Myths *and* Manipulation *in* Political Discourse

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Introduction

This little book started out in a way that probably many other scholarly publications do: When the five of us met as doctoral students and instructors in the Department of British and American Studies, we soon realized that our research overlapped on a number of points. Most prominent among those was our interest in political or politically-motivated discourse and the study of myths and manipulation that it employed.

In the end, we decided to pool the results of our research together in order to create a more complex picture, providing a variety of perspectives and voices. In our endeavor, we were greatly aided by the financial support we received from a grant offered by the Šafárik University. The outcome of these efforts is the five chapters of this brief, but hopefully informative and insightful monograph.

In Chapter 1, Viktória Marcinová deals with the impact of totalitarian ideology on the translation of so-called "capitalist" drama during the first stage of normalization in Slovakia (1948-1968). In Chapter 2, the focus shifts to political discourse and manipulation in a democracy, as Jaroslav Marcin takes a closer look at the wartime rhetoric of American presidents. USA remains the focus also in Chapter 3, but this time the question, addressed by Martina Martausová, will be one of the myth of the American Dream and its presentation in post-9/11 United States. A similar idea, though in a different geographical-cultural context, is dealt with in Chapter 4, where Božena Velebná identifies myths of Scottish identity as portrayed in historic films. Finally, in Chapter 5, Eduard Soták will take a look at the role of the mass media within the topic of politically-motivated discourse and spread of political ideology.

It is our hope that in this way we can contribute to a better understanding of politically-motivated discourse, manipulation and the use of myths. Through interweaving the results of our research and our analyses, we hope to provide a more complex look at the topic in question, which we feel is missing at the moment.

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Lillian Hellman:
The playwright as the agent (of a social change)
Viktória Marcinová

This paper is going to focalize American drama on Slovak stages between the years 1948 and 1968, during the first phase of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. The political and social situation of these two decades was rather unstable, characterized by two political thaws: the first of them fairly brief, sweeping across Central Europe in the year 1956, the other one beginning approximately in the beginning of the 1960s, turning into a subtle and increasing liberation movement, and gaining its full strength in the middle of the 1960s. August 1968 and the Soviet military intervention brought it to a well-known stop, redefining the political climate of Czechoslovakia for the following forty years. I will be dealing specifically with Lillian Hellman and her play *The Little Foxes* as the first American drama translated into Slovak after the war. My primary goal will be to provide a case study of the censorship strategies valid in the establishment era of the communist regime, that is the fulfillment of the tradition of socialist realism and more importantly, the level of the political commitment on the side of the playwright.

The role of theater
As to the contextual factors of Slovakia shortly after the war, the initial period of socialism lasting until Stalin's death in 1953 was characterized by the communist regime at its worst: political persecutions, numerous political trials followed by life sentences and executions.[1] Every aspect of country's life was subjected to ideologization and normalization. Czechoslovakia, as one of the states which were assigned the role of a satellite state of the Soviet Union almost from its very first moments of

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1 See Kaplan, O cenzuře v Československu v letech 1945-1956: Studie [On Censorship in Czechoslovakia in 1945-1956: A Case Study], Kaplan, Sociální souvislosti krizí komunistického režimu 1953-1957 a 1968-1975 [The Social Context of the Crises of the Communist Regime, 1953-1957 and 1968-1975], Marušiak, *Slovenská literatúra a moc v druhej polovici päťdesiatych rokov [Slovak Literature and Power in the 2nd half of the 1950s]*

existence, was dominated by Soviet concepts and values across all spheres of life: whether they be political, social or cultural.

In these tumultuous and complicated times, theater became the locus of the dominant political and social concepts. According to Ján Jamnický, one of the most significant personalities of Slovak theater life,[2] the utmost need of theater of his time was to become a means of education (Lajcha, *Documents of SNT 2* 523). In his view, theater was to adopt the ideological and functional perspective, and to supersede the business perspective of the previous political establishment. The role of the repertoire of Slovak theaters as specified by Ladislav Novomeský, the Commissioner of *Slovenská národná rada pre vzdelávanie a kultúru* (the Slovak National Council for Education and Culture), consisted of reaching for goals identical to those of political institutions, press and schools (qtd. in Hellman, theater booklet 1949, 57).

After the first political thaw in 1956, on March 12, 1957 the government established *Sväz československých divadelných umelcov* (The Union of Czechoslovak Drama Artists), possibly as a form of re-stabilization of the authority of the State. This triggered an interesting discussion on the importance of theater which appeared in the journal *Slovenské divadlo* (Slovak Theatre) and further affirmed the ideological nature of the function of theater. Various critics expressed their hope that The Union would finally guard the ideological purity of the drama arts, since

> never before did theater bear such a privileged position as now when it is helping to transform life, helping to remove all which is out-dated and obsolete, which hinders our flight towards a glorious future [nikdy v minulosti nemalo divadlo tak výsostne čestnú funkciu ako dnes, keď pomáha pretvárať život, odstraňovať všetko prežité a zastaralé, čo hamuje náš rozlet za skvelou budúcnosťou]. ("Discussion. On the necessity and the tasks of The Union of Czechoslovak Drama Artists" 146)

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2 Ján Jamnický began his career as an actor. Later he began working as a dramaturgist and as a director, becoming one of the key personalities in Slovak theatrical theory and history. He is still immensely respected as one of the highest authorities.

As it was proclaimed, theater could now serve the nation and serve "the idea of peace which is one of the basic conditions of its own blossoming [myšlienke mieru, ktorá je jednou z podmienok aj jeho vlastného rozkvetu]" ("Discussion" 149). As it is, what used to be the means of entertainment was now confirmed as an unambiguous and explicit tool in support of the ideology and the endeavor of the state.

Censorship requirements
It follows that the situation in totalitarian Czechoslovakia did not allow much artistic autonomy. The official literary production and theater management were strictly centralized in order to enable maximum control. Writers, translators, directors and dramaturges were exposed to binding censorial regulations according to which the priority was assigned to the aesthetic principle of socialist realism, and to the literature of socialist countries, despite the fact that the rigor of these regulations would gradually decline with the growing liberation process. Especially in the very first few years after the year 1948 socialist realism was not merely given the highest priority, but was *imposed* as the only correct and objective way of representing reality on stage. As a result, Slovak theaters focused on the original plays of an uncomplicated and crystal clear plot, but more importantly, of a direct and explicit moral. These attributes were to guarantee the unambiguity of interpretation and a popular character, and naturally lead to what is not referred to as "the era of greyness," in which the plays mirrored one another in their subject matter, director's concept and scenery. Consequently, in a large number of home productions which followed, the directors were forced to re-focus their attention on light genres which would encourage the masses and not frustrate their prosaic routine life, such as humorous performances and optimistic pictures of life.

Ladislav Lajcha, Slovak drama historian, maintains that comedies became the most viable alternative: they would guarantee full auditorium as well as satisfy the requirement of an optimistic view of life. Every comedy giving a wide berth to boring, moralizing and didactic plays immediately became popular, Lajcha continues. Dramaturges also searched for translations which would—in the midst of a massive amount of plays that were ideologizing, politicizing and

mythologizing—sparkle with humanity, affection and humor, he explains (Lajcha, "From Skalka's Goat Milk to Karvas' The Complete Prohibiton" 226).

Nevertheless, the selection procedure was not guided by the sole criterion of socialist realism. In the year 1948 the Council of Drama and Repertoire[3] produced a set of guidelines around the country of origin, placing a different level of importance on each individual piece and its author:

1. a) original contemporary Slovak plays;
   b) contemporary plays of other socialist countries;
2. reconsidered pieces of the Czech and Slovak theatrical heritage;
3. Russian and Soviet plays;
4. a) plays of other socialist countries;
   b) reconsidered pieces of the world dramatic canon;
5. and finally western progressive plays (qtd. In Miller, theater booklet 1949, 111-2) where the term *progressive* was applied to those plays which supported the State.

As Lajcha points out, any initiative or creativity on the side of literary advisers was thus banned and barred; their choices consisted of entering figures into pre-printed charts according to which their work was analyzed and reviewed. Especially until the first period of the thaw, this set of guidelines was prioritized even over the needs of the ensembles or of the actors for their professional growth (Lajcha, "From Skalka's Goat Milk" 224).

As to the country of origin, the top position on the chart is occupied by contemporary Slovak plays. This is natural; after all, theater should respond to the needs of the local culture. However, the priority was actually given to Soviet works of art for reasons mentioned previously: Soviet texts (shielded by the category of contemporary plays of other socialist countries) were to mediate the basic principles of their culture in order to establish its representation in Slovakia. *The Summary of Premières in Slovak Theatres* demonstrates that between 1948 and 1956 the number of Soviet and Russian plays exceeded in great measure

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3   *Divadelná a dramaturgická rada*

either contemporary or classic Slovak and Czech plays. Also other canonical authors such as Molière, Lope de Vega, Carlo Goldoni, or later G.B. Shaw were scarce, and between the years 1948 and 1958, only four American plays were able to pass the censorship filters.

American Drama

Theater with its ability to recreate reality served primarily to teach basic ideological principles, and to mediate various aspects of the dominant Soviet culture. And yet, drama did not serve only to teach what to believe and how to live. It also taught how *not* to live, or what consequences would one face dared she or he live against the ideological recommendations. Ample examples were found in the capitalist (American) drama: greed for money (*Hellman,* Miller), family desctruction (*Miller,* O'Neill) or betrayal (*Fast,* Hellman, *Miller, O'Neill*). Other unfavorable elements would soon follow: racial problems (*A Raisin in the Sun*) or alcoholism (*Streetcar Named Desire, Long Day's Journey into the Night*). If we examine the first four American plays staged in post-war Slovakia, we find out that Lillian Hellman's *Little Foxes* (first staged in 1949), a play which will be discussed as a case study, was not perceived as a study of evil, but as a study of evil American capitalism. Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* (first staged in 1949) was not performed as an attack on the emptiness of American Dream, nor did it portray a drama of a father and son, but its focus was on the ruthlessness of American people. The racial problems presented in *Deep Are the Roots* written by Arnaud D'Usseau and James Gow (staged in 1949) as well as the moral corruption in Howard Fast's *30 Pieces of Silver* (staged in 1951) were understood as arising solely on the background of American capitalism. As it is, these plays fulfill both basic censorship criteria: they were written in the desired realistic tradition, and their theme allowed an oversimplified interpretation so as to present an ideologically unambiguous subject matter, thus allowing them to be staged as a form of agitprop against America.

And yet, a third criterion was at work here, resting in the the personal convictions of American playwrights. More specifically, it was the political commitment of the writers which was closely studied prior to the approval of a play for translation and performance. The more connection there existed between the political commitment of the

playwrights and between the socio-cultural context in which they were to occur, the more likely they were to be approved by the censorship machinery, thus entering the category of "western progressive plays." And indeed, Hellman was "pugnaciously procommunist," and "remained loyal to the communist vision" (Wright). As to Miller, he openly claimed to cling to the tradition of Russian and northern realism (Miller 64). After producing *All My Sons* in his own country, he was accused of being unpatriotic, and was soon subjected to scrutiny by the House Committee of Un-American Activities ("Obituary: Arthur Miller"). Regarding D'Usseau and Gow, their *Tomorrow the World* and *Deep Are the Roots* are their only theatrical achievements, both long-running successfully on Broadway, yet highly propagandistic (Bordman 414), eventually leading D'Ussau to stand before the Committee in 1953. Fast became blacklisted for Communist activities in 1950 and imprisoned, *30 Piece of Silver* was forbidden in The United States, his works were ostentatiously burned and the author himself not allowed to travel to Prague for the première (Homberger). Thus in spite of the nationality of all five dramatists, each one of them appeared on the other, the correct, side of the barricade, in complete support of the socialist efforts of the State.

It follows that in case of American playwrights, their political commitment served as a criterion on which to judge the doctrinal value of their dramas. Naturally, no Slovak, Czech or even Russian politically uncommitted playwright would under any circumstances be approved for performance. But it must be noted that as to Slovak or Czech authors, these were more or less under control of their national unions of writers, closely watched by the state. For this reason, politically problematic individuals were easily traced and dealt with. But American playwrights, in contrast, were coming from the alien territory. Therefore a visible sign of political commitment (such as being put on the Hollywood Blacklist) was an absolute must. Political commitment then became some sort of analogy to the requirement of socialist realism, as both would represent an *objective* tool on basis of which to approve a play or not. In this regard, political commitment would explain why in the 1950s many of the grand American playwrights such as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Thornton Wilder, or even leftist Sidney

Kingsley[4] were avoided in spite of the quality of their works: their lives simply lacked that single element of personal conviction confirmed by a public story, the more scandalous, the better. For instance, Kingsley did appear on the blacklist, unfortunately, his works were never burnt as those of Fast, nor his interrogation before HCUA rose as much attention as that of Miller.

Lillian Hellman

As discussed in the previous section, the key requirement voiced by the official discourse in the early 1950s was to sustain the tradition of socialist realism. But as has also been mentioned, in case of foreign authors the primary condition was encapsulated in the level of their political commitment.

And indeed, Lillian Hellman is an epitome of political demands on the life of a writer. It is a well-known and a frequently mentioned fact across various encyclopedias that throughout her life she retained a genuine interest in the Marxist theory and suffered much in her career due to her convictions, even if adherence to the doctrines of the left was quite usual among many intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s. After all, there was the Depression era due to which "a predominant part of academia and workers in the media, moved into a position of criticism and hostility towards the structural ideas of the American consensus: the free market, capitalism, individualism, enterprise, independence and personal responsibility" (Johnson 743). But according to Hellman's biographer, William Wright, there were two other events which contributed to Hellman's membership in the radical left: her active participation in the struggles between the studio owners and the Hollywood writers, and her personal experience in the Spanish Civil War (Wright).

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4 By the year 1949, the offer of American dramas was wonderfully rich, and American theater was experiencing its point of excellence: O'Neill already secured in the world hall of fame, Wilder having written his best plays (*Our Town*—1938, *The Skin of Our Teeth* - 1942), Hellman was already perfectly established (*The Children's Hour*—1934, *Little Foxes* 1939, *Another Part of the Forest*—1946) together with Miller (*All My Sons*—1947, *Death of a Salesman*—1949) and Williams (*The Glass Menagerie*—1945, *Streetcar named Desire*—1947). As to the left-wing playwrights, Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* (1935) and *Wake and Sing!* (1935), or Sidney Kingsley's *Dead End* (1935) can be mentioned.

What distinguishes Lillian Hellman from other leftist artists of her era is the fact that she remained loyal to the communist ideas even after Stalin's purges in Russia during 1930s, despite Stalin's alliance with Hitler, and regardless of Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (which, in contrast, received a strong condemnation from previously supportive Arthur Miller). All the more, in her will in 1984 she left an amount of money for grants and awards consistent with the views of Karl Marx (Wright).

And indeed, when scanning various encyclopaedic entries on Lillian Hellman, it is the outward circumstances of her which are in the limelight, primarily the connection between her political beliefs and the main motives of her plays. Her dramas are claimed to have "bitterly and forcefully attacked injustice, exploitation, and selfishness" (Kuiper 533) and are generally accepted as examinations of the relationship between capitalism and the nuclear family.

Her political consciousness is certainly true; after all, *Days to Come* (1936), the anti-fascist *Watch on the Rhine* (1940) and *The Searching Wind* (1944) are original political plays. Moreover, in the year 1952 she decided to direct the revival of *The Children's Hour* (1934) in order to reflect "the malicious name calling and guilt-by-innuendo of the witch-hunts" during McCarthyism. Later in the decade, she would draw upon the sociopolitical subtext again when producing two new stage adaptations, both referring to the wide-spread Russian paranoia, and both posing the question of choice between an individual's belief and the requirements of an institutionalized authority[5] (Adler P., "Drama in the 1940s and 1950s" 170).

Yet, Hellman could hardly have become one of America's most cherished authors only due to the way in which her plays may have mirrored the political situation in the US. As it is, Hellman's plays are most importantly studies of hostility in relationships (King 397), whether it is *The Children's Hour* (1934) in which lies of a mischievous student destroy the lives of her teacher, or semi-biographical *Toys in the Attic* (1960)*,* telling a story of two sister desiring power over the life of their brother. This is true of *Another Part of the Forest* (1946) as well, a

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5 Emmanuel Robles's *Montserrat* (1949) as a story of Simon Bolívar and the Spanish Army occupation in Venezuela; Jean Anouilh's *The Lark* (1955) as a story of Joan of Arc

prequel to *The Little Foxes* (1939), where the Hubbard family is pictured as innately evil, without any sense of morality, where every member has exploited or is prepared to exploit somebody else, oftentimes using blackmailing, Hellman's "favorite metaphor for personal manipulation" (King 398). Hellman seems to focus on exhibiting "the characters in all their rancor, selfishness, cruelty and perversity, with little or no redemption from the forces of darkness" (Halline xx). *Autumn Garden* (1951), a Chekchovian study of eight middle-aged people and their disillusionment, marital unfaithfulness and mid-life fatigue, is different in its tone, yet it approaches relationships from similar angle. It is not lies and avarice which function as the means of destruction, but passivity and bad faith.

Hellman's plays are not only portrayals of dysfunctional relationships, but especially of women dependence (or even codependency), as Peter Adler lays out ("Lillian Hellman: feminism, formalism and politics" 119). In one of the interviews, Hellman said that she was interested in how financial security may allow one to control the lives of others: "I don't think it's of any great moment who carries out the garbage. I think it is important that people be economically equal. So that if somebody feels like walking out, there's a way for her to earn a living rather than suffering through a whole lifetime because she can't" (Bryer, qtd. in Adler P., "Lillian Hellman: feminism, formalism and politics" 118). And indeed, the protagonists in her plays are women who *could not,* as Adler exemplifies*:* Lavinia Hubbard in *Another Part of the Forest* and later Birdie in *The Little Foxes* are financially dependent on their husbands, and therefore powerless in their fortune-motivated marriages, and abused. Regina traded romantic fulfillment for financial gain of her family in *Another Part of the Forest,* and in *The Little Foxes* she has become a cold-blooded, money-driven monster who would deny her husband his medicines in his heart attack, thus effectively killing him**.** Financial and emotional bondage are intertwined in *Toys in the Attic*, Adler continues, where sisters Anna and Carrie Berniers are emotionally addicted to their brother Julian, and addicted to exercising control over him.

And again, codependency is one of the main motives in the *Autumn Garden*. Nicholas Denery, an unsuccessful artist and a drunkard, repeatedly attempts to end his marriage with Nina, who

continually accepts him back, even despite his suspected affairs. The Griggs couple, in contrast, treat each other with elegant antagonism, yet Rose Griggs is willing to continue such life so that her health problems may be cured. She promises to divorce her husband afterward, which General Griggs actually welcomes as a good reason to avoid all the hassle of the divorce procedures. Where in Hellman's earlier plays a desire to manipulate is the key drive, and a drive not to be manipulated, here it is the desire not to experience pain, which may or may not include an experience of the unknown (a divorce, in our case, or separation). In her early plays, the villains dominate and subdue, here the disillusioned couples *infect*. Aggravation and explicit animosity of her plays are replaced here by utter apathy, undisturbed even in the face of unfaithfulness or blackmailing.

