has been placed on her in the trade city of Ketterdam, where Kaz Brekker, the leader of the gang called Crows, is hired to kidnap her. Alina is faced with accepting her powers and what they make her, as well as with the difficult task of destroying the Fold, which

has divided her people for centuries. Evidencing the success of the show, the show was renewed for a second season in June 2021.

The production involved experienced and acclaimed cast and crew. The show was developed by Eric Heisserer, who is best known for his Academy Award nominee *Arrival* (2016), the 2010 version of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Bird Box* (2018). Among the producers was Shawn Levy, who worked on the *Night at the Museum* movie franchise (2006-2014) and the show *Stranger Things* (2016-present), among his other titles. The musical score was composed by Joseph Trapanese, a prolific composer for movies and shows, some of the titles he has worked on being *Straight Outta Compton* (2015), *The Greatest Showman* (2017), and *Robin Hood* (2018). The cast includes Ben Barnes (*The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (2008), *Dorian Gray* (2009), *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of Dawn Treader* (2010)) as General Kirigan and Zöe Wannamaker (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001), *My Week with Marilyn* (2011) as Baghra, Alina's Grisha instructor. The crew's experience with works of the fantastic is indubitable and they successfully bring the *Shadow and Bone* characters, plots, and settings to life. The fact that Leigh Bardugo herself was one of the show's executive producers certainly contributed to the faithful representation of her material.

Of course, the script and directorial instructions would not be enough if the actors were subpar. Ben Barnes masterfully embodies General Kirigan, the charismatic leader of Ravka's Grisha army. He stands out in every scene he is in, but the rest of the cast, although with less acting experience under their belts, do not pale in comparison. Jessie Mei Li accurately represents Alina and her struggle to come to terms with who she is. Archie Renaux is the show's Malyen "Mal" Oretsev, a tracker in the army who has been Alina's best friend since their time in the orphanage they grew up in. Mal's character is the one who arguably profits the most from the show – the trilogy is written from Alina's first person point of view, whereas the show also

covers what Mal is up to when he and Alina get separated. In this way, he is more fleshed out and becomes as important as other characters that are developed because Alina interacts with them. In Alina's and Mal's characters, the show diverges from the source material in regard to their race. Some among the audience may be surprised to see them stemming from Shu Han, a country inspired by Mongolia and China, when they are only mentioned as being from the Russian-inspired Ravka in the novels. While the change of their race is a conscious decision to decrease the overwhelming number of white characters in the trilogy and show more inclusivity and diversity, it does stay in line with the material's intention and tone. Alina and Mal are always shown as struggling to fit in, especially she, due to her powers that set her apart from everyone else. Tackling racism is not unique to the show. It is one of the most prominent social problems present in Bardugo's most recent Grishaverse novels, *King of Scars* (2019) and its sequel *Rule of Wolves* (2021), so it does not feel unnatural to see it play out in the show.

Because the plots of the two series were not initially connected – the *Six of Crows* duology being set two years after the conclusion of the original trilogy – the show developers had to think around the timeline problem. All issues were solved seamlessly so the show serves as a prequel to the plot of the duology. It follows the intriguing story of Nina Zenik (Danielle Galligan), a Corporalki Grisha, and Matthias Helvar (Calahan Skogman), a Fjerdan Grisha hunter. As these characters are only recurring, their story may seem unconnected to the rest of the plot at first, but they are still a valuable addition. Their interactions most explicitly bring to light the racism and fear of otherness present in a considerable number of people living both in and out of Ravka. The audience also gets to know Kaz (Freddie Carter) and two members of the Crows, Inej Ghafa (Amita Suman), a skilled spy, and Jesper Fahey (Kit Young), a sharpshooter. Carter is convincing in his role of a young gang leader and the audience is sure to be drawn in by the mystery surrounding his origins. Inej is replicated almost to perfection by Amita Suman, who easily slips into the role of the so-called Wraith and preserves the character's

faith and sense of righteousness. So far, Young's Jesper Fahey may be wrongly written off as a mere comic relief character, but the actor's performance is engaging and the script does not fail to suggest more about Jesper's hidden depths. Except for being exceptional in their roles, the actors also manage to replicate the dynamics that the characters share in the novels.