The dependence of women is reified by means of domestic setting to which they are confined and which becomes the source of their abuse and/or disillusionment. As such, the picture of femininity that Hellman paints is distorted, maybe even crushed: the love of sisters Berniers borders on the pathological. Regina either pretends love or does not pretend contempt, even the motherly in her is forged. She either flirts in whisper, or shouts—or stands silent above her dying husband. Lavinia and Birdie are continually silenced by their husbands: the former finds solace in religious fanatism in *Forest,* while the latter becomes an alcoholic in *Foxes*. Both of them are ridiculed and played with by their husbands. Alexandra of *Foxes* is similarly treated as a piece of meat to be traded. In the finale, she decides to leave her wicked family, but her decision actually strikes one as naivety rather than idealism. Hellman herself stated that the girl's escape had little to do with "a statement of faith in Alexandra, in her denial of her family. I never meant it that way. She did have courage enough to leave, but she would never have the force or vigor of her mother's family" (Hellman qtd. in Barlow 170).

These comments authoritatively direct our attention back to her plays, reminding us that Hellman was primarily a writer, despite the fact that the critical reception of her work frequently takes place outside the plays themselves (Haytock 158). After all, Hellman "was first and foremost a playwright and was considered one of America's finest during the 1930s and 1940s, a period rich in serious dramatists"

(Wright). To reduce her to the voice of propaganda would be a blind and dangerous oversimplification.

> [w]hile she was never associated with any theater group that discussed, wrote, or produced radical propaganda plays, all but one of her works belong in the camp of the earnest thinkers - the propagandists. To say this without qualification, however, is to miss the point. Though she never wrote a play merely to entertain an audience, to win fame, or to make money, she never wrote a line without trying to say something that would help man to escape or offset the effects of ignorance. (Clark 133)

The Little Foxes in Slovakia

The combination of destructive relationships within a wealthy capitalist family, written in a realist tradition and by a writer who is intensely and consistently political allowed *The Little Foxes* to merge smoothly with the mainstream drama production of the nineteen-fifties. This was expressed also in one of the reviews of *Foxes* from the year 1965 when the play was renewed for the last time in Slovakia:

> [Hellman] belonged to the few chosen ones from behind the ocean who could actually appear on our stages in the 1950s, blessed by Stanislavsky and supported by socialist realism [Patrila k vyvoleným, ktorí v päťdesiatych rokoch mohli spoza veľkej mláky vstúpiť na naše javiská, požehnané Stanislavským a podopreté socialistickým realizmom]" (Štefko, *"Little Foxes"* n.pag.). (Štefko n.pag.)

It is fascinating how freely the reviewer comments on the censorial regulations of the early regime. Naturally, the year 1965 already belonged into the liberation period, and therefore the socio-political context was dramatically different from that of its first performance. And indeed, as repeatedly proclaimed in performance bulletins in the early 1950s, Lillian Hellman was arguably the voice of the progressive American people, or in other words, the representative of the *other* of the two American cultures. While one of them was rotting, as critics believed, the other one would reveal the true picture of the American society with all its contradictions and its inconsistencies (Chmelko 3).

The Little Foxes is a textbook example of ideological requirements placed upon a work of art. It tells a story of a wealthy family stricken by greed and rivalry among three siblings, Oscar, Ben and Regina. The play is governed by Regina both in terms of dramatic action (she constantly pushes it forward, being its central force) and in terms of family relationships, where she controls and maneuvers the movements of everybody else, whether it be her immoral and violent brothers, or naïve and idealistic daughter Alexandra. On her virtual chess board, the family members always play to her advantage (mostly unknowingly), and if ensuring her position means not helping her husband, Horace, during his heart attack—and therefore killing him—she will make such a move. Naturally, she becomes the winner in the end; and her victory is not marred even by the fact that her daughter decides to leave her.

Considering the hatred and merciless want of gain among the members of Hubbard family, it does not come as a surprise that *The Little Foxes* were produced in Slovakia in the year 1949 "as the exemplary play depicting the decay of the capitalist society and the family, *as the stage illustration of the thesis* [ako exemplárna ukážka rozkladu kapitalistickej spoločnosti a rodiny, ako javisková ilustrácia tézy]" (Štefko n.pag.). Naturally, this quote originates again in the daring review of the 1965 performance. The thesis which the reviewer has in mind rests in the fact that in 1949 the play was understood as accepting no possibility of change in the American system (Rozner n.pag.) For this reason it was oftentimes compared with Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* and considered to have "stronger" dramatic impact. For instance, Špitzer believed that

> Hellman's play models the absurdity of Americanism in its very beginnings. It depicts the thick atmosphere of Americanism on the rise, and shows us the American today [Hra Hellmanovej modeluje absurdnosť amerikanizmu v jeho prvopočiatkoch. Približuje jeho dusnú atmosféru z čias jeho nástupu a premieta nám americký dnešok.] (Špitzer, qtd. in Hellman, theater booklet 60).

Rozner (Rozner n.pag.) claimed that the narrated time of the play was around the year 1900, yet it was "crystal-clear [jasné]," he emphasized,

that the story did not take place back in the past, because Hellman's characters "are the embodiments, the types of capitalist society [stelesnením, typmi kapitalistickej spoločnosti]." Modern America was already in their hands, he continued, but their hunger increased together with their strength and as such, "[i]t is important to know these representatives of the 'American century,' who would like to come and 'liberate' the world—for themselves [dôležité poznať týchto predstaviteľov "amerického storočia," ktorí by chceli prísť "oslobodzovať" svet—pre seba]." Such opinion was shared also by other reviewers and contributors to the theater booklets for *Little Foxes* in the years 1949 and 1950,[6] and only one flaw was found in the play: *Foxes* failed to demonstrate the way to escape the American system (that is, the explicit escape towards socialism) and failed to guarantee Alexandra's victory after she leaves her family (Oktavec 3)

It follows from the previous remarks that the interpretation of the play was limited to its political aspect. On the one hand, Procházka (Procházka 6) was convinced of the play's universal validity, as it "touches the w h o l e society (…), it touches everyone or warns everyone [[sa dotýka c e l e j spoločnosti](...) [dotýka všetkých alebo všetkých varuje]." Yet on the other, the seeming reference to universality and atemporality was actually a reference to a very restricted version of it. The warning of the play was against the social order, Procházka continued, and against "the social net, old and torn, which in the end becomes the noose [spoločenskej siete, starej a potrhanej, ktorá sa im samotným napokon stáva slučkou na hrdlo]."

The phrase "stage illustration of the thesis" as the main reason to select *Foxes* as the first American drama in Slovakia was indeed succinctly put. It exemplifies how the theme underwent a massive reconstruction from the metaphorical to the literal. It was stripped of its universality and the theme was narrowed down to support the official doctrine reflecting the basic dichotomy of the state ideology in the early 1950s: *bad America* versus *good Soviets*, *exploiting capitalism* versus *nurturing socialism*, or simply, *them* versus *us*. Lillian Hellman may have claimed her play to be about various forms of evil rather an

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6   See articles written under pseudonyms: -r-, qtd. in Hellman, theater booklet 3; GIM
    n.pag.

indictment of capitalism (Wright), even critics may have "defined evil and its nature as a primary theme in Hellman's work" (Haytock 159) , yet according to the reviews, the only universal that the play could refer to was the universal evil of capitalism. As Rozner said, "Hellman's characters - they are the distilled essence of capitalistic thinking, feeling and behavior, capitalistic morals, capitalistic worldview [Postavy Hellmanovej - to sú vypresované esencie kapitalistického myslenia, cítenia a konania, kapitalistickej morálky, kapitalistického svetonázoru]" (Rozner n.pag). The situational context of pro-Soviet and pro-socialist Slovakia proved its superiority over the textual, since the morale of the story, the characters, the meaning of their words or actions were simplified and polarised in order for them to correspond to the physical world as it was presented by the official discourse—and then they were used to attack this simplified and polarized reality.

The validity of the given intepretation of the play was justified by frequent referral to Hellman's political identity. *Little Foxes* was said to be a play of "a gracious American fighter for peace and progress [ušľachtilej americkej bojovníčky za mier a pokrok]" (Oktavec 3). Since Hellman was "most of all a politically conscious author [predovšetkým uvedomelá autorka]" (I.B., qtd. in Hellman, theater booklet 65), in this play she exposed the problems of American people

> mercilessly and ruthlessly, as it is required from the one who desires, due to their artistic and human responsibility and determination, to discuss the moral, social and the political profile of their own art production. [Hellmanová odkrýva tak nemilosrdne a bezohľadne ako sa to žiada od toho, kto chce s umeleckou i ľudskou zodpovednosťou a dôslednosťou riešiť morálny, spoločnenský a i politický profil svojho umeleckého diela.] (Štefánik n.pag).

It has already been commented on the importance of the playwright's political orientation—its function was that of supposedly objective tool to judge the quality of an individual work of art. However, there existed still another reason to require leftist orientation from the playwrights. In order to explain it, a seeming digression is necessary, which will turn to one of Umberto Eco's *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*.

Umberto Eco offers a description of how the fictional world may or may not obey the rules of the real world, by retelling a story concerning Causabon, a character from *Foucalt's Pendulum*. One of the readers became so taken by the vivid description of Casaubon's midnight walk through the streets of Paris in chapter 115 (according to the novel - on the night between June 23 and 24, 1984) that he afterward visited his local library, compared Eco's description to what the local newspaper said about that specific night, and wrote a letter to the author inquiring about a fire which historically took place, but which the story never mentioned (*Six Walks,* 76-78). According to Eco, this inquiry was a good example of an attempt to cause the fictional and the real world to overlap, to apply chosen elements of the real world to the fictional one. A complete overlap is, naturally, impossible, but the two worlds can coexist: "[A]ny narrative fiction is necessarily and fatally swift because, in building a world that comprises myriad events and characters, it cannot say everything about this world. It hints at it and then asks the reader to fill in a whole series of gaps" (*Six Walks,* 3). The reader's cooperation, then, is a necessity, and to a certain extent the reader's reaction was not entirely amiss, as Eco confesses. Nevertheless, the fact that the fictional world (despite its flexibility and openness) must borrow bits and pieces from the real one should not lead one into the temptation of superimposing the order of the real world onto the fictional one; which is what Eco's reader did. The two worlds function on their own; but the fictional takes whatever is necessary from the actual one, a point which Eco brilliantly summarizes by saying that "fictional worlds are parasites on the real world" (*Six Walks,* 83).

And yet, this is not true in the totalitarian context. To begin with, the *theatrical* reality of Slovakia in 1950s did not have an aesthetic function. The stories of alcoholism, destruction of family, racial issues or greed were not believed to be fictional, but rather became real on stage, as if they were a window into the capitalist world. Therefore, theater transformed into documentary, a slice of life, ready to be used in the ideological war. This can be traced in the period reviews and critiques which were rarely interested in the quality of the performances themselves, but were more preoccupied with the practicalities of life in America and with anti-American discourse. Many of them were confrontational, malicious and bullying, and in one case, a daring claim

appeared according to which the American Ministry of Justice had been trained by the German Fascists (Šimková 111–114). The raw emotions, hatred and repugnance of the reviewers show that stage was not a place of illusion anymore. The *actual* world began to use the characteristics of the *fictional* world.

As it is, the relationship of *the actual* and *the fictional* was reversed here in contrast to Eco's original model: fiction was being parasitized by the actual world—it was the actual world which took whatever was necessary from the fictional world. Oversimplification of Hellman's text (as well as the other three American dramas) epitomizes such parasitizing of the actual world on the literary work of art. T*he actual* was in need of *the fictional* for the support of its arguments; indeed, the negative images in the American drama were actually required so that the system confirm itself.

As such, the role of theater did not consist only of presenting ideologically unquestionable plays and serving as an educational institution. It is also important that the means to accomplish such function consisted in presenting nothing else but that which is the core of documentaries—facts, and corresponding images. The line between theater and actual world, between the *fictional* and the *real* became blurred. The preference of realism against any other poetic method finds here its greatest advocate: in theater, *the fictional* was *real,* especially after narrowing the subject matter to its most literal explanation. Here we come full round to the political commitment of the Western playwrights: as living human beings who had first-hand experience with the injustice of capitalism, they indirectly confirmed the realness of the world which their plays portrayed.

Indeed, it is a dangerous to understand *The Little Foxes* only as an indictment of capitalism, as dangerous as to limit Hellman to a propagandist. *Foxes* certainly are a bitter portrait of voracity (Atkinson 19). Yet, Hellman herself explained that the viciousness of Regina's character (as well as the illness of her husband) were not an artistic construction solely in service of ideology. Quite the opposite, both refer to semi-biographical elements from Hellman's own past, serving primarily to point at dysfunctionality of the family—but not necessarily dysfunctionality of a *capitalist* family ("An Evening with Lillian Hellman" 17–8). Similarly, according to Anne Fletcher Hellman did not

"conceive the play as centered on the class issue, as many 1930s plays did", and the Hubbards family was *not* "to be taken altogether seriously." After all, Hellman did insist the Hubbard family to represent more than a simple negative example: "I had meant the audience to recognize some part of themselves in the money-dominated Hubbards; I had not meant people to think of them as villains to whom they had no connection" (Hellman in *Pentimento*, qtd.in Barlow 159).

William Wright, Hellman's biographer, also recalls Hellman's own words according to which "the play is not about capitalism, but various forms of evil, and the consequences of evil" (Wright). She is also remembered to have expressed much surprise "that anybody thought'" *The Little Foxes* to be criticizing the spread of capitalism, even if she admitted: "I don't think that what writers intend makes very much difference. It's what comes out" (Hellman qtd. in Barlow 164).

And indeed, what came out after the productions in 1949 and 1950 was radically different from the productions of *The Little Foxes* at the beginning of the 1960s, during a subtle, yet growing, liberation process. Interestingly, the number of reviews and critiques was considerably lower than when compared with the productions of the early 1950s. Moreover, none of them commented on the political profile of the playwright. Quite the opposite, Lillian Hellman turned rather into "an anachronism than any contribution of dramaturgy," despite her indisputable qualities (Polák n.pag.). This is a fascinating statement, as it rejects the typical doctrinal image of Hellman as the most progressive western playwright and a role model. Hellman's plays were now not only considered distant historically and geographically, but also as to their poetics. Their critical realism, once appreciated and glorified, was thought to be outdated. Not without emotion, the reviewer claimed

> Yes, I know that this Alabama story from the year 1900 (!) spreads over the walls of one Southern American family, but for Pete's sake, why does it need to be forever repeated (. . .), now that (. . .) we desire something greater. [Áno, viem, že aj tento alabamský príbeh z roku 1900 (!) presahuje múry jednej juhoamerickej rodiny, ale božemôj, prečo to treba už dnes do nekonečna (. . .) zdôrazňovať, keď (. . .) ide nám už o oveľa viac.] (Polák n.pag.)

This appeal reflects how the revolutionized attitude towards Hellman was reflected in the avoidance of the doctrinal interpretation of her play. Polák demonstrated it clearly when he stated that a proper stage representation of her characters must emphasize everything "typical, ambiguous, multi-dimensional, hidden deeply in the meaning of the character, in its subtext [typické, mnohoznačné, mnohorozmerné, ukryté hlboko v zmysle postavy, v jej podtexte]" (Polák n.pag.). Polák's opinion proves that the previously restricted inner drama and a polarized theme should now open towards universality.

The final resurrection of this drama in the year 1965 brought even less period material than the productions at the beginning of the 1960s, and in those few pieces it was discussed with hesitation, as Hellman's poetics of realism was already considered perfectly obsolete. Undeniably, the year 1965 represents a strong liberation period with priority assigned to expressionistic plays and formal experiments. Hellman offered none of these. Nevertheless, Štefko was able to find a decent reason for staging her in such dramatic years: "[t]oday, Hellman's play offers the possibility of a wider and more universal angle (. . .) in spite of its undoubtable *moral wear* [[d]nes Helmanovej hra poskytuje možnosť na širší, všeobecnejší záber (. . .) napriek svojej *morálnej opotrebovanosti*]" (Štefko n.pag.). A short commentary in the theater booklet expressed a similar opinion:

> Her analysis of the mind of her characters (. . .) is simplified, however, (. . .) it affects the audience very much, it shakes the audience by means of its conflict, which - *even if* its roots go back to the social theater of the 1930s - does bring many impulses to be considered even today. [Jej analýza duševného sveta postáv (. . .) zjednodušuje jeho výklad, avšak (. . .) dosahuje veľkého účinku na diváka, otriasa ním silou svojho konfliktu, ktorý, i keď má korene v sociálnom chápaní divadla tridsiatych rokov, predsa len prináša mnohé podnety na zamýšľanie sa i v dnešných časoch.] (qtd. in Hellman, theater booklet 1964, emphasis mine)

In the eyes of the reviewers, the play showed some signs of wear since it stemmed from the social theater. In other words, the social theater in the second part of the 1960s was considered outdated and uninspiring

for Slovak cultural context, but the core of Hellman's conflict was deemed lasting and valid. As it is, the universality of the conflict resonated in the audience despite the fact that the social dimension of the play ceased, as both quotes emphasize, to remain relevant. More specifically, not only were the social elements irrelevant, but according to the period reviews also potentially problematic, and as such, they remained in the background. Had it not been so, the "space for the resonance of human passions [priestor pre rezonáciu ľudských vášní]" would be restricted" (-pl- n.pag.).

An important line of thought must be recognized in these statements. None of them comments on the play from the point of view of a censor or doctrine. More importantly, not one phrase evaluates the connection between the drama and the physical world. The reviewers focused on the artistic value of the text and its stage production; they discussed the qualities of the acting ensemble, scenography, stage direction and above all, demanded a genuine message, "a merciless war of human characters on a more universal level [nemilosrdným bojom charakterov v rovine všeobecnejšej platnosti]" (Štefko n.pag.), "a creative synthesis which also contains a certain appeal and more universal validity [syntézu, ktorá má v sebe obsiahnutú aj určitú naliehavú adresnosť a všeobecnejšiu platnosť]" (Polák n.pag.). Such set of criteria to evaluate a work of art signifies that the voice of the Doctrine was pushed to the background, and the fictional resonated again as *the fictional*, with its natural—not twisted—ability to refer to the real.

What conclusion can be drawn from the previous analysis? The fluctuating power of the Doctrine between 1948 and 1968 is reflected in how clearly its voice can be heard in the translated texts. In the initial phase of nurturing the newly-born socialist state, not the artistic was desired, but political. As a result, those plays were selected whose theme could easily be pared to the literal meaning and served as the objective picture of the polarized world. In the course of those twenty years, with the influence of two political thaws and the increasing liberation process, the voice of the Doctrine was gradually silenced. It remained in the background, still approving some texts for translations and some translations for the productions, yet in a far less rigid manner and far more subtle form.

The most radical change was the end of official rhetorics in most of the reviews; gone was the polarization of the world, gone were *they* and *us*. As Umberto Eco stated in one of his *Five Moral Pieces*, the freedom of speech means liberation from rhetorics. This was true, even if it lasted only until the end of August 1968.

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American Wartime Rhetoric

Jaroslav Marcin

> In stark contrast, the citizens of Iraq are coming to know what kind of people we have sent to liberate them. American forces and our allies are treating innocent civilians with kindness and showing proper respect to the soldiers who surrender. The people of the United States are proud of the honorable conduct of our military. And I am proud to lead such brave and decent Americans.
>
> …
>
> We are bringing aid to the long suffering people of Iraq, and we are bringing something more: we are bringing hope. One Iraqi, when the coalition troops arrived, described the emotions of his village: They were waiting for you, he said, and all the people believe that America and Britain have come to liberate them, not to conquer them.
>
> (George W. Bush, "Operation Iraqi Freedom")

Introduction

In European geographical context, the term "war" bears gravely negative connotations, owing to the continent's extensive experience with warfare and its consequences—lives lost, homes destroyed, cultural heritage wiped out in a matter of seconds, and even merciless genocide. Given our recent history, there is not much to leave us wondering why we stand where we do on war—and that is regardless of whether the war is happening on our territory or abroad. A 2009 poll, for instance, found that only 24 percent of UK citizens and as few as 13 percent of Germans believed that "fighting international terrorism should be top of Mr Obama's priorities", as opposed to 45 percent of Americans (Blitz n.pag.)—a profound difference in sentiments. It is for this reason, specifically, that we often fail to understand why Americans, co-creators of our Western Culture, might feel quite differently about this subject. In fact, we frequently misjudge their motives and misinterpret their rhetoric, analyzing it with our (European) set of viewpoints. I have made it my aim, therefore, to shed some light on American wartime rhetoric, the specificities of its discourse, as well as the cultural mindset within which they were intended to be perceived. In order to meet the requirements of such a challenging task without becoming needlessly dull, I have chosen to focus on the more recent

and/or best-known examples of American wartime rhetoric, giving the reader a solid idea of what we are looking at.

It has often been said that there have not been any armed conflicts on American mainland since the Civil War as if to suggest that, for this reason, Americans never perceived war as such a negative, sinister phenomenon. Such belief, however, goes against the facts which show that Americans have been affected by the war in measures comparable to those of European. Most recently, the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been the subject of much talk, both among the scholarly community as well as among the general public, stimulated by the cries of veterans who have become victims of it. Moreover, wars have also "produced" broken-up homes, stirred up anti-war sentiments resulting in riots and fear, occasionally even mass hysteria, as in the case of the Red Scare in the United States. All of this suggests that the concept of war has been as real in the minds of Americans, as it has been in the lives of people living in formerly war-stricken European countries. Nevertheless, there is a marked difference between the perceptions of war in Europe and in the United States, and this difference can be very clearly seen in the wartime rhetoric of American presidents.

George W. Bush and the War in Iraq
Among the most recent examples of this kind of political rhetoric has been the fairly recent—and much criticized—War in Iraq. In his addressed, "Operation Iraqi Freedom," (former) President Bush reacts to earlier criticism coming from many groups: the accusations of non-Americans that the USA are playing the world police force, as well as doubts coming from among his own nation as to whether the need to interfere was a real one (and these doubts and concerns kept growing throughout Bush's second term). The key theme, as stated by Bush, is "advancing against the regime of Saddam Hussein"; or, in other words, liberation (thus, "Operation Iraqi Freedom"). This liberation is supposed to prevent (or pre-empt?[1]) the use of weapons of mass destruction

1 The idea of preemptive military action was a part of the "Bush Doctrine," according to which deferred action may have brought with it catastrophic consequences. The word "preemptive" suggests that there is a perceived (real) threat, and thus a perceived aggressor; as opposed to "preventive," where there

against the USA, and, as stated further in what become another theme, "by defending our own security, we are ridding the people of Iraq of one of the cruelest regimes on earth."

The war itself thus becomes "a great and just cause."[2] This idea is not something new; rather, it is a *leitmotif* repeatedly found in the political history of the United States, using Enlightenment philosophy (of, among others, John Locke) to justify this and similar struggles: from American Revolution, through the struggle for the abolition of slavery in the Civil War, through the Civil Rights Movement's efforts, up until the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The ideals that underlie these struggles are at least as old as the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims the belief that "all men are created equal," giving them all—American or not—a right to a happy life in a democratic country.[3]

Bush's radio address is relatively short and follows a simple structure of *Introduction-Comparison-Conclusion*. The Introduction presents a brief summary of the mission embarked on together with an update on the latest developments ("members of our 101st Airborne Division have been welcomed as liberators"). The Comparison, which forms the body of the address, contrasts those who represent the Iraqi regime ("Saddam's thugs") and the liberating forces of the Allies (largely Americans). The Conclusion defends the stance held by the American government (that the invasion of Iraq was necessary and proper) and emphasizes the need to continue in this endeavor.

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exists no threat or aggressor.

2 Ever since Thomas Paine, whose 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense* reasoning for the separation of the American colonies from Britain, argued that "the cause of America is the cause of all mankind" (Paine n.pag.), the causes America has fought for have always been generally perceived by US politicians as "great and just," an idea which has been carried over into the American national anthem whose fourth and last stanza ends in the words: "And conquer we must, for our cause, it is just / And this be our motto: In God is our trust / And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave / O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

3 This is a prime example of an erroneous extension based on the United States ethnocentric perceptions of the world. This implies that if all people and nations in the world have the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," they have to achieve these in the same way the Americans have, regardless of cultural differences between their culture and American culture.

From the point of view of functional language, the text of the body lends itself most readily for analysis, contrasting two opposing camps, which can essentially be labeled as **them** and **us** (Bugarski 129-145). The physical proximity of the two descriptions results in a juxtaposition which the listener is able to reflect on more easily, with his or her mind quickly identifying the key words and phrases describing "them" and immediately comparing them against those that pertain to "us." In the case of Bush's address, the portrayal underlines that "they":

- "shield themselves with women and children"
- "have killed Iraqi citizens who welcome coalition troops"
- "have forced Iraqis into battle by threatening to torture or kill their families"
- "have executed prisoners of war"
- "[have] waged war attacks under the white flag of truce"
- "[have] concealed combat forces in civilian neighborhoods, schools, hospitals and mosques"

This creates an extremely negative image, which underscores the moral depravity (as we would call such unethical actions) and ruthlessness—not merely against soldiers, but also with regard to civilians; not only against the Allies, but also when it comes to the Iraqi citizens themselves.

In contrast (or as Bush puts it, "[i]n stark contrast"), the "us" group, which features the American soldiers sent to Iraq, the description abounds in praise: they have been sent to "liberate", they "are treating innocent civilians with kindness and showing proper respect", they act with "honorable conduct" and "[bring] hope" to the suffering. The function of such language is clear at a first glance: to divert the attention from the very specific criticism of American intervention to the (very) general, perhaps even mythical, characteristics of American soldiers. In other words, Bush does not address the criticism with counterarguments. He simply presents an idealized picture of America(ns), which is supposed to imply something along the lines of "If they are so moral, they certainly would not be capable of anything bad." And in terms of the logic it uses, this is a very misleading implication.

Similarly, a (much) less than balanced view is presented when it comes to action in the battlefield. The most upsetting news is that Iraqi soldiers and officials do not hesitate to commit atrocities even on Iraqi civilians, as they "shield themselves with women and children" and "[conceal] combat forces in civilian neighborhoods, schools, hospitals and mosques." These statements are especially powerful because of the emotional reactions they evoke in the minds of the listeners who empathize with the innocently suffering (i.e. those who did not choose to go into war and are in some way powerless to defend themselves) and who hate foul play (as even such a thing as war is expected to be "played" by certain rules).

Unlike this, the American soldiers seem to have no negative impact on the lives of the Iraqi civilians; rather, their presence is wholly beneficial as they "have brought food and water and medicine," "[they]'re delivering emergency rations to the hungry," and "[they] are bringing aid to the long suffering people of Iraq." The negative effects of the war are ignored and words with neutral (connotative or denotative) meanings are used instead: Bush talks of "*eliminat[ing]* the enemy," "advancing against the *regime*," and "*removing* hundreds of military targets" (emphasis added). Clearly, in this war people are not being killed—merely targets are being removed!

In a similar vein, further loaded words are used to complete the picture of the two parties at war. The Iraqi army are connected with "atrocities", "fear", "terror", "torture", "killing", "cowardice and murder"; they are "enemies" and "oppressors"; they are representative of the "regime" (which would not be a bad word in itself if it were not for the connotations this word carries, linking it in our minds to dictatorships, as in "the Castro regime" or "the fascist regime"). Americans, in contrast, are not only a "free nation"; they also came to "liberate" the Iraqi. And it is this active intervention which is positively viewed. "Free nations will not sit and wait, leaving enemies free to plot another September the 11th—this time, perhaps, with chemical, biological, or nuclear terror."

Looking at President Bush's address, we find, in fact, that some words are repeated more often than others. This is, naturally, no coincidence. Namely, the word "to liberate" (or "liberator", "liberation") can be found in the text as many as five times, while the

word "regime" occurs six times (these words are not anyhow linked and only once do they appear in a sentence together). The word "regime" is connected with "atrocities", "crimes", "terror" and "cruelty." These two key words alternate in Bush's speech, creating a strange, irregular (and perhaps dissonant) rhythm, not altogether different from the beating of a drum accompanied by occasional shouts of: *Regime. Liberation. Regime. Regime. Liberation. Regime. Regime. Liberation. Liberation. Liberation. Regime.*

To complete this picture, other syntactic and stylistic tools are used: One is placing America in the first place within phrases like "American and coalition forces", or "America and Britain." Another is the emphasis on the joint-venture nature of the mission ("[soldiers] *we* have sent", "The people of the United States are *proud*", and "*we* are bringing hope"). We can also find a theme with variations repeated throughout the address: "we have … brought food and water and medicine", followed by "we are bringing aid to the long suffering people", only to climax in "we are bringing hope." What we see here is a three-step gradation leading from the concrete to the more (and more) abstract: from "food and water and medicine" to "aid" to "hope"; from the past ("we have … brought food and water and medicine") through the present ("we are bringing aid") to the future ("we are bringing hope" as hope is a future-oriented word).

The last piece in the jigsaw puzzle of Bush's address is the "direct testimony," which consists in the words of *an* Iraqi civilian (coming from an unspecified village). "They were waiting for you, … and all the people believe that America and Britain have come to liberate them, not to conquer." Even on first hearing, there is something odd about the sentence. The author distances himself from the subject of the sentence in the first part ("*they* were waiting" instead of "*we* were waiting"*)* as much as in the second part ("*all the people* believe … liberate *them*" instead of "all of *us*" and "liberate *us*", respectively). Why do we see the speaker distancing himself from the action in a situation where his emotions would be at their highest? Why does he not, instead, take on the more natural personally-involved point of view and say, "We were waiting for you and believe you have come to liberate us"? One possible answer is that the testimony is made up, or it has, at least, been "tampered with" to suggest, through personal

distancing, the neutrality and thus an implied objectivity of this statement.

Either way, the audience hardly has time to reflect on all these incongruencies while listening to the President's address on the radio. Such analysis is only possible when one is allowed enough time to study the speech on paper, noting each little detail. The radio audience is limited to having to process the speech "on the fly," which means it only picks up the key themes and is left with an impression—in this case an impression of a job well done, of a duty obeyed to help other human beings, of remaining true to the ideas that formed the American nation. It is a principle that, according to Ramonet, can also be observed in journalism, when he states that "the press … forced to follow the lead of television [as the dominant medium] … runs stories … which, like pictures, are aimed to touch on the affective and emotional side [of the audience], turning to the heart and the emotions rather than to the reason and intelligence" (38, my translation).

This kind of propaganda can then be perceived as manipulation quite in the spirit of Goebbels: brief, clearly phrased and understandable to the masses (Goebbels 13), which follows the underlying belief that "the mass is a weak, lazy, cowardly majority" (ibid. 35, my translation). Or, perhaps we are going too far to conclude so. One would also need to see the motivation of the speaker in order to pronounce such harsh judgment, and in this case—as, in fact, in any case—the motivation remains concealed from our view. Perhaps the motivation does reflect some inner fears and doubts that have been sown in the 9/11 attacks on the United States—and worries about the possibility of similar attacks in the future[4]. Even that, however, is not enough to justify the skewed, slanted and simplified view of the situation that Bush presents, especially in the light of accounts of the war by contemporary historians, which state that:

> The complicated Iraqi military campaign was a brilliantly orchestrated demonstration of intense firepower, daring maneuver, and complex

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4 As "in the same way that we talk of a post-war world (delineating the period after 1945) and a post-cold war era (the years following the collapse of the Berlin Wall), it is now reasonable to speak of a post-11 September world in which nothing will ever quite be the same again" (Cox 468).

> logistical support. No one had predicted such a quick and decisive victory—or so few casualties among the allied forces. The six-week war came at a cost of fewer than 200 combat deaths among the 300,000 coalition troops. Over 2,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed; civilian casualties numbered in the tens of thousands. (Tindall and Shi 1453)

while also not forgetting to note that:

> Defense Department analysts had greatly underestimated the difficulty in pacifying and reconstructing postwar Iraq. By the fall of 2003, President Bush admitted that substantial numbers of American troops (around 150,000) would remain in Iraq much longer than originally anticipated and that rebuilding the fractured nation would take years. Victory on the battlefields of Iraq did not bring peace to the Middle East. … [Moreover,] the president's credibility suffered a sharp blow when administration officials admitted that no weapons of mass destruction—the primary reason for launching the invasion—had been found in Iraq. The chief arms inspector told the Congress that the intelligence reports about Hussein's supposed secret weapons were "almost all wrong." (ibid. 1454-1455)

President Bush's address, from this point of view, thus seems incredibly short-sighted and reflects an unrealistically optimistic view of world affairs. Not only that: it conveys this set of gullible assumptions (to put it very mildly) to the American public, who—unlike the President—have no access to foreign intelligence and a host of experts. And although they are "bought" into Bush's ideas for the time being[5], this is not a sentiment that will last long.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II

If we fear we may have gone too far in judging Bush for his "Operation Iraqi Freedom" address, perhaps we would do well to put it in the context of American wartime rhetoric at large and to compare it with the addresses of other Presidents who found themselves facing similar challenges and serious decisions. In such case, we will do well to look

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5 A USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll taken in March 2003 found that more than three in four Americans approved of the decision to attack (Benedetto n.pag.).

at President F. D. Roosevelt's reaction to the Pearl Harbor attack, as well as further samples of speeches by Richard Nixon (Vietnam War) and George H. W. Bush (Gulf War).

> Powerful and resourceful gangsters have banded together to make war upon the whole human race. (…) The Congress and the people of the United States have accepted that challenge. (…) Every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history. (…) [T]he United States can accept no result save victory, final and complete. (…) So we are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows. (Roosevelt, "Day of Infamy")

In this analysis I want to take a look at two addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in which he reacts publicly to the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor of December 7, 1941. The first speech, given one day after the attacks on the American military base, is an address to the joint session of the Congress and is presented to justify Roosevelt's request to declare war (as according to American legislation this is a right given to the Congress). The other speech, made on the radio one day later, is for the general public and its aim is to inform it about the recent events as well as their consequences and the steps taken by the administration with regard to these.

The address before the join session of the Congress is rather brief. It informs those present about the events of the day before and after presenting the arguments, the President asks the Congress to officially declare war against Japan. Yet, the address does not limit itself to simple facts. Its goal is not merely to persuade the Congress to pass a resolution declaring war, but also to emotionally "tune" the Congress against the enemy. Roosevelt does this by presenting a list of Japan's offenses, including "severe damage to American naval and military forces," "very many American lives … lost" (although no real estimate is available at this point) and "American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas." The presented image is one of total **destruction** and, when considering "ships torpedoed on the high seas," also one of **powerlessness**.

Coupled with the destruction and powerlessness (experienced by the Americans) is the theme of **premeditation** on the part of the Japanese: Although for Americans this was a "sudden attack," a "surprise offensive," for Japan it was "deliberate" and "premeditated"―a word typically associated with murder and thus somehow implying that this, too, was a murderous act. Moreover, the word "deliberate" is used several times in the text, in expressions such as "deliberately planned," "deliberately sought to deceive," and "deliberately attacked," which completes the picture―but the master-orator can go a step further without stumbling.

To add to the dramatic effect, Roosevelt chooses to relate an episode which illustrates the **cruelty** and **deceptiveness** of Japan. He relates it using the following words:

> The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

According to this account, the United States was actively pursuing peace ("looking toward the maintenance of peace") and its motives were transparent. Unlike it, Japan, which had in fact initiated these peace talks ("at the solicitation of Japan") later chose to alter its original stance and ended them ("this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue"). Not only that―although in direct contact with the American government, the Japanese refused―even one hour after the offensive had started―to communicate the whole truth, i.e. that attacks had begun. This creates an image of Japan's **volatile** (unreliable) character and **treachery**. Moreover, **greed** enters the stage to add to this image: Roosevelt lists six other islands or territories attacked in a similar fashion while repeating virtually the same phrasing four times for added emphasis.

"The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves," Roosevelt then adds. What remains largely concealed, or at best on the level of indirect implication, is that Roosevelt has not been inactive. In fact, as he admits before asking the Congress to declare war on Japan, that he has already taken the initiative into his own hands ("As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.") and, in addition, has a plan of action ready ("I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but *will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us*" (emphasis added).

The radio address before the American people is an extended version of the address to the joint session of the Congress. Thus the portrayal of Japan as "traitors," "gangsters," "bandits," "deceptive," and "dishonorable." The image of a "longstanding peace between [Japan and the USA]" recurs alongside images of soldiers and marines killed, ships sunk and airplanes destroyed. Japanese greed is put in the context of Nazism as such where along Japan, the primary villains Germany and Italy have since as early as 1931 transformed the world into "one gigantic battlefield." The impact of this state on the lives of every single individual is emphasized in the words: "We are now in this war. We are all in it—all the way. Every single man, woman and child is a partner..."

The effect of this emotional speech on the audience is powerful: After all, this is the President himself, a figure of considerable authority, addressing them. They listen to his words and accept them without questioning. They might even be asking themselves, much like those addressed by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). The President has an answer at hand, or perhaps on the tip of his tongue. He has, as we have already seen, a plan and only needs to get his audience on board. Step by step, he lays it out before the American public, until it seems as the only possible rational solution.

This initial phase is about preparing ground for later, "harsher" words. It is about getting the listener on your side, gaining his or her trust—trust in the President and his people. Both rational and emotional appeals are used to achieve this goal. On the emotional side, there is **empathy** expressed by the President ("I deeply feel the anxiety of all

the families," "I … give them my solemn promise"), which makes him "one of us."On the rational side are the **qualifications** of those in charge ("the country now has an organization in Washington built around men and women who are recognized experts in their own fields. … [They] are pulling together with a teamwork that has never before been excelled."). With these assurances, the audience is ready to hop on board with the plan.

One of the most essential stylistic tools used in the subsequent presentation is **repetition**, sometimes with variations, at other times repetition of entire phrases without modification. This repetition is intended to wield a persuasive force and let the key points of the plan "sink in." To achieve this, phrases are typically repeated within one or several subsequent paragraphs, quite similarly to the way a poet uses the anaphora, epistrophe, and similar devices, otherwise the effect would be lost. As it is, however, point by point resonates with the listener, stressing the following catchphrases:

Without warning. In addition to words with similar denotative and connotative meanings used to describe Japan ("treachery," "gangsters," "bandits," etc.), the first among the frequently repeated expressions is "without warning" (10 instances). It is used to talk about the invasions and attacks by the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan) over the period of the previous ten years, and it is always set off by a dash (which indicated a pause in spoken language) and appears in a prominent—final position—in the sentence (as in "In 1931, ten years ago, Japan invaded Manchukuo—without warning.") This adds a dramatic effect and conveys Japanese **callousness.**

We, all, everyone. The United States is a huge country, separated from the majority of its potential enemies by a vast body of water (the Pacific or the Atlantic). This can create the illusion that whatever is going on somehow does not affect the country. But Roosevelt needs to get his countrymen on board, which means they have to take on the challenge as their own and unite in their efforts. Thus, Roosevelt proclaims: "We are now in this war. We are all in it... Every single man, woman and child." This is repetition with a variation, perhaps even with intensification, as the first "we" can sound too impersonal, but the later use of "we all" establishes the connection with

the entire nation (the masses), and "every single" relates it to individual listeners (every single one of them).