Generally, the show's plot and character interactions were all carefully crafted. As with any work of the fantastic genre, it is necessary to familiarise the audience to the setting, but sometimes these introductory and explanatory segments can feel a bit stilted. Luckily, in *Shadow and Bone*, the exposition is organically incorporated into the script for the most part – the way characters interact, the situations they are in, and the contents of their dialogues naturally introduce the audience to background stories and the wider world of Grishaverse. However, there is a lot to catch and connect in terms of characters, places, hierarchies, and the different kinds of Grisha. The first episode is a bit exposition-heavy and may seem overwhelming to viewers who are not familiar with Bardugo's material, but once the stage is set, the show focuses on the main settings. Hence, the viewers should gain a good grasp on the geopolitics of Grishaverse, but the script then focuses their attention on the main characters and how they fit into the universe. Mystery and drama, both present in the show, work exceptionally well in this fantasy setting.

Furthermore, much attention has been given to the atmosphere of the show. One of the techniques used concerns the colour palettes that match the settings they were applied to. Namely, pale and bleak colours create a sombre mood for the scenes that take place in the military, scenes set in the debauchery of Ketterdam are warm and saturated, while the cold opulence of the Ravkan palace may hint at Alina's loneliness during her stay in it. The scene montage also plays a key role in setting the tone – for example, the cut scenes capture the frenzy of Ketterdam. Moreover, cinematic parallels and flashbacks are used to develop relationships

and explore different characters in depth. With most of the plot taking place in Ravka, the majority of music used in the show is characterised by the recognisable lilts of Russian and other Slavic tunes. To add even more layers to the setting and contribute to creating a believable world, fictional languages, like Fjerdan – Fjerda being a country inspired by the Scandinavian area – and Old Ravkan, were created for the show by David J. Peterson and Christian Thalmann. The costumes add to the rich worldbuilding, as well. They help the viewer discern the nationality, class, and occupation of the characters. Again, the most prominently featured are Ravkans, whose fashion seems like an amalgamation of influences – the Grisha *keftas*, being at the same time embroidered and bulletproof, encompass both tradition and modernity; the upper classes dress like the nobility from the second half of the 19th century; the military dress looks appropriate for the early 20th century. All of this provides for a plethora of puzzle pieces that make up the interesting and innovative Grishaverse.

All in all, the show should provide quality entertainment to both long-time fans of the Grishaverse and to the new viewership. What it brings to the table is a fast-paced quest, intricate mystery, a diverse cast of characters, a morally grey villain, a bit of romance, and good old adventure. It drops just enough hints about future developments and background stories to continue occupying the audience even after the credits have rolled.

On fanfiction, mass media and the pornographization of contemporary culture

* * *

The discussion on fanfiction has picked up some steam, especially in recent years, with many a young adult novels and especially many TV series and movies being used as a basis for such texts. At first, the copyright legality of such texts was scrutinized, but in 2021, a year in which the Internet has garnered such a strong and everlasting presence in our everyday lives; and seems to be only rapidly evolving and expanding, so is the discussion on fanfiction.

Is it good or is it bad? Legitimate or illegitimate? I wish here not to make any definitive judgement on either side of those spectrums, but only to offer a bit of personal insight on the topic as a relatively active participant in its matters.

It has, of course, been observed that, since man became literate, he holds a certain creative power, and naturally wishes to express it. However, for quite some time, the freedom to express oneself was not always a given. Now, it seems, it can be obtained with a simple click of a finger. With the rise of mass media, almost anyone and everyone can release their innate propensity for creative expression; and not only that but instantly share it with the world. Many sites have been established since the rise of the Internet, with AO3 being one of the most popular and widely used today, where flocks of young people can gather around a particular shared interest and share their stories, as well as practice their own ability to write. This appears to me to be a very good aspect of these kinds of sites. Under their own initiative, young people can

not only consume media, but make it, and in doing so practice, practice, practice. They can practice; firstly– either their own or their second or even third – the language skills, then their ability to form and expand a narrative, and finally, in connection with the narrative, how to properly convey and give voice to an idea – their own idea. The fact that such a piece of work is, in a way, an ‘extension’ of an already existing work of art, plays little part here in my mind, because by practicing how to voice your inner hidden creativity, you can only work towards strengthening and developing it, and in the end – using it to delve into your own creative endeavors.