Hard, hard, hard. Roosevelt spends considerable time in his address on the effects of war on the lives of American citizens. He repeats it is a "hard war," and what lies ahead is a "hard road" and a lot of "hard work." Here is a further repetition with intensification, obvious in the words: "On the road ahead lies hard work—grueling work—day and night, every hour and every minute." These words are further illustrated by examples of concrete measures taken by the government, including a seven-day work week "in every war industry, including the production of raw materials" and raising the production capacity (for military reasons), using the existing plants as well as by building new ones. As for those who will not be directly affected by this, Roosevelt adds: "[T]here will be … a clear and definite shortage of metals for many kinds of civilian use... Yes, we shall have to give up many things entirely."

Not a sacrifice. At this point the listener feels affected and might even be beginning to ponder the negative consequences which will further complicate his or her life. But Roosevelt's goal is to agitate; he has no use for a depressed audience, or perhaps one that might start questioning the Presidential strategy. Roosevelt intends to "convert" his audience to make his plan their own. Thus, following the depiction of future hard times, Roosevelt goes on to say: "I was about to add that ahead there lies sacrifice for all of us," but he then modifies this idea: "But it is not correct ot use that word" because:

- "[T]he United States does not consider it a sacrifice to do all one can to give one's best to our nation, when the nation is fighting for its existence and its future life."
- "It is not a sacrifice for any man, old or young, to be in the Army or the Navy of the United States. Rather it is a privilege."
- "It is not a sacrifice [for various groups of citizens] to pay more taxes, to buy more bonds, to forego extra profits, to work longer or harder... Rather it is a privilege."
- "It is not a sacrifice to do without many things to which we are accustomed if the national defense calls for doing without it."

Although until now Roosevelt has been proceeding from the nation to the individual in order to prepare him or her for what lies ahead, here the President turns back to address the nation in order to raise a spirit of **patriotism**. Patriotism can then be used to silence any possible doubts among the audience and to help them cope with the ideal of a lower standard of living, or even to feel grateful for the inconvenience in some, otherwise hardly conceivable, way. And the flow of Roosevelt's ideas continues.

I am sure. The following paragraphs are meant to reassure the audience and impose a sense of obligation:

> And I am sure that the people in every part of our nation are prepared in their individual living to win this war. I am sure they will cheerfully help to pay a large part of its financial cost while it goes on. I am sure they will cheerfully give up those material things they are asked to give up.
> And I am sure that they will retain all those great spiritual things without which we cannot win through.

This is quite akin to a parent expressing their support in their child's abilities, which at the same time implies a certain obligation: "If they trust me so, I can't let them down." It is a clever and well-planned psychological move. The listener easily disregards the vagueness of the phrase "those great spiritual things without which we cannot win" and becomes a loyal follower to his or her leader. (Yes, the parallel with dictatorships like those of the then Germany, Italy or―interestingly―Japan, is no coincidence).

After all, we can expand on this parallel with strict authoritarian regimes easily if we not Roosevelt's appeal to the media "built into" the address. To these traditional bulwarks of the freedom of expression and the freedom of information, Roosevelt says: "[I]n the absence of all the facts, as revealed by official sources, you have no right in the ethics of patriotism to deal out unconfirmed reports in such a way as to make people believe that they are gospel truth." This is a raised finger as if to gently but firmly warn, or perhaps exhort, the press and the radio to stick to the official accounts.

When considered together, we find that both of Roosevelt's addresses are written in a similar vein: They seem to inform or ask permission, but what they actually do is agitate and command. Or, if we wish to put it in other words, in the first address Roosevelt asks the Congress for a resolution of war, which he believes a purely formal issue, as everything has been—and is to continue—under his command. Similarly, in the second address before a radio audience and for the sake of the American people as well as the mass media, who are expected to join in his game. Any questions, comments, or doubts concerning Roosevelt's plan on the part of any of these parties (the Congress, the mass media, the citizens) could result in the plan's failure. And no politician wants to wage a war on two fronts—one abroad and another at home.

Revealing the patterns

If we compare these speeches with other political addresses of American Presidents made in wartime situations we do, in fact, find many striking similarities—both in terms of form and content. As for content, the dominant themes include an effort to resolve things in a peaceful manner and using war as the last and least desirable resort, or using war merely in self-defense. Also, noble motives and goals are present, along with optimistic projections of the war efforts. In terms of the form, the texts clearly differentiate between "them" and "us" in a way that polarizes the text through a wide range of synonyms and using repetition as a key element of agitation.

Reluctance to wage war is a key element when it comes to the content of these addresses. What is emphasized is the effort to seek peaceable ways of resolving conflicts, as in "The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific" (Roosevelt, "Day of Infamy"). The war is the last resort if all other alternatives fail:

> We don't like it—we didn't want to get in it—but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got. … The true goal we seek is far above and beyond the ugly field of battle. … We Americans are not

destroyers―we are builders. We are now in the midst of a war, not for conquest, not for vengeance... (Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 19")

Similar ideas are expressed by George H. W. Bush during the Gulf War:

> This military action … follows months of constant and virtually endless diplomatic activity on the part of the United Nations, the United States, and many, many other countries. … Now the 28 countries with forces in the Gulf area have exhausted all reasonable efforts to reach a peaceful resolution―have no choice but to drive Saddam from Kuwait by force. (Bush, "Address to Congress")

War is typically seen as defensive, rather than an American offensive, regardless of whether the attack was on the United States itself (as in 1941) or on another nation (Kuwait, 1991). Even in case of the so-called pre-emptive war (attacking an enemy who is perceived as an aggressor before the enemy nation can fully realize its perceived threats, as in Iraq, 2003) does the United States believe itself to be on the defensive. Nor does it matter at all whether or not this defensive is historically accurate, as can be seen in the case of President James Polk in the 19th century, whose:

> message [to the Congress] embodied a conscious effort to conceal the degree of naked American provocation and lust for expansion shown in the months preceding the war. He also hid the determination of the United States to fulfill its "manifest destiny" to dominate the North American heartland. (Reid 310)

Hand in hand with this goes the belief that America's motives are **noble**, such as **patriotism** on the one hand, or some form of **altruism** on the other hand. Patriotism, of course, comes first because the war is always linked to the United States or at least to American interests (e.g. the perceived threat of the Iraqi regime with regard to the USA in the First and Second Gulf War). As for altruism, the goal of the war is never self-serving―simply to protect American interests―a greater cause always underlies the undertaking:

In January I could only conclude that the precipitate withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam would be a disaster not only for South Vietnam but for the United States and for the cause of peace. … Our defeat and humiliation in South Vietnam without question would promote recklessness in the councils of those great powers who have not yet abandoned their goals of world conquest. (Nixon)[6]

Among other **noble goals** are "defending freedom" (Nixon), "a new world order—a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations" (Bush, "Address to Congress"); "liberation," or "a great and just cause" (Bush, "Operation Iraqi Freedom"); or "ultimate good" (Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 19"). The issue on the table, then, is **freedom**, **security**, and—above all—**peace**. Peace is the desired state (thus the reluctance to wage war) and American politicians, not unlike Miss Universe contestants seem to have their minds set on it:

- "So we are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows." (Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 19")
- "I prefer to think of peace, not war." (Bush, "Address to Congress")
- "The great question is: How can we win America's peace?" (Nixon)

An important role is also played by American national **myths** intended to persuade through stroking their ego:

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6 The Vietnam War is another interesting example of American propaganda that would deserve separate attention. While it followed from the Truman's and later Eisenhower's policies in Southeast Asia, it developed openly only under Kennedy, and his successors Johnson and Nixon. Under Johnson, as the full-scale war unraveled, the American public was told that the war was a reaction to an "unprovoked attack" on an American destroyer ship "patrolling" in the Gulf of Tonkin. However, as Zinn recaps the story: "In fact, the CIA had engaged in a secret operation attacking North Vietnamese coastal installations—so if there had been an attack it would not have been 'unprovoked.' It was not a 'routine patrol,' because the *Maddox* was on a special electronic spying mission. And it was not in international waters but in Vietnamese territorial waters. It turned out that no torpedoes were fired at the *Maddox*..." (Zinn 476).

- "We Americans are not destroyers—we are builders." (Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 19")
- "We Americans are a do-it-yourself people. We are an impatient people." (Nixon)

The myths do more than justify decisions already taken. They create a sense of meaningfulness in the complex, perhaps even unfathomable reality. In a time of war and insecurity the use of myths by the country's most prominent politicians is anything but surprising. In a similarly predictable fashion, the religious theme enters stage in in the final act a time of crisis, either through the direct mention of God or through a less religion-specific word—prayer:

- "we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God" (Roosevelt, "Day of Infamy")
- "All of them are praying for us. But, in representing our cause, we represent theirs as well—our hope and their hope for liberty under God." (Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat 19")
- "I pledge to you tonight that I shall meet this responsibility with all of the strength and wisdom I command in accordance with your hopes, mindful of your concerns, sustained by your prayers." (Nixon)
- "Tonight, as our forces fight, they and their families are in our prayers. May God bless each and every one of them, and the coalition forces at our side in the Gulf, and may He continue to bless our nation, the United States of America." (Bush, "Address to Congress")

This religious motif is typical of the conclusion of the addresses and acts as a ritual resting point, reminding one of the biblical "if God is for us, who can be against us" (Romans 8:31). It helps to sway popular moods, make the audience trust without doubt this is a worthy cause and gives them moral courage and support. A similar goal is achieved through **optimistic projections**. They provide assurance that the war will be "quick and pain-free":

> Prior to ordering our forces into battle, I instructed our military commanders to take every necessary step to prevail as quickly as possible, and with the greatest degree of protection possible for American and allied service men and women. I've told the American people before that this will not be another Vietnam, and I repeat this here tonight. Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world, and they will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back. I'm hopeful that this fighting will not go on for long and that casualties will be held to an absolute minimum. (Bush, "Address to Congress")

And in case such quick and pain-free end of war cannot be reasonably foreseen, the speech present at least optimistic projections of positive consequences for the human kind (see "noble causes").

But motivational effects are also achieved through a presentation of **catastrophic scenarios**, which—although hypothetical in their nature—come to life in the words of their speakers should America fail to act: "Let historians not record that when America was the most powerful nation in the world we passed on the other side of the road and allowed the last hopes for peace and freedom of millions of people to be suffocated by the forces of totalitarianism" (Nixon).

Under close examination, therefore, there are basically two "moves" American presidents tend to make in their wartime speeches, which can roughly be described by the terms intensification and neutralization. While the former leads to a polarized image of the world (opposing forces at war), in geographical-political terms (the horizontal level), as well as and amplification of future negative impact in case of inaction, taking into account the vertical time line; the latter is aimed at decreasing possible negative impact of American motivation and actions. Even more simply put, intensification always pertains to the instances where "they" are the subject; whereas in case the subject (i.e. the agent) is "us", neutralization is employed.

This distinction between "them" and "us" can be easily proven: One needs to merely run through the addresses, put together a list nouns, adjectives and verbs used to describe the two distinct groups—"them" and "us," and the strategy is clear: A profusion of negatively charged words associated with "them" is contrasted with the

abundance of positive ones which describe "us" (see Table 1). **Synonyms** are used frequently as they help maintain the set course and message of the address while allowing for variation which helps retain the listener's attention.

	Us	Them
Nouns	Determination, justice?, pride, effort, freedom, liberation, endurance, patriotism, obligation, builders, defense, aid, hope, progress, peace	Offensive, invasion, treachery, harm, danger, dictators, bandits, gangsters, brutality, deception, cruelty, callousness, ruthlessness, atrocities
Adjectives/Adverbs	Firmly, bold, determined, optimistic, honorable	Sudden, premeditated, deliberate, criminal, treacherous, deceptive, dishonorable
Verbs	Defend, fight, eliminate, win, reinstate, bring, remove	Attack, deceive, murder, maim, rape, torture, terrorize, execute

Table 1: Verbal polarization of the world into "us" and "them."

In addition to these polarizing expressions, another functional device of political rhetoric is **repetition** of key words and phrases, which has already been discussed in connection with F. D. Roosevelt. It adds to the dramatic effect of the speech and helps the audience remember the main points. The use of repetition here is much akin to that of using repetition in poetry, music, in visual art or architecture―it is both aesthetically pleasing and rationally grounded (it, simply put, makes good sense).

The major question we are facing, however, is: Can we (safely) say this is a case of manipulation, camouflage, deception―or something else? The answer is not altogether clear and straightforward as we might like it. One thing that is obvious is that we are looking at a rather skewed view of reality―there is no way the world could be so polarized as presented in the addresses of these politicians, not even in a time of war. On the other hand, can a nation as large as America be governed

and led effectively (without violating some communication maxim, as those formulated by Grice) if its top politicians always try to capture the complexity of the situation? And even if this was achievable in time of peace, does it work also at times of war?

So, going back to Grice, can we tell what the speaker is doing in each case: Is he *violating* a maxim (and thus misleading on purpose), *opting out* (in order to show reluctance to cooperate), *flouting* it (in order to employ a conversational implicature), or is there a *clash* between two maxims (which cannot be reconciled) (81-82)?[7] Without a direct (and honest) feedback from the speaker, we cannot quite tell; though logically we may infer that as human behavior is a set of complex processes, this too is probably a case where there are several underlying motivations.

From what we have seen, then, it is impossible to distinguish whether the words they spoke were what they believed to be true, or outright lies meant to deceive the public. Be as it may, the addresses are examples of propaganda *par excellence*―as used in a democratic country―featuring a carefully crafted selection of images with little notice taken of the factual character of what is stated and much greater emphasis on the emotions the words evoke.

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7   Naturally, we may conclude in the above cases that opting out or flouting a maxim is not a likely choice, given the circumstances; the remaining two options, especially in a wartime scenario where there is a lack of information and yet the need to inform the public remains (a prime example of the clash of the maxims of quantity and quality), and where there is a need to take quick and direct action, backed up by public opinion.

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American Dream = $n\sqrt{(x + ideo \log y)}$
Martina Martausová

Defining the American Dream

There have not been many societies that would receive more attention of media than the American. With its symbols, icons, ideals and ideal values that once were unprecedented, the country has lured prospective immigrants for more than 4 centuries and it still continues to spread the image of the embodiment of hope to the rest of the world. An important component of the self-image it has created is the American Dream that has been presented as a characteristic uniquely ascribed to the country. The study aims to explain foundations of the uniqueness, as well as to clarify the Dream's (im)perfect characteristics proposing reasons for why the notion still holds such an important position.

The study brings arguments that justify existence of the concept of the American Dream and support its long-lasting endurance while remaining one of the essential tenets of American identity. For illustration of the arguments a mathematical formula was formulated to demonstrate the relationship of the concept with theory that have constructed it. The formula states that the American Dream is based on the root of X plus Ideology, where the X is conditioned by hope and positivism personified by Pragmatism.

To demonstrate the elusive character of the American Dream, which is one of the points of the study, three film analyses are incorporated representing the works of three distinguished American directors known for their preoccupation with American society—Todd Solondz, Michael Moore and David Lynch. The three films—*Happiness* (Solondz 1989), *Roger and Me* (Moore 1989) and *Mullholand Drive* (Lynch 2001) directly manifest the influence of deceptive character the American Dream might have on individuals of a closed community, and the way the concept is used to soothe frustrations and justify inequalities in society.

To define the American Dream a definition by Roger L. Pearson is presented, which embraces the essential idea of the concept and represents what most of the interpretations of the American Dream have in common. This definition explains the American Dream as:

the belief that every man, whatever his origin, may pursue and attain his chosen goals, be they political, monetary, or social. It is the literary expression of the concept of America: the land of opportunity. (Pearson 638-642,645)

The American Dream, a social construct of a mythic character bearing features of a stereotype strictly confined to the American character, is highly dependable upon changes in society.

Although the definition itself does not literally reflect desires connected with material possession, rather emphasizes pursuit of goals of non-material substance, in contemporary western society, in which the concept resides, one's personal happiness is inevitably tied to wealth and financial (in)stability.

As the American history proves, the concept of the American Dream has been challenged as American society and economy have changed; however, the essential core of understanding of the concept has not fundamentally changed throughout the time of its existence. Ironical as the claim appears in relation to the social history of the US, the definition has never literally embraced any elements of exclusion for any groups. Instead, it has been its interpretations, which have adjusted to the changing circumstances offering various applications, and expanded the idea into various fields of everyday life, and thus under the influence of the Postmodern was the concept embraced by individual groups sharing common goals creating a variety of American Dream(s).

The character of the American Dream is demonstrated through the root used in the mathematical formula. The root stands for the ability to decompose and deconstruct the idea, as each interpretation is a variation of the core. Therefore an altered formulation creates its own environment and conditions, while still fundamentally representing the core idea.

Some of the interpretations present the American Dream as follows:

- "The American Dream that we were all raised on is a **simple but powerful** one—if you work hard and play by the rules you should be given a chance to go as far as your God-given ability

will take you." (Hochschild 16-25)

The interpretation suggests enormous psychological power of the concept as it emphasizes unbounded hope that dwells in it. Words "simple but powerful" interplay to refer to Pragmatism as to the core philosophy.

- "I don't think the American Dream was that everybody was going to make… a billion of dollars, but it was that **everybody** was going to have an **opportunity and the chance** to live a life with some decency and some dignity and a chance for some self-respect."
- The emphasized words present the core idea of the concept and incite thoughts about idealized, mythicized, and blurred reality. Its power resides in a conditional manner.
- "The idea of the American Dream has been attached to everything from religious freedom to a home in the suburbs, and it has inspired emotions ranging **from deep satisfaction to disillusioned fury**." (Hochschild 16-25)

This interpretation implies a negative connotation of the concept for the wide range of emotions that the Dream 'inspires'. The common implication emphasized by the Dream is hope that effort might be turned into success; however, this implication is often inadequate and deceptive. Individuals, who are not fit for competition because of their nature, may experience 'disillusioned fury' when pushed into a pre-designed pursuit of happiness.

- „The American Dream is **a cluster of ideas** around which the definitions of the good life, morality, responsibility, purpose, success are described through **language, symbols, icons and heroes**." (Corbin 4-7)

The last interpretation proposes two ideas. First, that the Dream is applicable to a variety of situations and used according to the demands of a group or individuals; since it is 'a cluster of ideas' it can be

decomposed and used context-wise. The second idea is a proposed mythical character of the Dream, mythical in Barthes' sense.

All of the interpretations demonstrate different implications from the variations representing crucial characteristics of the American Dream and support the relevance of its existence.

Myth

Another determinant of the mathematical formula is 'ideology' supplemented with myth and stereotype. In this case myth and stereotype with their characteristics assist the claim that the American Dream resembles features very similar to that of ideology.

The American Dream embodies essential attributes of American Identity; therefore it conveys thoughts not only unmythic, but easily considered even natural. This, according to E. Tonkin, results in a tendency not to question its tangible existence but rather nurture the idea, of which "if the style is conversational, and the content unmythic, seems realistic" (Tonkin 255).

Myth, its existence and formulation, is highly influenced by its contemporary as well as past factors affecting and molding the accurateness giving it a more romantic and mystical shape. In the process of formation both audience and speakers become active participants. When transmitted orally a myth is often supported by written records already influenced by changes in the context; therefore various emotional shades are implemented by the speakers.

Myths and certain beliefs delivered by speakers also convey a certain degree of emotional engagement of the speaker to influence and attract audiences. Each participant involved in further transmission of the myth moulds the idea to one's own subjective point of view and transforms it to one's own purposes. We may say that to trace accurateness of history of an orally conveyed idea is almost impossible, even more so when the idea is not a fact in history, or an event bounded by records. The American Dream is a concept that has been transmitted orally by people who support the belief either for their own psychological comfort that radiates from hope, or based on their own experience or experience of others.

The fact that the American Dream can be designated a myth is also justifiable by a theory presented by Roland Barthes (Barthes 125).

As a semiotician, he combined cultural studies with semiotics and thus implemented the theory of connotation and denotation to the theory of myth. As Barthes points out, each sign has its primary meaning describing an object and a state of being that the sign denotes, but based on cultural experience the same sign can also connote a culture-dependant meaning expressing reality based on cultural codes of a specific speech community. The American Dream is a concept perceived from two basic points of view taking into consideration its primary meaning and its connotative meaning; however it is the connotative meaning that takes over its basic interpretation. When people speak of the American Dream, they obviously do not speak of a dream dreamt at night, but rather of a notion induced in their minds during the state of vigilance connoting its unique association with American character.

According to Barthes (Barthes 125) when a connotative meaning becomes hegemonic over a denotative and becomes 'natural' and 'normal', thus creating a metalanguage, it illustrates the mythical function of a sign based on specific cultural codes.

In this case the mythical character dwells in the belief that the dream can be pursued by people entering the land of opportunity and in hope in what the land can offer to those who put some effort in it. Therefore we may claim that the fundamental nature implied in this concept is hope that makes the concept unwavering, because as Schumacher points out, a human being without hope "is like a walking corpse, which is both physiologically and metaphysically absurd" (Schumacher 2).

Stereotype

Defining the American Dream within the boundaries of a stereotype is based on its feature of a concept generally applied to a community tied by common values. Stereotypes generalize certain characteristic traits and attribute them to the whole unit of an undifferentiated group. The main problem of this lingers in the question of what kinds of traits are attributed, as well as in generalization as such that widely overlooks peculiarities and distinction of an individual as of a member of a community. Traits that are stereotypically attributed are also exaggerated characteristics consensually shared „in the interest of the

social group among whom they are widely utilized and diffused." (Pickering 99) They are distinguished as discriminatory, often with derogatory intention, creating hostile and untrue judgments.

However, stereotypes have also been redesigned to serve their purpose of creating national identity images. Each nation presents itself with certain sets of attributes common for majority of members belonging to the nation and each national identity „presupposes a culture that supports this sense of allegiance and belonging." (Pickering 99) In this case, a stereotype does not necessarily bear a derogatory meaning; on the contrary it is a generalized image of a community to be distinguished from others. Nonetheless, its power often dwells in the representation itself, since a substance becomes real only when represented and this can be spatially and temporarily modified—as such representation is a highly subjective performance. As Michael Pickering in his study of stereotypes stresses, „reality is only objectified, but not objective"(Pickering 24). Therefore, a presented image can only be a processing of subjective experiences blended with knowledge that is again based on previous subjective experiences producing a romantic image with the promise of a new experience for those who have not encountered it. Media take the biggest share in the process of representation, and together with controlled education they help to transmit the national self-image, as in the case of the American Dream.

A stereotype can also be defined by the method of binary oppositions, as Angela McRobbie points out, in which the presence of one denotes the absence of its opposition. In this case McRobbie (McRobbie 70-73) illustrates on the example presented by Homi Bhabha that a stereotype presented from a non-involved party is perceived as something that the party lacks. Binary oppositioning is also applied to create a collective identity that is achieved through „differentiation, objectifying and identifying of the others"(McRobbie 70-73) whereas at the same time it modifies and blurs the image of the „non-others". Paraphrasing Jacques Lacan, the non-involved party lacks qualities presented by the stereotype and these qualities represent a promise of completeness that everybody subconsciously and inherently intends to achieve creating a desire to attain what the stereotype offers. In his own words - „it is something that is not me.

Therefore**,** I am not whole.“ (McRobbie 70-73)

The American Dream embodies characteristics attractive for its 'audience' requiring attention of all pursuing happiness. Its main function is to spread the positive message about the land of opportunity inciting idealistic expectations for all who would want to become a part of it.

Ideology

Unwavering existence of the American Dream despite its elusive character strongly resembles ideological practice. The term ideology is most commonly associated with theories of K. Marx who as one of the first theoreticians coined the term with his thesis on false consciousness and linked ideology with power and social class system. Though in this case the term ‚Ideology‘ presents “falsehood based on the idealist notion that Consciousness produced social life, as opposed to the materialist notion that the production of social life gives rise to consciousness” (Given 28).

The term is also strongly associated with Antonio Gramsci's theory of counter hegemonic ideology that 'neutralized' its connotation from mainly negative to negating, when positive ideology negates structures of domination and relations of exploitation.

In cultural understanding the main problem of ideology is described as one that is connected with epistemological position in relation to truth and knowledge, declaring an existence of objective intentions opening eventuality of a false belief. (Barker 206) The truth, according to this claim, is bound to culture and depends on historical and cultural circumstances of its own origin.

Defining ideology according to Michel Foucault's altering term of power/knowledge would be perhaps most applicable to Pragmatism, a philosophy that promotes the existence of the American Dream. Ideology is thus perceived as a discourse that gives meaning to material objects as well as to social practices defining a comprehensible understanding of the world, and serves as a means of justifying the way of life of a social group. In this understanding ideology is not to designate truth or falsity but rather aims at stabilizing its meaning created for certain purpose.

The main property of ideology is its base in belief. Knowledge

and belief differ in designation of knowledge. People have knowledge about their competences, thus have abilities, but beliefs "need some kind of 'content' or 'object'. They must be about things." (Van Dijk 374) Therefore the content is attributed to an object that we believe embraces the content, as it is with the American Dream, which denotes that the USA *is* a land of opportunity. These beliefs are often 'unreal', involving goals, fantasies or dreams.

As Teun A. Van Dijk in his study of Ideology (Van Dijk 374) claims, ideologies also resemble attitudes of a group based on "organized clusters of domain-specific social opinions", which basically means that individual attitudes towards certain issues are thus transmitted with the general opinion transformed into beliefs. If we take into consideration the American Dream, the legacy of the belief is an embodiment of hope. Hope and positivism again refer to Pragmatism that incites utilization over definition.

The American Dream has not been so commonly associated with ideology, because it does not evidently demonstrate such aspirations. As Teun van Dijk points out, Ideology is often demonstrated by a construction of the relationship between a dominant and non-dominant group (Van Dijk 374). More specifically, it requires a situation when a social group realizes that the common ground is not in the interest of the whole community, but rather of the dominant group. In the case of the American Dream, despite the fundamental fact that in the past it excluded a majority of groups forming a multicultural American society, it has always been in the interest of all by providing the sense of hope to "every man, whatever his origin…". The concept embraced the whole nation, everybody who entered the land and offered their effort could participate in the competition whether with real prospects to achieve one's goals or not. If the concept was not in the interest of each individual, each member of the community, whether willing to participate or not, it could have been designated as a general belief attributed to the dominant group, but in this case it is seemingly very difficult to designate a dominant group, therefore it can hardly be perceived by members on the grounds of ideology. The definition itself does not literally exclude any groups; on the contrary it includes every individual with the only condition being spatial territory of the US. However and again, based on Barthes' notion of culturally based

connotations, in its representation based on recent history it is undeniable that it had **de jure** excluded many individual groups and **de facto** still continues to do so. Hence we may claim that the concept is ideological by definition, since it deceives providing a seemingly equal opportunity for everybody to participate in the pursuit.

When considering ideology, a control of a dominant group over a non-dominant group appears to be its design. Who forms the dominant group and who the non-dominant in this case? Can the purpose of domination be identified when speaking of the American Dream? Let us have a closer look at the definition that states that

> every man, whatever his origin, may pursue and attain his chosen goals, be they political, monetary, or social. It is the literary expression of the concept of America: the land of opportunity. (Pearson 638-642, 645)

The dominant group, drawing from the context, represents those who have already gained control, whether through hard work, or by other means, therefore can defend and justify their position in a democratic society based on competitiveness where only the fittest survive. The non-dominant group can thus be identified as a group of people who participate in the race whether with expectations or not, yet have not succeeded. Thus the dominant group uses the tool of the American Dream to justify and defend their move to a higher social status necessarily linked to acquired wealth.

Each individual in society succumbs to rules established by the society, and as each person is naturally and inherently a social being this domination of society over the individual is natural. If an idea or a concept becomes strongly induced in minds of members of the society, one can hardly fight against such a strong influence in case of different individual preferences. Speaking of ideology, the powerful group imposes models that are not in the best interest of the less powerful group, and such models violate their will and interest. Whose will and interest would be violated by the imposed model of the American Dream?

Todd Solondz: Happiness

An example of such situation was presented to a film audience in 1998 by one of Todd Solondz' films *Happiness* through the character of Joy, who is a true embodiment of an American Dream anti-hero. Todd Solondz is a director characteristic for tragic harshness implied in his 'comedies' referring to every-day situations and common people. Solondz aim is to portray the core of society he lives in, depicting common life of an average middle-class family. As he himself states his "are the streets, the life on streets and the endless crowds of people he just can't get enough of" (Miklášová). Solondz is often attracted by taboo topics, which violate viewer's intimacy, and he uses this as a tool to encourage audience to question morality. He proposes reconsideration of questions of moral relativism, of what is generally accepted as good and evil. By presenting pictures of absolute perversity of one's values he violates the traditional picture of ethical American society and its moral principles based in religion. Solondz through his films often creates the impression that crooked values are not infrequently present amongst seemingly 'normal' people using the setting of a common neighborhood and representing standard middle-class people with American values. The film Happiness presents several main characters as the story evolves around members of a family and their lives

One of the characters is Dr. Bill Maplewood, a psychiatrist. Ironically enough, he is the only character in the film, to whom Solondz gives the privilege to actually attain his Dream, even if it means overstepping boundaries of morality. Dr. Maplewood takes a step beyond the invisible parting line to reach his 'happiness', despite the fact that the 'happiness' means reaching satisfaction through the sexual abuse of an 11-year old boy—a friend of his son. Through the character of Bill Maplewood, Solondz questions the relativity of acquiring one's dreams and compares reaching one's happiness through these broken boundaries with the rejection of pre-designed happiness, as if he doubted the relevance of desire itself. Dr. Maplewood is the head of an ordinary middle-class nuclear family with two children, and a successful wife with a career - Trish, living in a spacious house in suburbia. Solondz employs the character of Trish to demonstrate the desire to

pursue the pre-designed Dream of pursuing a career, a family, a house, to portray a person who 'has-it-all'. By setting the two characters in the same family, Solondz juxtaposes suitability of pursuing one's deep desires radiating from the individual craving, and pursuing a pre-modeled desire based on shallow preconceptions imposing them further on other members of the family.

Joy is another character, who as it has been mentioned, represents American anti-hero and Trish's sister that remains helpless in the fight against societal pressure. Joy, despite her name, is an unfortunate character. She is a sister of two successful women and the weakest member of the family. Pursuing her musical career she helplessly trudges through life and seeks support of her family. Ironically, under the pressure of the well-intended advice of Trish, she starts doubting her abilities even more, and eventually adopts models that contradict her own desires. The model of leading a proper life is the model of pursuing one's happiness by means of material fulfillment based on achieving a proper position in society through work success, while at the same time adopting the role of a wife and mother in a proper nuclear family.

Solondz emphasizes the situation in a scene where Joy and Trish (Joy's sister) talk about Joy's future and Trish expresses her concern with Joy's life. From the scene it is obvious that those two characters are considerably different in manners and lifestyle. Solondz criticizes domination of one's values over others by leaving Trish being a dominant character trying to influence Joy's life. Solondz implies absolute ridicule to criticize such actions as he lets Trish give Joy guaranteed advice on how to improve her life and start achieving what should be achieved:

> Trish: You have got to eat red meat.
> Joy: Oh, Trish.
> Trish: I knew that's how you'd react, but I'm telling you, it's true.
> (Solondz 13m:05s)

With this trivial advice Trish puts herself into the position of an older, experienced sister and Joy apparently lets her influence her life also by arranging blind dates for her with guys Trish had chosen. Solondz

emphasizes the effect of such domination in the following scene, where Joy is shown preparing a big piece of steak for dinner, taking Trish's advice, and the following dialogue with Trish even strengthens her authority.

> Trish: Oh, honey, I'm so happy you're happy.' Cause all this time I've been thinking you were so miserable. You know, it's just with your music career--
> Joy: Oh, my career's fine.
> Trish: Oh, I know. I know, it will be. I just know it. And then you'll move out of mom and dad's.
> Joy: Real soon.
> Trish: And you'll meet Mr. Right.
> Joy: Oh, I will. (Solondz 3m:34s)

Trish is not only delicately pointing at Joy's miserable life, but also indirectly emphasizes what all she has achieved that Joy has not and what values and priorities should Joy adopt in order to pursue her happiness - a career, independence, and a Mr. Right. Trish does not leave space for Joy to express how she feels about her own life, whether she has different needs or priorities, because she cannot admit there may be people with different needs than those she represents. Especially when this person is her own sister. She stresses how important these things are in her own life by adding that:

> Trish: The truth is I always thought you'd never amount to much. That you would end up alone, without a career. It's what we all thought. Mom, Dad, Helen... everyone.
> I always prayed we'd all be wrong, but, somehow you always seemed so doomed to failure. But now I see that's not true. There's a glimmer of hope for you after all.
> (Solondz 14m:38s)

Todd Solondz again and again points at the situation where a weak individual is forced to adopt socially praised models. Joy remains lost in pursuing her happiness for the rest of the film as one of the songs Solondz lets her sing suggests:

It seems the things
I've wanted in my life
I've never had
And so it's no surprise that
living only leaves me sad
Happiness, where are you?
I've searched so long
for you
Happiness, what are you?
I haven't got a clue
Happiness, why do you
have to stay…
So far away...
From me?
When I'm in despair and life
has turned into a mess
I know I don't dare to end
my search for happiness
Happiness, where are you? (Solondz 32m:60s)

Todd Solondz does not let his characters see dreams come true and thus leaves Joy with her inability to arrange her life, creating thus a parallel with the real life where dreams come true only rarely.

Solondz also plays with the character of Trish. Interesting is the way he stresses blindness and inability of Trish to admit otherness and at the same time points at the confidence in her conviction that she is to present an example of an ideal. In Trish's point of view, Joy is not only unlucky having different points of view and needs to fulfill in her life, she is simply incapable to reach her level of "having-it-all" and again compares to her own character of being so determined and apt to organize her life according to demands of society. Any divergence from the 'mainstream' and Trish's view of high-quality life is considered as incapability.

Trish: She's not like me. She doesn't have it all. She pretends to be happy, but, you can see right through her, she's miserable.
Bill: Why do you think that?
Trish: To be frank, she's lazy. She's not a go-getter. She's so picky. (Solondz 19m:29s)

It is obvious that Trish is not honest with her sister and the expression of her feelings is not only ridiculous as Solondz pushes it into extreme where viewers experience appalling ridicule of shallowness.

From the overall characteristics of Joy, she is presented to viewers as a person who often daydreams, she is very naïve and thinks of life as of a place where good deeds are recompensed. Solondz creates this embodiment of failure to refer to deviation from a general picture of what creates criteria for pursuing happiness by majority in the society. He examines values that define American society and through his characters challenges the concept of the American Dream. The character of Joy fits the image of an anti-assertive young woman, who devoted her life to the quest for happiness. She is often put into positions where she is ridiculed and viewers can often find her behavior pathetic with only very little self-trust. All these characteristics represent American anti-hero. Joy is even punished for 'being different' and becomes a constant subject of "hostility directed at me… (Joy)" (Solondz 12m:37s). Again and again, Todd Solondz opens the question of moral relativism, whether the collective view of the good should take a superior position over the individual one challenging the American Dream by questioning its relevance for majority of American society.

Based on this example we may claim that the American Dream in its essence distinguishes a dominant group and even presents the traditional model of hegemony. It leads to a pragmatic conclusion that is presented in the claim that the "criterion (for an ideology) is not truth but relevance (self-serving social functions, interests)."(Van Dijk 374) This approach has been preferred over a traditional semantics of truth that according to pragmatists leads to no utilization of such concept.

This fact is very interesting because it presents the interconnectedness of the concept of the American Dream and the justification of its existence as an ideology in Pragmatism that as it has been mentioned, is the only environment in which such a concept can sustain its position, because Pragmatism is inherently associated with American idealism and the American Dream is one of its representations.

Definition of X

As it has been suggested by the mathematical formula and its explanation, the X is conditioned by positivism and hope that is here represented by Pragmatism.

Hope is a vital nature for the existence of human beings. The essence of the concept of the American Dream is to provide people with hope. It is based on hope because in its very core "*every man… **may pursue his chosen goals**…*", which demonstrates that hope resides in the fact that everybody may be this every man and that the effort may bring its fruit. The subject of hope is also one embraced by Pragmatism.

Pragmatism and the American Dream

Pragmatism, as the only philosophy that originated in the USA, symbolizes all the principles of American society that are essential for creating the idea of the land of opportunity. It embodies the spirit of the States reflecting its needs and longings. In this part I will seek the support for claims in the theoretical work of Richard Rorty, as a renowned pragmatist philosopher of the 20th century and in his statements represented in Pragmatism of contemporary American society, which is the period of the interest of this study.

Pragmatism is a philosophy that prefers satisfactory utilization over futile theorization. It originated in the late 19th century in the states as a result of the previous attempts to create a philosophy that would reflect and consider all aspects of American individualism and exceptionalism. Pragmatism has achieved to emphasize the most efficient characteristics of American mind and is presented through works of theoreticians and philosophers as a philosophy truly functioning to the best benefit of common people. It also presents a basic model for theoretical concepts being practically applied; the American Dream is an icon to those concepts.

The central idea of Pragmatism in relation to objects and subjects as such is applicability rather than defining and identifying that lies in questioning the relevance of truth, which is according to Pragmatism vain to the extent that it distracts the main focus from availability and serviceability.

American democracy and American capitalism are based on applicability of theories in practical life; theories have become practical.

As history reveals there have been many theories which did not out step its theoretical grounds and never became fully applicable in practice. Vaguely said—'theory leads to nothing if it is not used in practical life.' As Rorty points out one should not "look for truth; seek the best use of it, and the means to make the best use of it." (Rorty 264) Taken this statement into consideration, the existence of the American Dream would not be questioned; the focus would be solely on its applicability and the prospective beneficial use. The aim of the study, however, is to identify and define.