Which brings me to the other side, the so-called ‘bad’ side of fanfiction, if you so will. Since the inception of its notion, it has been enveloped in the contention over just how much sexuality is part of its expression. This is most prevalent in the discussions over the famed (or rather, infamous) piece of contemporary pulp fiction – *Fifty Shades of Grey*. It is no secret that the novel started as fanfiction on another rather hotly debated young adult series, the *Twilightsaga*. Its creator, E. L. James, has even stated that the work came about as a certain answer to her own ‘middle-age crisis’. If a pornographic piece of work has managed to come about in such conditions, it should not be a surprise that most of fanfiction, mostly written by people in the adolescent age range, should also be pornographic in nature. Such seems to be the price of the freedom of expression – the ability to express one’s own sexuality, which of course, is perfectly valid. But to what extent? This, in turn, seems to be the larger question. Should it even be monetized? Most of the time, if one hears the word ‘fanfiction’, one could – and mostly is – reminded of the fact that it is ‘a way for (young) people to let off some steam’. Pornography and its serious downsides are a part of a much wider cultural problem in today’s time, and the downsides only appear to be getting worse; with addiction, exploitation and objectification being just a small part of it – and fanfiction certainly has its own part in the problem. With the rise of mass media, pornography seeps into every faucet of the way we consume such

contemporary media. For a TV series to be successful, it necessarily has to also show some nudity – one only has to look at a popular series such as *Game of Thrones*, or *Altered Carbon* (whereby, fans even expressed discontent at the fact the second season took more of a turn towards ‘a soap-opera’ and showed less nudity). Fanfiction is, mostly out of need, free for consumption (the question of copyright mentioned at the beginning prevents the authors to make any money off it). As a result, smut in written form is even *more* accessible to us.

Fanfiction certainly has many good, as well as bad aspects. To what extent does free speech apply, and should the sites that provide it be regulated in any way? Is there a definitive answer to this question? For now, it is certainly one to give some serious thought about.

The Dystopia of The Wasteland in *Mad Max: Fury Road*

Mad Max: Fury Road is a 2015 post-apocalyptic dystopian film directed by George Miller. The film is a part of a larger *Mad Max* franchise, and it stars Tom Hardy and Charlize Theron. The film shows Hardy as Max Rockatansky and Theron as Imperator Furiosa joining their forces to take down Immortan Joe, played by Hugh Keays-Byrne, and free the people of the Citadel. This review aims to give a critical commentary about the film's dystopian features and how well they were executed.

To begin with, *Mad Max: Fury Road* is set in the post-apocalyptic Australia. Nuclear war for oil resources is the cause of the post-apocalyptic and dystopian society, which exists in the Wasteland. The first frame of the film's visual setting perfectly depicts the feeling of nothingness and void left by the war. A scene of a lizard with two heads further depicts the physical and obvious effects of the nuclear war (*Mad Max: Fury Road* 00:01:20). During a particular sequence, the viewers are shown a branding of Max's blood type and other relevant information about his physique on his back (00:03:55). Max and other healthy humans serve only one purpose. They keep the leader's army strong and healthy so that they can protect the Citadel, which is the only resource of fresh water in the Wasteland. The authoritarian leader of the Wasteland is called Immortan Joe, his name denoting his immortality and power. As an effect of the nuclear war, he is physically weak and sick. However, he is kept alive by a respiratory mask. He is possessive over his five wives, whom he mercilessly uses to produce the healthiest and strongest male heir to his throne. Besides his wives, other women serve him

by constantly producing breast milk. He has successfully brainwashed his young male soldiers to give up their lives for him and the Citadel. He rules over the Citadel and its people, controlling them by withholding their right to clean water. One can see the dystopian character of the film when Immortan Joe releases fresh water for the citizens of Citadel: “It is by my hand you will rise from the ashes of this world. Do not become addicted to this water, it will get a hold of you, and you will resent its absence” (00:08:35). The irony of this statement and the idea that the citizens of the Citadel could even get addicted to water is what makes the society of the Wasteland dystopian. The dystopian features become even more prominent when seeing Immortan Joe and his family living with a surplus of water and food, while the people outside of his close circle are on the brink of death (00:13:45).