Origins of the American Dream are dated back to the early 17th century with the foundation of the first colonies and ever since then it has endured and sustained its position as one of the bases of the American identity, for its very unique quality that happens to be applicability.

The driving force of the idea of the American Dream is a theory of upward mobility that individuals may experience through thrift and hard work. Applicability of this concept resides in its everyday practice by individuals, which is also a method to keep the concept strongly induced in minds maintaining its natural character. Members of this society do not have to question its existence because it is futile for them to theorize the concept if they can just easily and actively use it for their own benefit, which is also the point where Pragmatism shows its implication. As Henry James, one of the founders of empirical psychology, points out 'the truth is what is good for us, what we trust is good for us'.

The concept itself has become effective spreading its positive message. Pragmatism as such is a very positive philosophy and positivism has always been an omnipresent quality in American society. The USA is a very fresh, new country "still excited about having been explored only recently" (Rorty 264). This positivism is reflected in American philosophy, American values and lifestyle, expectations and beliefs. What distinguishes the States from countries in 'more experienced thus less optimistic' Europe is the vision of future, the prospect of future where one has the chance to change unsatisfying present for more satisfying future. And that is exactly what the American Dream has been created and used for, and will be used for as long as positivism remains the essential part of American philosophy.

The concept of American Dream perfectly fits the boundaries of expectations of American society and its feature of applicability and positivism makes it an ideal conception in a society that intermingles egalitarianism with the Darwinist theory.

(Im)Perfection of the American Dream

Yet still, as the subtitle of the study suggests, the American Dream only appears to be a perfect tool for positive national self-imaging, creating an impression of uniqueness for the citizens by providing images of a better, brighter future. On the one hand, the Dream is perfect for the ability to justify inequalities in society using one of the most powerful tools―hope; however, on the other hand, it still remains only a concept based on a belief strongly associated with American identity.

Michael Moore: Roger and Me

A director that criticizes such justification of inequalities in American society pointing at the elusive character of the American Dream is Michael Moore, who is a director of documentary dramas. In his films he does not employ icons, illusions, nor does he question the relativity of good and evil. However, the central topic of his films remains a concern with relativity of values in American society. His tools for expressing criticism of American society are objectified testimonies of real people in real situations, as it is common in documentary films.

With his debut, *Roger and Me,* Michael Moore provoked public discussions about policies of corporations, which by employing certain proportion of population of towns and cities create financial dependence of inhabitants on these companies. The film's main aim is to criticize the ethics of such actions of corporations, because as they shut down, most of the workers of the particular city remain unemployed, creating thus a large unemployment rate of a city or town. Subject of the film is the "fate of the worker at the hands of the modern corporation… inflected most recently by the predicaments of post industrialism" (Orvell 10).

Moore raises questions of new rules implied by global capitalism and the degree of responsibility corporations have and should have for their workers, and directly points at the excuses that are used by the powers that be to justify such actions. The focus of *Roger and*

Me is one town in particular, Flint, Michigan, with its inhabitants. With great emphasis on ridicule he interviews Anita Bryant, a singer, employed by the General Motors, the corporation whose actions are criticized, to perform on stage for their former employees giving advice to the unemployed to soothe their frustrations:

> "I read something interesting. Margaret Thatcher says:
> Cheer up, America! You live in a great country.
> You are a free country.
> You have a great president.
> Not everything is perfect, but cheer up because you live in a free America." (Moore 37:20min.)

And then she continues:

> "Today is a new day, an opportunity to do something with yourself. If nothing else, thank God for the sunshine… and for the fact that you're not starving to death. Go out and do something with your hands. I don't know…" (Moore 37m:32s)

Michael Moore depicts these irrationalities to strengthen the ridiculousness of the intention of big corporations to numb workers' critical mindset. He also points at the ignorance of people as he interviews the citizens of Flint, whether employees in factories, unemployed, or those, who were forced to find other means of making a living. Moore demonstrates the lack of interest in social issues of those, who 'live off the fat of the land', and are a part of the community life in Flint and see every day problems of citizens in the dilapidating town, yet still do not care.

Moore again and again depicts shallow ignorance of the society based on individual pursuit of the American Dream. In another scene a young woman appears on the camera as the audience learns it is the Miss of Michigan, soon-to-become the Miss of the United States. When Moore interviews her and asks a question about how it feels to be driving in the streets of Flint when so many employees have been fired from plants, she answers:

> I feel like a big supporter… So I keep my fingers crossed that they'll

be back working soon." (Moore 28m:45s)

At this moment the soon-to-become Miss America seems to be taken by surprise and with much bigger enthusiasm continues:

> I'm trying to stay neutral. I'm going to Miss America in two weeks
> and I don't…" at this point Moore changes the topic to distract the
> intention of Miss Michigan to speak about her career and tries to
> obtain a message from her to the citizens of Flint.
> Michael Moore: "Any message to the people of Flint?"
> Miss America: "Pray for my victory in Atlantic City in two
> weeks."(Moore 29m:10s)

This sequence is perhaps one of the most apparent parallels of indifference and the lack of interest in public issues. The young woman became the Miss America 1988, an icon that represents all virtues of American humanity, including compassion and concern with the world peace.

Moore's obvious subjectivity implied in his films has been highly criticized and the preoccupation with responsibility of one person is evident. However, he employs the excessive enthusiasm to create a straightforward link with American traditionally positive values represented through opportunities and freedom for everybody, and its converted values reflecting capitalist concerns that result in widening social gaps. To strengthen the irony of such parallel he interviews people, who were not as 'lazy' as other former workers of General Motors and seized the opportunity.

Moore introduces a woman presenting her new career of a colorist that evidently does not require high qualification but rather certain predispositions. In the scene the woman is demonstrating her skills trying to persuade the audience of the importance of her task of distinguishing people by ascribing them with particular types of color ranges; later she is presented again, and as Michael Moore comments: "she phoned in a panic and asked that we come back… as she'd made a terrible mistake" (Moore 43m:07s).

Moore's intentional exaggeration and downgrade of the importance of her job explains the sarcasm of the overall message as he

lets the woman explain the terrible mistake:

> Janet: "I've very recently learned that I am not an autumn (color type of skin). I was color-analyzed by someone in the IMS line…who are the people who taught me to do colors. I've discovered that I am another season."(Moore 43m:12s)

Michael Moore presents the interviewees in a variety of ridiculed positions with the aim to point at the more serious problems of American society resulting from inadequate actions of those who are living their American Dreams and justify their position in society using this icon. By presenting people in various undignified positions while trying to find alternatives to their making living, such as skinning rabbits, Moore utters his disappointment with crooked values once so dignified. He criticizes the relentlessly omnipresent image of the American Dream while portraying people, who despite their sincere effort have to bear humiliating conditions of their living.

David Lynch: Mullholand Drive

David Lynch, the third director relevant for the study, whose work undeniably reflects the struggle of society to tackle reality and illusion, directly points at the problem of "universally applicable clear guidelines about what is good or evil" (Hochschild 16-25). Lynch employs ambiguous narratives, interlaced plot, mysteries to trick his audience. He is highly suspicious of values that form the traditional American lifestyle and juxtaposes good with evil, or rather what they are believed to be. Yet, he does not aim to put good and evil into the opposition, instead he explores both through experiencing "the relationship between being good and doing good" (Makarushka 31-46), while suppressing the clear dividing line. In his work, Lynch masquerades evil as good thus endangering a community and its members with false beliefs in illusion hardly recognizing mistaken values. Suspicion, nihilism, ambiguity, decomposition of moral superiority, destabilized concept of authority, all these define Lynch's work as he questions the adequacy of cultural codes and collective truths upon which America's self-understanding lies. His work is thus generally considered postmodernist, even "latter-day surreal" (Perez 1-3). "Lynch deconstructs the images that define,

center, and structure the meaning of the American Dream within a modernist horizon" (Makarushka 31-46).

Mullholand Drive, a film relevant for this study, is unlike Lynch's other works "relatively straightforward" (McGowan 67-71). In this film he opens several parallel narratives, several realities that mingle together and resemble dreams; however that comes obvious only in the second half of the film. Dream is the central theme in spite of the fact that audience is acknowledged with it only as the narrative diverts from the main trajectory and radically changes. Viewers loose the certainty of reality presented by Lynch, who thus directly attacks the question of relative certainties about realities and dreams. The question of absolute, objective or subjective collective truth is one of Lynch's central topics.

Preoccupation with illusions and dreams with dreamlike appearance of characters in Mullholand Drive is strengthened by the moment when audience learn about the two central women characters, Betty and Rita being not what they were presented to be in the first part of the film. In the opening Betty is shown at the airport gazing in awe as a sign above her head says "Welcome to Los Angeles". As she is departing with an old couple she presumably met in the plane, a taxi driver takes her bags to the car. When Betty finds out her luggage is not with her, she becomes frightened, and when she realizes the taxi driver had already taken care of them she becomes even more amazed by 'the dream place' as she later states—the city of Los Angeles because it was "not a Los Angeles where thieves steal the bags of unsuspecting visitors but one in which everyone is eager to help" (McGowan 67-71). Lynch seizes every opportunity to emphasize the dream place, which inevitably incites suspicion that things are not what they seem to be. In this scene he incites suspicion by presenting the old couple Betty met in the plane, who are later shown sitting in a cab maliciously smiling as if they knew that the dreamy place would disappear, leaving Betty completely broken and shattered.

The old couple appears in the very initial picture of the film as if representing some kind of companions throughout the story. The scene is dedicated to the 1950s and 60s—the era of good old optimistic America, where smiling couples dance in a dreamy mood. David Lynch likes to portray icons and symbols of the 'American way of life' to

glorify the principles of the country and refers to the era when America reflected the image of a dream country to the rest of the world. He uses these images to create "an allegory whose images reflect nostalgia for absolute values" (Makarushka 31-46).

The dreamlike effect of the film is also induced by appearance, sudden disappearance and reappearance of several 'magical' objects. Lynch by employing those puzzling moments refers to subconscious adjusting to a fantasy mistaken for reality. Such moment is also the turning point of the film when the main narrative becomes violated and the audience find themselves betrayed and tricked, because the reality, which Lynch turns into an illusion, has been accepted by the audience as a reality. Viewers are acknowledged with the fact that society or individual social units are prone to be tricked with beliefs, which if their *style is conversational, and the content unmythic, seem realistic.* The American Dream is not only collective and widely accepted but it has become a symbol of American identity presented to American citizens as well as to the rest of the world. The aim is to refer to the collective American consciousness and collective thinking. The evil that Lynch sees behind the collective self-understanding is "the blind faith that uncritically legitimates the American Dream". (Makarushka 31-46)

Based on Irena Makarushka's claim David Lynch also identifies himself with Friedrich Nietzsche's nihilistic view when claims that to believe the Dream is true " is ultimately nihilistic in its denial of the complex nature of experience and in its assumption that the future is constrained by the totalizing truth claims of the past." (ibid.)

Conclusion

The American Dream is a social construct formulated by American society to justify promotion not always based on a fair-play competition, as well as to promote a positive self-image of the country, where everybody has the opportunity to improve their living standards. Whether it is true or not is of little importance as long as the concept continues to embody driving force for people willing to take part in the competition. Contemporary western society, which practices are strongly rooted in principles of Laissez-faire economy and social Darwinism, praise widely applicable concepts that help to excuse injustices.

As it has been presented using the mathematical formula, the American Dream is supported by theory that not only reveals its elusive character, but directly refers to its symbolic function. This was also illustrated on the examples of works of three American directors, whose main preoccupation is American society and its values. Todd Solondz, Michael Moore and David Lynch center their attention on criticism of such values that are reflected through the prism of ideological conceptions and demonstrate their prevailing unhappiness with the inability of the community they live in to tackle the problem of deceptive realities created by dominant groups to alleviate frustrations of non-dominant groups. Each of the directors uses his own means of expression; Todd Solondz violently attacks viewer's intimacy questioning the relativity of moral values, Michael Moore documents real people and activities of dominant groups with humiliating effects on the non-dominant groups, and David Lynch unveils illusions naively mistaken for realities. Yet their common aim remains clear―to criticize ignorance, oppression and inability to question environment people live in.

As Kurt Vonnegut in his book Cat's Cradle opens a story with: "Live by the *foma** that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy" (*foma*―harmless untruths), I conclude with its supplemented version: "Live by the foma that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy; but know the foma".

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Stone of Destiny and the Myth of Golden Age
Božena Velebná

The title of this paper seems to have little to do with Edensor's argument that national identity is created and reaffirmed in everyday situations. Neither 'Stone of Destiny', nor 'Golden Age' or 'myth' would be considered as denoting something that is a part of everyday experience. His understanding of national identity as a part of cultural matrix, in which it is redistributed, includes the study of popular culture, more precisely the media (Edensor). Before commencing any study of national identity, it is useful to bear in mind Edensor's claim that, it is impossible to grasp all its aspects in their totality at once but must be approached through concentrating on "a few selective, symbolic dimensions" (5). This paper is interested in how national history is presented in historical film through the myth of Golden Age.

Myths and memories
Smith believes that "we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology or form of politics but must treat them as cultural phenomena as well. That is to say, nationalism the ideology and movement must be closely related to national identity, a multidimensional concept, and extended to include a specific language, sentiments and symbolism" (A. Smith, *National Identity* vii). He defines national identity as "the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identification of individuals with that heritage and its cultural phenomena" (A. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalismmm*).

Interestingly, Smith chooses the expression 'historical memories' rather than 'history' when talking about the elements of nationhood. Historical memory, as a constituent part of a broader social memory, is selective and the criteria for this selection depend on the needs of the community. The selective nature of historical memory allows for the existence of various interpretations of the same historical event that may even contradict each other and that successive generations often re-interpret (Bačová 17-26).

The same can be said about myths which, according to Smith's (1999) proposed structure of national identity elements, fall into the same category as historical memories. The word 'myth' therefore has multiple meanings, ranging from narratives about gods, supernatural and magical creatures or heroes, to anything that is questionable, irrational and uncritically accepted. Manová, however, acknowledges the fact that official historiography as well as myth are but two ways of remembering the past (10). Similarly, Samuel and Thompson see myth as "embedded in real experience: both growing from it, and helping to shape its perception" (6). It is, they believe, "the omissions and the shaping which make these stories also myth" (9). Basso compares the relationship between 'facts' of history and 'myths' to "a word which has been stolen and given back. Only that the word was not exactly the same when it was returned" (68).

For Pittock, "mythology can be a kind of history favoured by the dispossessed … a kind of protest history, a self-expression of identity on behalf of those whose identity was under threat" (*The Invention of Scotland* 5). Within the scope of this analysis, therefore, the term myth refers to this meaning of the word as tied to historical memory of a nation, one that, in McCrone's words, "is not to be taken as a history lesson in the sense that it is an accurate account of the past (although its authors clearly intend this to be the case).We might characterise it as 'myth-history' in the sense that it sets out to celebrate identity and associated values (263-4).

Several mutually overlapping classifications of such myths are possible, depending on varying points of view. Samuel and Thompson mention the basic distinction between positive and negative myths―idealisation and demonisation of self and the other―"splitting the world into images of absolute good and evil" (6). At the same time, there exist close ties and continual exchange between "myth in personal narrative and public tradition" (15), the latter being constantly internalised and passed on through a variety of channels, including the media.

Here, Thompson refers to "constant negotiation between … private and public memory" (78), the reason for this being the desire of individuals to feel comfortable and accepted within the society and its public memory. This often leads not only to accepting the publicly

mediated versions of distant historical events but, in case of events still within living memory of people, even to reconsidering their own memories. Thompson observes how stories narrated by Australian First World War veterans are reminiscent of films scripts, since the films depicting the events perceived as the birth of the Australian nation became the major source of public memory and a model to internalize and to adjust to for the people whose authentic memories did not fit the picture. In this process, as the public memories are reconsidered, so are the personal ones (77-8). It is therefore not surprising that the need to share in common historical memories of the society leads to public acceptance and re-consideration of historical myths as presented by the media, especially if these are related to distant past that requires no parting with one's individual experience.

Even though the media play a significant role in this process in the contemporary world, the process itself is not a modern invention. "For most history, history as we know it did not exist, or rather, what was available was known to comparatively few since society at large depended mainly upon the oral as opposed to the written, medium (Cowan and Finlay 2). The myths perpetuated by generations of early chroniclers and scholars who took oral tradition have, however, become so deeply entrenched in national memory, it proved to be very difficult to tell the national history without them.

Anthony Smith talks about 'ethno-history', that is "the ethnic members' memories and understanding of their communal past or pasts, rather than any more objective and dispassionate analysis by professional historians" (*Myths and Memories of the Nation* 16). According to him, "for many pre-modern peoples the line between myth and history was often blurred or even non-existent. Even today that line is not as clear-cut as some would like it to be" (*National Identity* 22). In a similar spirit, Connor believes "it is not chronological or factual history that is the key to the nation, but sentient or felt history" (71).

The selection of episodes from ethnic history to be employed in the process of vernacular mobilisation was, according to Smith, not completely free of arbitrary selection or even forgery. However, he believes that "cultural nationalists were intent on recreating vernacular culture and history that would meet the two basic criteria of historical plausibility and popular 'resonance' (*Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism*

71), which implies that a complete invention would be counterproductive. These "'inventions' of modern nationalists must therefore resonate with large numbers of the designated 'co nationals', otherwise the project will fail to mobilize them for political action" (A. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* 198).

The former criterion was largely dependent on the state of historical knowledge which was sometimes rather sketchy. The latter, on the other hand, depended on the definition of 'the people'. More often than not, "the designated nation was much more heterogeneous and its homeland far more ragged; and it was often divided into cultural regions, each with its own dialect (if not language) and separate customs, arts and folk memories" (72). Therefore, certain selection was inevitable, responding to the needs, values and memories, symbols and tradition of different segments of the designated population" which, in turn, was taught to accept them as national (72).

Smith discusses these myths, which form and essential part of his ethno-symbolic approach to the study of nations and nationalism, and their potential for creating and sustaining group identity, in several of his works. He believes that even though each community possesses myths that are in some respect unique, "they possess a common form that can be usefully broken down into its component myths" (62). He subdivides the elements of ethnic mythology into six groups which find their concrete manifestations in individual nations' national mythologies.

'A Myth of Temporal Origins or How We Were Begotten' is essential for temporal location of the community's birth just as 'A Myth of Location and Migration, or Where We Came from and How We Got There' is for its spatial location (A. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* 63). According to Smith, this myth is not fully developed in all the ethnic communities, yet they all have certain notions of the territory they consider their homeland—a territory which helps "to define the nation, by marking its boundaries and providing its home" (64). The ancestral homeland is created in the process of "territorialisation of memories" (A. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism* 94). This process, he claims, may be carried one step further through the "sanctification of territory" (94), the inspiration for which can spring from several sources - "the presence and activities of saints,

prophets and sages … virtuous heroes ... and of chaste heroines ... defenders of both the faith and the kingdom" and finally, the source that Smith considers to be the most potent one, by the presence of the tombs of ancestors (94-5).

In addition to the time and place of the origin, common ancestors—whether mythical or quasi-historical—are essential for creating the sense of belonging to a single family of the nation. 'A Myth of Ancestry, or Who Begot Us and How We Developed' therefore provides "the symbolic kinship link between all members of the present generation of the community, and between this generation and all its forbears, down to the common ancestor" (64).

It is 'A Myth of the Heroic Age, or How We Were Freed and Became Glorious' that gets most attention in mass culture and proves the richest source of inspiration for historical film. The heroic age is, naturally, filled with national heroes who "provide models of virtuous conduct, their deeds of valour inspire faith and courage in their oppressed and decadent descendants" (65). Taking as an example the ancient Greeks' reverence for their heroes, Smith observes that "in these alleged qualities of the hero were mirrored the best of the community's traditions, its authentic voice in the moment of its first flowering, so sadly silent today, so badly needed to halt exile and decline" (66). This also implies that the choice of the national 'hero of the day' and the choice of qualities this person was later endowed with to complement his or her real life personality, if known at all, largely depends on the present day needs of the community.

Smith also refers to the Heroic age as the Golden Age (66), which not only serves as an inspiration and a vehicle for the awakening and reconstruction of the nation but is seen as the sole source of meaningful future of the community, being "the pristine 'golden age' when men were heroes" (65). Rather than simply providing an outlet for romantic escapism, the Golden Age sets the norms of behaviour of the community, defines its very character, gives the community a sense of destiny and therefore stimulates its regeneration, too (263).

There is, Smith believes, nothing fixed about the Golden Age even within a single community. "For some it will be a golden age because it boasted religious virtuosi, saints and sages; for others because great art, drama, music and philosophy flourished; for still others

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because the community enjoyed its greatest territorial extent and military power; or pioneered great moral and legal codes and institutions" (263). Even the choice of the historical period seen as the Golden Age of a nation may be changing with successive generations, even allowing for simultaneous existence of alternative myths.

This age of prosperity and chivalry is inevitably followed by decline, hence 'A Myth of Decline, or How We Fell into a State of Decay' (67), brought about by the community's failure to adhere to their values and traditions, estranged from their ancestors and therefore losing purpose as a community and as individuals, too.. The individual human being is seen as only being able to find his or her true fulfilment as a part of the community. (67). Too much individualism at the expense of the community, on the other hand, leads to decay on both national and personal level, from which the community must be rescued by the return of the heroes that would restore the lost Golden Age.

'A Myth of Regeneration, or How to Restore the Golden Age and Renew Our Community as 'in the Days of Old'' (67) represents, for Smith, a "move from the sphere of explanatory myth to that of prescriptive ideology: from an idealized, epic history to an account of 'required actions', or rationale of collective mobilization" (67).

In his later works, he usually distinguishes between just two types of the myths of ethnic descent, using the terms 'origin myths' and 'myths of Golden Age', so it might be assumed that the above elements never appear in isolation and there is a certain degree of overlap. Therefore, the first three of the above discussed myths, those of spatial, temporal and genealogical descent, can be labelled together as the myths of origin, while the latter three comprise the myths of Golden Age. Other authors usually refer to myths of national history simply as ancestry or origin myths. Ichijo, for example, uses the term 'foundation myths', which could refer to either of Smith's two more recently used categories. In order to clarify which of these two might be expected to be more prevalent in Scottish myth-history, it is useful to consider the difference between civic/territorial and ethnic nations.

Civic and ethnic nations
One of the most common classifications of nations from synchronic point of view is the distinction between civic and ethnic. Smith defines

civic or territorial nationalism by means of four attributes—"a definite, compact territorial homeland; common legal codes and the equality of all members before the law; the social and political rights of citizenship; … and a mass, public culture" (*Myths and Memories of the Nation*190). It is therefore more open, not excluding any individual from joining the nation if so they wish, regardless of their ethnicity and cultural background. Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, sees nation not merely as a community of shared culture and values but literally of shared ancestry and blood.

> Here a myth of common ancestry replaces residence in an historic homeland as the criterion of national membership; genealogy rather than territory defines the ethnic nation. Similarly, vernacular cultures, notably language and customs, are more highly prized than legal equality, and popular mobilization than citizenship. Finally, in place of a civic, mass culture, ethnic nationalisms extol native history and a more circumscribed ethnic culture. (190)

Even though the two types are not mutually exclusive and often combine, he considers the second type to be currently a more dominant one.

When talking about the various types of myths of ethnic descent, Smith believes that the above discussed mythological elements combine in individual nations' mythologies with some, at least for a time, prevailing over others. Since the whole system of ethnic history and mythology is based on a shared belief in common descent rather than a solid biological fact, with the population becoming more and more ethnically and culturally diverse, "that belief and that feeling begin to wane, and the myth of common origins becomes only one part of the symbolic ensemble, and while it may not be discarded, it cedes place to other myths and memories" (*Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism* 113). Of the two broad categories of national myths mentioned earlier, it should therefore be the myths of Golden Age rather than those of common origin that dominate national mythologies of civic nations. Before commencing the analysis of a film dealing with Scottish history, a question that should be asked is which of the two types of nations Scotland belongs to.

Ichijo begins her study of Scottish nationalism by asking: Who are the Scots? The very demarcation of who is and who is not a Scot might be challenging. There is no religion and no unifying national Scottish language, at least not one spoken by a decisive majority of the population (16) that would clearly set the Scots apart from their 'others', the English (16). On the other hand, the Scots possess a strong sense of common history and can claim a long tradition of political independence. The answer to the question 'Who are the Scots', according to Ichijo, can be answered by turning to civic, rather than ethnic criteria of nationalism and nationhood, granting the membership in a stateless nation and all the related political rights and duties solely on the basis of residence, a principle quite unheard of in many ethnically oriented nations (18). Scots, she says, "are the people who live in Scotland" (19).

The territory or the ancestral homeland is therefore of prime importance for Scottish sense of nationhood and identity. Ichijo considers two more elements crucial. Firstly, it is common history, that is, foundation myths, heroes and heroines and, most importantly, the values that this history has cultivated in a nation that may not be that fundamentally different from other European nations, yet are seen by the members of the nation as having shaped who they are (20-1). Secondly, it is the presence of 'the other', that being the English, who have remained in this position even after the creation of a political union of the two nations (21). "The Scots are those who are attached to the area called Scotland and share historic memories and values which Scottish history has shaped, and the Scots are people who want to be Scottish" (29).

If territorial principle is the most prevalent attribute of Scottish identity, as Ichijo claims, Scottish perception of nationhood appears to be civic rather than ethnic. Pittock believes this being not only true of contemporary society but a feature inherently present in Scottish nation from the time of its formation, given its polyethnic origins. "It is thus important to realize," says Pittock, "that Scotland was never a 'people-nation', and that 'ethnic' nationalism was, from the very beginning of the Scottish polity, a contradiction in terms" (*Scottish Nationality* 30).

Ichijo, as already mentioned, uses a single term 'foundation myths' to refer to myths of national history. According to A. Smith,

while the myth of common origin/ancestry is the most important criterion in case of ethnic nations, it is not dominant in civic nations and cedes its place to other aspects of national history. Therefore, it is possible to assume the prevalence of the myths of Golden Age, rather than those of origin or ancestry, in Scottish national mythology and its visual presentation.

Historical films and films about history

Scottish history, apart from being a crucial source of national identity and sense of community also enjoys a relatively large media presence. Even a casual glimpse at some of the well known media products featuring Scottish national heroes and their deeds suggests that this topic may provide one with ample examples of national mythology. Media in general and film in particular represent a small sample of the cultural matrix Edensor mentions, emphasising that while historically it was the codified body of what was recognised as high culture that was formulated in order to both represent and reinforce the sense of nationality, "once the nation is established as a common-sense entity, under conditions of modernity, the mass media and the means to develop and transmit popular culture expands dramatically, and largely escapes the grip of the state, being transmitted through commercial and more informal networks" (Edensor 4).

Rather than simply serving the commercial and entertainment purposes for which they are no doubt produced, historical fiction films also "interpret and comment on significant past events, as do historians; this interpretive role places historical films in a context of historiography and enables them to have an impact on the public that often exceeds that of scholarship in range and influence" (Grindon 2). In this sense they, too, try to establish, as Hobsbawm puts it, "continuity with a suitable historical past" (1).

When trying to establish the criteria for the selection of films, one inevitably stumbles upon the problem of how to define the genre in question. There is even be certain doubt among scholars whether historical films constitute a separate genre at all. Quinn and Kingsley Smith suggest that there might be more ways of understanding and applying the term 'historical film'. The more general one is frequently, though incorrectly, used as "an umbrella term equally applicable to all

films set in the near or distant past" (172). In this sense, historical film could hardly be considered as a separate genre since, as Monk observes "the many sub-categories implied by the shorthand 'British period screen fictions' are both extremely diverse and inclined to overlap and blur in ways which make a mockery of neat categorization" (176). These would include literary adaptations of literary works set in the past, films and television dramas depicting events from a distant past or within living memory, portraying events and persons real or imaginary.

Some of the above mentioned types of films belong to the genre of costume drama, defined by Hayward as "set in an historical period but do not, like historical films, purport to treat actual events. They refer in general terms to the time in history through the costumes which, by convention, should be in keeping with the time" (75). They are often referred to as period films, however, this term "can be used to refer to costume dramas and also to more contemporary times but where dress-codes and setting are clearly of another period" (75). The boundary between the two genres appears to be a very thin one, depending on the precise localisation of 'more contemporary times' on the time axis. Moreover, both a costume drama and period film can at the same time be an adaptation of a literary work.

Clearly, there is more than one way of approaching historical film and defining it. It may be used as an umbrella term for any film set in the past by some, while some may adhere to a more limited definition, excluding the above mentioned kinds of films. Still, a film set in the past and depicting a recognizable historical period and real-life person or persons may at the same time be classified as comedy, drama and potentially any number of other film genres. In their analysis of Kenneth Brannagh's film Henry V, for example, Quinn and Kingsley-Smith show how a single film may, depending on the chosen point of view, be at the same time considered a historical film, a heritage film, or even a 'Shakespeare film', depending on whether one agrees to recognise the latter as a separate category of films.

Historical films in a more narrow sense of the term, typically share a number of features which, according to Quinn and Kingsley Smith include "the presence of title cards and voiceovers which establish a historical context for the narrative; the tendency of characters to understand themselves as being 'in history; the overt 'quotation' of

historical sources; the recurrence of particular stars; an often 'theatrical' *mise-en-scène* entailing spectacular long-shots; episodic and strictly chronological narratives; a concern with the nation and national identity; a pronounced interest in royalty and government; and a mythic ritual propensity to explore questions of duty and sacrifice" (163).

It can be argued that while some films meet all the criteria, whether they can be considered historical in the narrow sense of the term is quite disputable. Popular Robin Hood films, for example, are usually set in a very specific historical era, with a number of well documented historical characters however, the existence of Robin Hood himself is questionable at the very least. *Stone of Destiny*, on the other hand, might not be considered 'historical' at the first sight, since the events it portrays are but half a century old and not of the kind one would expect of 'national' events. Moreover, the film is labelled as adventure as well as comedy, again not a typical combination of genres to go with historical film. Still, as I am going to argue, it is a historical film as well as a film about history that portrays a Scottish myth, or possibly myths, of Golden Age.

Stone of Destiny

From what has been written about the myth of Golden Age several pages earlier, it can be characterised and identified by the presence of several features all of which, as I shall argue, are present in the 2008 film *Stone of Destiny*. It is the time of the nation's freedom and glory and defines the norms of behaviour for the community in the future. The Golden Age is also the age of heroes who provide models for the said behaviour and virtuous conduct and their heroic deeds inspire and encourage their oppressed descendants. As already mentioned, both the decline and the following rebirth are a part of the Golden Age, which starts with decline yet gives the community sense of destiny which stimulates its regeneration. There is also, it can be argued, a territorial dimension to the myth, which firmly ties the story to the ancestral homeland. Finally, the Golden Age is not unchangeable, both in its presentation and in the very selection of the historical period.

Decline

In late 1940s and early 1950s, the period in which *Stone of Destiny* is

set, Scottish Covenant Association campaigned for devolution and the creation of Scottish Parliament, attracted considerable support. More than 2 million people signed the petition, however, only of it to be rejected by the Westminster Parliament (Devine 565-8). As seen in the film, in the end not many people seemed to mind this outcome. Ian Hamilton, the main character, is furious about the news not even being the main headline and consoled by his friend that it is on the front page and maybe next time they will be more successful. The people, he tells him, do care, they are just busy. However, the film also shows a different attitude towards the issue of Scottish home rule and national identity in general. In a pub, a heated student discussion about the petition, giving or not giving London another chance and, referring to at that time yet unwritten Scottish national anthem, being a nation again, is interrupted by an angry outburst of a man sitting nearby:

> Shut you stupid mouths! There is no bloody nation. There's nothin' but wind and rain and mud and shit. Look that that. What does that say? 'North Britain', see? We're all British now! Scotland's dead. It died in its sleep and nobody even came to the funeral.

The term North Britain was devised in the period immediately following the Union of 1707 to recreate Scottish identity in this new situation (Gardiner 36). However, at this point it seems to embody the decline rather than rebirth and a new beginning and symbolises frustration as well as maybe complete apathy of many Scots. Similar, though perhaps less expressive sentiments are voiced by Ian's father, who is concerned about his son throwing his life away "with that nationalist rubbish".

Heroes
A period of decline is a time when a hero or heroes must appear to inspire others. The Covenant movement itself can be considered as the beginning of regeneration and the arrival of the new Golden Age. However, when the official policies fail, it is time for guerrilla warfare and for individual hero or heroes to appear and to set an example for the community. Ian Hamilton feels it is time for "the young to remind us of who we were and who we could be again". Early on in the film, therefore, Ian realises that the problem lies in Scottish people being

ashamed of being Scottish, and sets out to do something that would help to restore the national pride. What they need, he says, is "a symbol, a gesture, something to wake these people up, an act of revolution." In any case, he feels he is through with talking and has his mind set on the most powerful of all the symbols - the Stone of Destiny, taken by the English army centuries ago and kept in the Westminster Abbey. "If this doesn't raise them to fight and cheer for their country, then Scotland really is dead but at least we'll know", he says. And so, with a group of like minded friends, they borrow books on Westminster Abbey, draw plans, lift weights and acquire burglary tools.

Norms of Behaviour
Even though the film, which is a comedy, depicts all this in a very cheerful way of just another student prank, the heroic qualities of the main characters are emphasised by their willingness to go to prison and the acceptance of this very probably being the ultimate outcome of their exploits, yet at the same time also a chance to speak at court and make their case be heard publicly. Even John McCormick, the leader of the Covenant movement and Lord Rector of the university, illicitly but enthusiastically supports the plan, even stating at one point that "we are all in your hands" fearing that he himself as the leader of the nationalist movement, might not have done enough. Finally, almost every part of the original plan having gone wrong and the four young people being repeatedly suspected of something or other simply because of their Scottish accents, they do manage to get the Stone out of the Abbey, albeit in two pieces and drive to it safety.

Sense of Destiny
Another feature of the Golden Age is that it gives the community the sense of destiny and therefore it stimulates its regeneration. This intention can be seen in Alan's monologue when trying to retrieve the Stone from its hiding place, currently occupied by a gypsy camp, and trying to explain the symbolic value it has for the Scottish people by appealing to the gypsies' sense of freedom:

> I think freedom's the most valuable thing that people can have. There are many that would take that freedom away from the people they

don't understand. Like yourselves and … well … ourselves. Our people, the Scots, have died for freedom over and over for centuries. And we would again, too, gladly. But for us to continue our fight, we need a symbol to unite our people. We've not done anything wrong, although what we have done is illegal. But we've done the only thing we could. We need that symbol of freedom so that the flame that burns in here can never be extinguished.

Like many times in this film, the comic relief that prevents the film from being weighed down by its patriotic message is provided when the man sitting unknowingly on the Stone asks, where this symbol is, to which Alan replies: "It's under your arse."

'Destiny' is, of course, present in the title of the film as well, which refers to the Stone of Scone, but also to its power, at least in the eyes of the main characters, to reawaken the community and, by physically bringing the Stone to Scotland, to reunite the nation with its original destiny. It represents the 'soul of Scotland'. "Someone once said a nation's soul is in its people's keeping", says Ian, when finally dragging the Stone out of the Abbey. "And that morning, it felt like the soul of Scotland was in my hands alone."

Regeneration

Here, the myth of the Golden Age transforms into the myth of regeneration or rebirth which, according to Smith is a "move from the sphere of explanatory myth to that of prescriptive ideology: from an idealized, epic history to an account of 'required actions', or rationale of collective mobilization". The film depicts this aspect in a slightly exaggerated way, with people dashing into streets with flags and embracing each another upon hearing the news on the radio the next morning, which is the Christmas Day of 1950. The action is immediately considered to be "a gesture of Scottish defiance, a rallying point for the cause of home rule" by the media and the authorities.

This time, they do make not only the front page but the main headlines as well, and stay there for several days. Back in the pub, 'North Britain' gets repainted to 'Scotland' - an action cheered by everyone present. The goal - awakening the people has therefore been achieved. This reawakening is also presented on a more personal level

when Ian Hamilton is reconciles with Bill, his friend and original accomplice, who decided not to be involved in such a risky plan and even with his father who is, rather surprisingly, very proud of his son's action despite his initial disapproval of his nationalist activities.

Constant Change

Finally, as mentioned already, myths of Golden Age are subject to constant change. "We can find the different and sometimes antagonistic, conceptions and ideals entertained by successive generations of the community as well as by rival political factions". While it is not possible to prove this by the analysis of a single film, what can be seen in the *Stone of Destiny* is the existence of several successive myths of Golden Age, each one taking its inspiration from the heroes of the past. While from our contemporary point of view, the events of the 1950s as portrayed in this film fulfil the characteristics of the myth of Golden Age, the heroes of that time were inspired by a different Golden Age in their quest to lead the community out of the period of decline they found themselves in. Several times, references are made to the Scottish Wars of Independence of the late 13th and early 14th century that the four students take inspiration and encouragement from:

> Do you remember Robert the Bruce when he fought the English? And the story of his spider? Six times he watched her spin that web and six times she failed. But she never gave up. I think we should go back to the abbey and look for spiders.

Even the locations associated with the medieval Golden Age are consciously invoked and revisited when a decision is made to retrieve the Stone from its hiding place and to 'return' it to the ruins of the Arbroath Abbey where the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320. This is a symbolic gesture rather than a literal return since the Arbroath Abbey was not the original location of the Stone. Here, a parallel is made with what was undoubtedly perceived by the students as the Golden Age of Scottish nation they were trying to recreate, a hope that is also present in the concluding words of the film, that at the same time reflect the feelings of the students in the 1950s as well as of the authors of the 14th century Declaration of Arbroath that is being quoted here:

On that day I heard the voice of Scotland speak as loudly as it did in 1320. 'As long as a hundred of us remain alive, we shall never give in to the domination of the English. We fight not for glory, nor for wealth nor honours, but only and alone for freedom, which no good man surrenders but with his life.'

In this sense, therefore, it is possible to talk about various Golden Ages as well as about a single one, since the successive generations take inspiration from their predecessors and see themselves as acting in the same spirit and for the same cause.