Furthermore, the theme of feminism is also prominent in this dystopian society. Immortan Joe owns five wives, who exist to produce healthy offspring and warlords. Led by Furiosa, who is sent to Gas Town and the Bullet Farm, the wives come up with a plan to escape. Instead of completing the supply run, Furiosa takes her War Rig and drives off in the direction of the Green Place, a peaceful fertile land that she remembers from her childhood. Before they escape, the female characters leave behind written messages: “Our babies will not be warlords, we are not things” and “You cannot own a human being. Sooner or later, someone pushes back” (00:14:15–00:14:30). By doing this, Furiosa becomes the embodiment of the fight for women’s rights. The film then follows Furiosa in her adventure to escape Immortan Joe’s army and how she fights off enemies. This shows the power of a woman who is set on achieving a goal, no matter what she finds in her way. Furiosa is later accompanied by Max, but this does not reduce her strength as a female character because Max’s character is simplified down to very little to almost no dialogue. Furiosa is the one in charge, and her planning, intelligence, and calmness save them from Immortan Joe. The character of Furiosa is not sexualized, and she does not enter

a love relationship to save the world. Unlike the rest of the army that works for Immortan Joe, Furiosa is not brainwashed by his power and authoritarian character.

Additionally, one can compare his Warboys, who are handpicked at a young age, to other dystopian works in which certain citizens blindly follow their leaders. For example, in George Orwell's *1984*, the ministers working for the Ministry of Love, like O'Brien, blindly follow their role in society. In *1984*, citizens are taught and praised if they turn their rule-breaking family members over to the authority, making Big Brother and devotion to him more important than their families. Warboys also never back down in the process of protecting Immortan Joe and the Citadel. They view death as a service to their leader and are ready to give up their lives for him at any moment. All Warboys behave the same and have no other interests or hobbies besides building machines and vehicles and going to battles for their leader. Moreover, they cover themselves in white powder to show respect and resemblance to Immortan Joe, who needs to use white powder to help his skin rash. Similar to other dystopias, the Warboys do not develop their own characteristics and are not free to do as they please because of the constant brainwashing which begins at birth.

To conclude, *Mad Max: Fury Road* is a successful example of a post-apocalyptic dystopian film based on survival and the fight for human freedom. It perfectly describes the difference between the powerful and authoritarian leader and the defenceless and powerless citizens who are doomed to follow the leader's orders from the moment they are born until the moment they die. Another dystopian theme seen in the movie is the appearance of a strong-minded character able to fight off the brainwashing and remain human by fighting for freedom and what is right. The character of Furiosa completely fits this theme. The film would be interesting to anyone looking for an action-packed, well-rounded dystopian film in which the female protagonist fights to change the dystopian order of the world.

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Dystopian Society in *What Happened to Monday*

The 2010s filmography is known for its dystopian genre with *Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *The Maze Runner* as its representatives, but also Tommy Wirkola's *What Happened to Monday* (2017). Throughout the two-hour movie, the viewers have a chance to dive into a dystopian society set in the near future, encompassing the lack of privacy, enhanced citizen control, surveillance, and of course, totalitarian regime. In the overpopulated world, the need for natural resources increases, soon reaching the full potential of its use. The aftermath is seen in an emerging economic crisis requiring drastic changes in every-day lives. Mass society needs to be fed, which is only possible with GMO production, causing multiple pregnancies and disorders, and driving world leaders to undertake desperate measures.

The viewers are introduced to this dystopian society caused by overpopulation and climate change. To save the Earth and the human race, a political activist Dr. Nicolette Cayman finds a solution in a one-child policy called "A Child Allocation Act," allowing only one child per family. The Act is soon adopted, allowing the oldest child to stay with the family while its younger sibling(s) is put to sleep, to be awoken in the future when overpopulation is a matter of the past. The movie takes its blueprint from China, where the one-child policy controlled the population in the cities, addressing the human right to reproduce. The exaggerated version of the policy models this dystopian society and warns its viewers of the possible future. Not only does this social system separate the so-called illegal children from their families, but it also promotes sterilization as one of the possible options to reduce the number of people populating

the planet. Wirkola introduces this ethical problem as one of the problems the society will soon have to face due to emerging overpopulation caused by improvements in medicine and working conditions. Therefore, the movie evokes the question of human birthrights, not only by denying the right to have more than one offspring but also by the foreshadowed abortion of one or several children in multiple pregnancies.

Moreover, to ensure greater control over the citizens and their family status, each person is obliged to wear a Bureau-issued identity bracelet. Introducing personalized bracelets is another characteristic of a dystopian society, which allows the state to have easy insight into personal information and control, justified as the greater good. Similar manipulation is present in the novel *1984*, where the state establishes constant surveillance over telescreens and microphones. In the movie, the citizens are vividly oppressed and forced to take all actions to realize the common goal of downsizing the number of people on Earth. Similarly, in *1984*, the citizens of the imaginary state of Oceania are gathered to fight the common enemy, Emmanuel Goldstein, who is a threat to an imposed system. Therefore, both, the movie and the novel, strive to gather the people to achieve for common good. Just like in *1984*, the citizens are encouraged to oblige by the numerous colorful posters promoting the current values of the state. As one might assume, breaking the law is strictly punished. In the movie, Wirkola portrays it as a public dismantling of the family once they are caught with more than one child per family. The police take the child away while the family members desperately try to keep their loved ones safe. Likewise, in the novel, citizens are sent to jail when caught depicting any affective relationship toward another person, keeping them from forming a family founded on mutual love. Therefore, the movie and the novel, contain recognizable elements of a dystopian society initiated to create order, instead resulting in limitations and oppression.

Furthermore, another recognizable element of dystopia are the rebels of the imposed social system. In *What Happened to Monday*, the first rebel to whom the viewers are introduced

is the septets' mother. In a world ruled by the one-child policy, a courageous woman decides to carry out her pregnancy with seven children. She dies while giving birth, leaving her daughters in the anti-sibling world. However, with the help of the doctor whom she shares an opinion about having multiple children, the girls' mother successfully carries out her pregnancy. Therefore, the doctor is another rebel against this dystopia because he purposely helps the pregnant woman save all her unborn children from being eliminated from society. Also, with an absent father, the girls' only option for survival is their grandfather. He is the central rebel against the state who decides to nurture his offspring in a safe apartment. Not only does he take the role of their caretaker, but the girls' grandfather also becomes their teacher and encourages the girls to embrace their differences and develop as individuals. The conditions in which they grow up make these girls rebel against the system early on, for example, when they take their mother's identity in order to participate in public situations. To survive, they continue their family tradition of rebellion against the state even after their grandfather passes away. Once they are discovered, each girl strives for the whole family to be saved. Once again, this can be connected to *1984*, where the main character Winston rebels against the inflicted rules of the society but conforms until he can act on them. Therefore, rebellion is a common theme in dystopian works because not all people have the same values and opinions, which is the principle upon which the dystopian society lies.

In conclusion, *What Happened to Monday* is a typical dystopian movie containing significant elements. These are rebels whose morals are beyond the state's oppression-oriented actions, the lack of freedom explained as necessary for a higher purpose, and the events connected to the present moment serving as a cautionary tale for the problems that might emerge. Some of them include surveillance in each aspect of our lives, limited freedom, not having control over one's body, limiting the number of offspring per partners, taking away children, and imposed sense of choice. All in all, *What Happened to Monday* is a contemporary

movie depicting the horrors of the future through a dystopian worldview making the viewers wonder about the time to come. One of the newest dystopian movies gives a novel insight into a possible future ruled by scientists, whose power is abused against an individual. Filled with inconceivable events for a member of today's society, the viewers find themselves rooting for the underdog while encountering the plot twists throughout the movie.

Creative Writing

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Wasted Seed

* * *

Howling wind took a seed,
dropped it near the waterwheel.
Making circles, one, two, three;
it almost seemed like eternity.
Oh, how young we used to be.

The stage of fright, the stage of worry,
our views used to be so blurry.
Innocence sprung, so close to debris;
to our eyes the world was a hyperbole.
Oh, how young we used to be.

From the ground a flower emerged,
dressed in colours well-dispersed,
Flourished near the waterwheel.
Making circles four, five, six,
oh, the precious clock still clicks.

Now it thinks about the past,
not enjoying, lack of sight.

Blind to the future – destined doom;

the anxiety as one of many bricks...

Oh, the precious clock still clicks.

Its colours fade, but it continues to grow.

The flower oscillates due to wind's blow.

Making circles seven, eight, nine;

waterwheel and wind entwine,

oh, so close to the dead-line.

It sees the faults under the light;

it seems so obvious with hindsight.

How could those blunders have been made?

Seeking the past, when everything was fine;

oh, so close to the dead-line.

Tempest came with devastation.

No hope was there for salvation.

It eradicated everything in sight;

flower, waterwheel and, thus,

it was no longer with us.

Wasted life, thoughts of past.

Even in adulthood mistakes were vast.

Awareness is there, but life delivered its cuts...

And? What use is there now

when it is no longer with us?

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My Mind Wanders

* * *

My morning begins. I wake up in cold sweat as the first thought, the thought of **falling behind on my payments**, crosses my mind. I sit up, my mind wanders. I look over at the piggy bank on my table. The memories of **scrimping and saving** for years with hard labor flash before my eyes. The piggy bank is, of course, empty. I **do not have a penny to my name**. No time to cry over lost money. I work, it is not that I do not, but I **earn such a pittance** that I am no longer able to put money aside. The piggy bank is hungry, but so am I. I have been **living on a breadline** for quite a bit now. My job? Well, my job is to get up at 6, have a miserable breakfast, go to work at 8 and get home by 5. But my work does not stop at 5. I smile. Today I will be **burning the midnight oil** again. It makes my boss happy. I get up and have my miserable breakfast. I brush my teeth, wash my face and leave. I refuse to look at any mirrors on my way out. I cannot afford to stare into the eyes of a disappointed child. I am sorry. As I walk down the street, heading to my job, I see a lot more disappointed children, heading to their jobs. Only few faces shine with some sort of emotion unknown to me...the **well-heeled** ones. I keep my head down. It does not matter; the ones **living off the hog** do not care about us. They say we need to **tighten our belt**; I say they are **tight-fisted** and close-minded. I arrive at my 8 to 5 job. I shake, my body shakes, my mind numbs. An eerie smile creeps on my face; I must show my gratitude for having a job. I walk in. Blank. My morning begins. I wake up in cold sweat as the first thought, the thought of being unhappy with my job, crosses my mind. I am only a student now. My mind wanders.

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Change

* * *

Pay the **bill**

And water your blue hydrangeas.

Don't be scared of the **overdraft**,

We'll pay in golden tears.

Earn a pittance for your worst poems

And hold tight your rose quartz.

You know **scrimping and saving** is not a way to live,

So, give change a chance.

Throw in the towel

And watch the sun slowly sink into the ocean.

There's **close on** two hundred of us,

Ready to dance our lives away.

Borrow some hope from the sky

And guide us far from the world we know.

We'll **burn the candle at both ends**

After dancing in the moonlight.

We won't **be living high on the hog,**

And we'll be happy about it.

We will be **well-to-do**

In spirit and soul.

So, give me a call

When you decide

To **pink slip**

Your blue life.

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Destruction and Desire

* * *

When the pain becomes unbearable

And all the memories turn to dust

the only thing that always stays

is him.

A golden-haired boy with piercing sapphire eyes

The one that speaks such beautiful lies.

Same one that tells fables that will never come true,

but then touches you and makes you think in blue.

Angry, lonely demon, whose words I cannot forget,

whose touch remains embroidered on my skin,

etching wounds that still burn with passion,

the ones that will never feel satisfaction.

And my mouth,

Left longing for the sweet taste of desire,

That melted ice
As his words became fire.

I still remember his scent,

It comes back to me,

Haunting and wrecking my future dreams,

And invoking a thousand internal screams.

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About *Kick*

From its inception, students' journal *Kick* had one simple purpose, to provide students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek with an easy and simple way to publish both their academic and creative writing in English. Students wholeheartedly accepted this opportunity and, as a result, *Kick* has already had three online issues in 2018 containing students' research papers, poems, short stories, and reviews. In 2019 *Kick* published its first two printed issues. It continued with its activities in 2020, now as a double-blind reviewed journal and a part of the English Student's Association "Glotta." This issue finally sees the light of day after a lengthy hiatus. It demonstrates the students' exceptional ingenuity, originality, and wisdom. Despite numerous obstacles and difficulties, it effectively captures the artistic, observational side of our colleagues. At last, for all questions Editorial Board answers via e-mail: kick.ffos2@gmail.com.