Homeland

When considering the spatial aspect of nation, Edensor identifies several types of symbolic national landscapes, or memoryscapes, as he calls them (45) - ideological rural landscapes, iconic sites, sites of popular culture and assembly and familiar everyday landscapes. The first to be named are perhaps the best known in most nations, since they function as

selective shorthand for these nations, synecdoches though which they are recognized globally. But they are also loaded with symbolic values and stand for national virtues, for the forging of the nation out of adversity, or the shaping of its geography out of nature whether conceived as beneficent, tamed or harnessed. … Moreover, they are the locale of a mythical … class of forbears, the peasants, yeoman or pioneers who battled against, tamed and were nurtured by these natural elements. (39-40)

These are, according to Edensor, commonly used in popular culture and in case of Scotland, Highlands have gradually come to be perceived as such. Even though the film itself does not take place in the Highlands, it opens with a long shot of the mountains accompanied by Scottish tunes and the narrator's voice-over talking about the power of national history. The values which such a region symbolically stands for are represented by one of the main characters—Kay, who, as we are informed, is a Highlander, "only happy when … tending the helpless or battling the English" and whose courage and determination proves vital

for the successful completion of the plan.

Iconic sites, too, are visible in the film, "highly selective, synedochal features which are held to embody specific kinds of evidence of past cultures, providing evidence of 'glorious' past of 'golden age'" or "monuments erected … to commemorate significant episodes in an often retrospectively reconstructed national history" (Edensor 45). These such as the ruins of the Arbroath Abbey, as mentioned already, link the more recent events with the medieval history of the Wars of Independence and place the events of 1950 into the context of long history of struggle for freedom.

History

It is therefore possible to say that this is a historical film as well as a film about history, though perhaps at the first sight in might not be considered as such, particularly due to the relatively recent historical events it portrays that do not usually form a part of the official 'textbook history' and to their rather light-hearted portrayal. Looking back to what Quinn and Kingsley-Smith consider typical features of historical films, *Stone of Destiny* meets most of the criteria. The voice over of the narrator and the main character Ian Hamilton introduces the historical context of the story and also provides its conclusion. Historical sources are quoted several times, as discussed already, as inspiration for the actions of the main characters as well as, it might be argued, for the audiences, both present and future. The opening sequence features the rather typical long shots of Scottish Highland landscape, one that audience automatically associates with crucial events from Scottish history through the above mentioned territorialisation of national myths and memories. The narrative is chronological and definitely primarily concerned with nation and national identity for the sake of which the main characters are willing to undertake sacrifices.

It is the usual focus on the royalty and government that this film seems to be missing. These two aspects are, however, illicitly yet constantly present. The London government is being petitioned, criticised for its failure to understand specific Scottish issues and to grant the Scots a chance of home rule. Even more importantly, the royalty, Scottish royalty, that is, is present through the symbol of the Stone itself—the ancient coronation stone of Scottish kings. The age of

independent Scottish monarchy, particularly the Stuarts but more generally the symbol they represented plays, according to Pittock, a decisive role in Scottish national mythology.

As stated earlier on, this film can also be seen as a 'film about history' in a sense that it consciously comments on historical events other than the ones directly portrayed or, as is often the case with historical films, the contemporary events it more or less directly alludes to. The history of Scotland is mentioned and debated several times when other Golden Ages are invoked. It is, however, also debated in terms of its relevance for the present day regeneration of the nation, the question being whether there is any point at all in looking back into past for the Golden Age, for inspiration.

The opening voice-over of the main character and the narrator introduces the dilemma by presenting two ways of looking at the Stone and Scottish history as a whole:

> It was only a rock, a big lump of sandstone. You might pass right by it. But to us … it was a symbol of our freedom, of our independence. We all knew about it, of course. We learned as children how it was the Scottish Stone of Kings. But they took it from us. And as a nation, I suppose we'd forgotten about it. Time does that. It was history.

In his book *The Invention of Scotland*, Pittock several times mentions the divided vision of Scottish history as either the history of the fight for national freedom or of gradual decline and a "journey to defeat" (112). Both of these interpretations feature in major Scottish historical myths, with focus shifting with changing cultural and political situation of the society. Ian represents the ones seeing themselves as a continuation of the history of fighting for freedom when, in the following scene he says that "Scotland needed to reclaim its identity. It was time for the young to remind us of who we were, and who we could be again." Some of his friends with whom he discusses the political situation and the hopes of the Covenant Movement, on the other hand, present the other viewpoint:

> 'Time? They've had centuries. How many promises have they broken? In 1707 …'

'Ancient history, mate.'
'That's Scottish history, that's our history!'
'The oldest nation in Europe.'
'Here you are! The oldest bloody nation in Europe.'

This more pragmatic approach to national history appears to reflect the understanding of Scottish history as belonging "to an immature period of a nation (75-6) and Scotland as a whole was "seen by many of the Enlightenment intellectuals and scholars as "tabula rasa, or at least a young and impressionable nation to be helped out if its earlier native barbarities: children of the mist indeed, emerging from the mist of time" (Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans* 33). The message of the film, on the other hand, implies that forgetting one's history leads to the opposite outcome―to the decline of the community rather than its promised modernisation and improvement. Yet it does not imply that it is a simple romantic fantasising about great events of yesteryear that the nation needs.

The opening words of the narrator are followed by his conviction that "Scotland needed to reclaim its identity. It was time for the young to remind us of who we were and who we could be again." At this point, the rather melancholy bagpipe music accompanying the long shots of Highland scenery changes and into a much more up to date―perhaps too much for 1950s―punk rock song entitled 'Tae the Battle', the lyrics of which underline the already discussed activist aspect of the myth of Golden Age, with the regeneration of the community in its present state of existence as the main aim:

The world we know is changin' fast
The walls are closin' in
And now's the time to make a stand
Don't let the cowards win
We're beset by common foe
Ye can hear the distant drums
Yes, we're a force, brave women and men
The scheme shall be undone …

This song reappears once again, to accompany the celebrations in the streets, this time including the words "So remember the creed,

remember the cry remember the ancient way", emphasising again the importance of the past and of the values of the Golden Age for the future generations of the nation.

Conclusion

"The historical film is not merely offering a representation of the past; in most instances it is offering a representation of a specifically national past. National histories are fiercely protected and contested. Nothing better illustrates this than the hysterical reaction in the British press to Hollywood films that distort the historical record of 'our finest hour,'" says Chapman (6). On the other hand, however, historical films are often made by foreign personnel, written by foreign scriptwriters, feature foreign stars which, as is the common source of criticism in case of the portrayal of Scottish history, do not speak the right accent, and aim at international audiences. Still, the historical evens they depict naturally do belong to what is perceived a national history of a certain group of people. Their perception of the film and its message therefore may and often is different from that of the 'others' or even from what the filmmakers claim to have or not to have wanted to say.

Stone of Destiny is an interesting example of the above mentioned dilemma. It was partially funded by public money through the Scottish Screen agency, featuring Scottish as well as foreign actors and is based upon an autobiographical book written by Ian Hamilton, the main character in the film, who was consulted by the director and was, according to his own words, pleased with the result (Hamilton). While certainly not a Hollywood blockbuster, this independent Scottish-Canadian film attracted a wide variety of opinion. As Lynette Porter points out in her study of the film, while the audiences outside Scotland responded positively to this light hearted comedy and its can do spirit, in Scotland it "early on became weighed down by a plethora of expectations and different definitions of its success" (55).

A proposal to show the film in the debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament was rejected on the ground of the film, despite being considered a comedy, having political overtones (Swanson) while its Canadian director denied having any other intention that simply telling the story he liked (Bradley) It was praised by some as a film hat everybody will come out of very proud to be Scottish, one that doesn't

offend England and is completely feel-good. (Porter). On the other hand, it was accused of both not being Scottish enough and of being too overtly and stereotypically Scottish (Porter) While some critics were outraged at this film being "a woeful slice of sentimental whimsy that makes Braveheart look like a documentary" ("Stone of Destiny: Review") one of the cast remarked that "we need another big film in Scotland that's not about junkies" (English).

The film speaks to the contemporary audience, depicting events from a relatively recent past but commenting on and invoking the spirit of a much more distant history and mythology, adding another level to double historical reference of historical film which, as Chapman puts it, often has "as much to say about the present in which it was made as about the past in which it was set" (Chapman 2). It also shows how a nationalist message can be differently interpreted by various audiences, depending on whether the history in questions is 'theirs'. The origin of the film certainly is relevant, however, in the long run, need not be decisive for the mass audience. After all, the favourite 'Scottish' film of all time by popular vote, is Braveheart (C. Smith).

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Cut Down the Tall Trees:
Little Words, Huge Impact

Eduard Soták

The world has changed. From the beginning, people have been using abiotic elements that have changed the environment in which they live in and building a new world upon the natural world.[1] As we happen to live in digital era and the words we choose for everyday communication are more often technical ones, in modern language, we might even say that we have "upgraded" or "updated" it. What characterises the new, upgraded version and what effect does it have on the way we live today? In the following article I will try to describe processes of change on three levels—a level of language, a level of media, and a level of society.

To meet their needs, people first started changing their environment utilising natural resources and reshaping their surroundings. At first, it was just a couple of rocks or branches, later forests were cut down and these changes had a profound impact not only on the world itself, but also, like a boomerang, they returned and affected us alike. At first, the changes people made affected the society on local level; however, as technologies were progressing, broader areas of effects have replaced the local levels. We have come to an era in which physical boundaries are no longer relevant and we are more often found surfing[2] (a term originally coined by McLuhan that has taken new meaning—a movement from site to site on the Internet) in the virtual space of, what a post-industrialist Marshall McLuhan himself termed, *the Gutenberg Galaxy*—the term that implies the accumulated body of human works. Long before the invention of the Internet (as a new [trans-]medium), he also wrote, "After three thousand years of specialist explosion and of increasing specialism and alienation in the technological extensions of our bodies, our world has become compressional by dramatic reversal. As electrically contracted, the globe

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1 See Popper's concept of cosmology (Popper, Karl and John C. Eccles. *The Self and Its Brain.* London: Routledge, 2006).

2 "Heidegger surf-boards along on the electronic wave as triumphantly as Descartes rode the mechanical wave" (McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The making of typographic man* 248).

is no more than a village [or than 'a head of a pin' (Negroponte 8)]"
(McLuhan, *Understanding Media* 6).

Information and Language

The changes, however, could not have happened if it was not for the
channels[3] in which information[4] flowed. Information is the basic
element of language: a language that travels from person to person via
channels and is the basis of human society and culture and for the
dominance of the human species. Technically speaking, when we
perceive humans as mere information systems, things they learn are
copied from external environment using channels that convey encoded
information (like files that are copied into computers) that are decoded
and processed by them. The process can be schemed, as follows
(compare to Foulger's model presented later in the article):
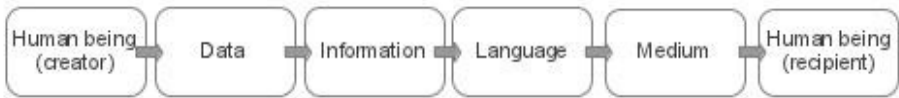
The process consists of several stages: at first, a human being
(the creator) wraps the idea using a set of data stored in the brain and
processes them. There are two basic areas in human brain that are
thought to be responsible for language production (Broca's area) and
language processing (Wernicke's area) plus other areas surrounding
lateral sulcus (Sylvian fissure). Figure 1 shows cortical changes when
speaking and generating words.

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3 "[P]hysical system used in the transmission of signals" (Danesi 58).
4 For the purpose of this chapter, information is a set of data encoded, transmitted, or
decoded by human beings. The difference between the term data and information is
that data have no effect on society, as they have no effect on conscious beings.
Once they are understood, they become information that can further affect
language, medium itself, or society. A human is then like any other information
system capable of creating, processing, storing and delivering information.
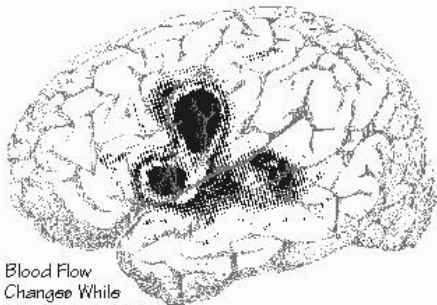
Blood Flow
Changes While
SPEAKING WORDS
(read aloud BIKE "Bike," subtracting off response to reading it silently)
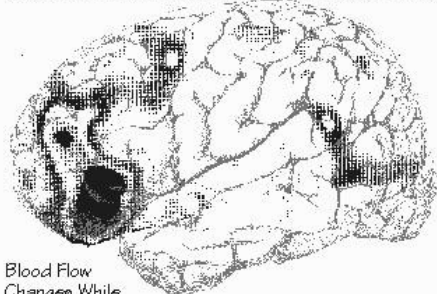
Blood Flow
Changes While
GENERATING WORDS
("Kids" for BIKE, subtracting off response to "Bike" above)

Figure 1: Cortical changes in brain (Calvin and Ojemann)

We must remember what is the basis of ideas, or information - the language. If language is a medium and the medium is a message, then language is the message triggering changes. In order to spread an idea in the crowd, a collective action is needed. A *theory of the invisible hand*, originally applied to the field of economics and first coined by Adam Smith in his famous title *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Smith), can be applied here to answer this tricky question. We must remember that a language is closely connected to its users and these macro and micro-levels of the institutions (present in Popper's cosmology) constantly interact with each other. Edna Ullmann-Margalit (Keller 66) characterises the interaction as follows:

> An invisible-hand explanation explains a well-structured social pattern or institution. It typically replaces an easily forthcoming and initially plausible explanation according to which the explanandum phenomenon is the product of intentional design with a rival account according to which it is brought about through a process involving the separate actions of many individuals who are supposed to be minding their own business unaware of and *a fortiori* not intending to produce the ultimate overall outcome.

Language is not an entity on its own, but it is rather an extension of other entities. When a language changes, it does not change by itself, but it is speakers who change it, even though they do not intend (in most cases) to do so.

By using our language, a million times a day, we change it continuously; or to use a more cautious turn of phrase, we produce a permanent change in our language. As a rule, we do not intend to do so. It leaves most of us indifferent. Most changes go unnoticed. We find some of them irritating or unpleasant, and consider others desirable; but in general, we cannot prevent a particular change, nor can we produce it on purpose. (Keller 12)

This argument is further supported by Croft: "Speakers have many goals when they use language, but changing the linguistic system is not one of them" (70). Any change in language should be welcome as long as it fulfils its purpose for successful communication as it allows languages and people to react properly to international and global situations. When a language cannot react, it is of no use for the users. Accepting and creating new lexical items is therefore one of the essentials if a language wants to survive.

This gets us back to the issue of acceptance of these new lexical items into language system by some linguists. Rudi Keller states that it is "just the same in the fashion world: novelties seem outlandish at first, but when they become run of the mill, we just smile condescendingly at the previous version" (3). A language is not a dead thing. Changes are within language itself (historical development of lexical items) or when one language gets in contact with another. Bernard Spolsky, a sociolinguist, writes that "with the breakdown of isolation in the modern world […] variation tends to diminish and languages become more and more homogenized"(28). Unfortunately, the amount of the force needed for the change has not yet been analysed as the number of variables is theoretically endless (we might see a clear parallel with the theory of chaos), and it is for this reason that the theory has "only a very restricted prognostic value" (Keller 70). As Roger Lass pointed out, "there are no explanations for language change because there are no laws in the domain of language" (Keller 72) and thus

language change can be explained in principle on the basis of laws. It is unpredictable, however, not for the lack of laws, but because it cannot be predicted whether the premises will be fulfilled. That is to say, we know the explanandum, we know the laws, and we reconstruct

the premisses. This is the point of diagnostic explanations. Trend extrapolations are not predictions based on uncertain laws, but predictions based on uncertain premisses. (Keller 72)

It is for this reason that the theory can be used only diagnostically. It should help us analyse changes and find reasons.

We can divide reasons for language change into two basic groups: internal and external. We might identify several reasons why users decide to change the way they speak consciously from sociolinguist's point of view (internal level of change). Factors that trigger changes are identity-connected. Users of language desire to belong to a certain social group, for instance. Other variables, such as age, gender, and occupation also play role in language change and are closely linked to a position of users in social structures. We quoted Keller in previous section on fashion-like novelties in language. Postal provides a similar argument:

> There is no more reason for language to change than there is for automobiles to add fins one year and remove them the next, for jackets to have three buttons one year and two the next . . . the 'causes' of sound change without language contact lie in the general tendency of human cultural products to undergo 'non-functional' stylistic change. (Aitchison 135)

Following this theory, we might as well expect a language to end up in a total chaos soon. It does not. As with other social changes, in order to be successful, the change must operate in a certain cultural framework of the society. As Donald Mackinnon (Beard 72) argues, even when a change in language takes place, individual members can have different attitudes towards it:

a) we may see language as correct or incorrect;
b) we may judge some language examples to be pleasant, others ugly;
c) we may judge some language examples to be socially acceptable and some socially unacceptable;
d) we may judge some language examples to be morally acceptable and some morally unacceptable;

e) we may find some language examples appropriate in their context and others inappropriate in their context;
f) we may find some language examples useful to us or useless.

A branch of sociolinguistics, language engineering, deals with language planning that ought to be performed with tact and care. A language can get diffused in a way that it is no longer socially and politically desirable. In such case, a process of standardisation should begin, but following the very purposes languages should serve (language functions, as presented at the beginning of the work), "since a population will only adopt a language or dialect it wants to speak" (Aitchison 260).

Transmission of information
Once a human being creates simple or complex information that is encoded in words, pictures, or sounds, it is transmitted using an appropriate medium of choice. At the other end, a recipient gets the message, decodes it and can take appropriate action, if needed using the same sequence of steps. It was this process that helped change our world as I mentioned at the beginning of this article.

"While the capacity for language is linked to genetically encoded physical features unique to the human brain, and human infants babble even in phonemes specific to languages they have never heard, the language they do learn is the one they hear and imitate" (Wexler 117). Imitation[5] is one of key components in acquiring and using a language. It is therefore vital for the information to travel from one human being to other. In other words, we have predispositions and capacity to learn and actively use languages. However, if it were not for the channels in which information encoded in language travel, the society would never have evolved, as it is known today. As mentioned earlier, language and media (and society) are inseparable. "Any transformation of the language influences our basic values and assumptions, that is, our culture, defined as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Zaltsman 100). Recent studies try to examine

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5 "Imitation is a rational response to our own cognitive limits" (Surowiecki 58).

the importance of language in media as media also contribute greatly to the development of social skills.

> Some observers have noted that deployment of attention is markedly different while playing most electronic games or watching many new music videos than during most preelectronic activities. Most notably, attentional shifts are rapid from item to item within the general activity, while attention to the activity itself is intense and sustained. Moreover, in most electronic games, language is absent and the speed of processing makes much use of inner language and labeling counterproductive. In many music videos, when language is present the words are unintelligible. The language system is thus used in a different and sub-ordinate manner, compared with its use in reading or in internal or external speech. These new, electronic activities have the potential to substantially alter the functional configuration of adult human brains. (Wexler 106)

Robin Dunbar (Gladwell), the British anthropologist, argues that there is a correlation between the society in which human beings (and other primates) exist and their brain capacity. He discovered that the larger the size of the group primates live in, the larger the size of their neocortex (a part of the brain responsible for complex language production and processing, social processing and emotional processing) is. Here, we see the link between the evolution of human species and the importance of existing in a group, as group interaction, among other processes, has made us what we are today and if it were not for the social construct of media, the world would be a completely different place.

The channels—from early symbols, ideograms, alphabet, books, radio, television to the modern invention of Internet—conveying information allowed people to communicate with each other without the temporal and spatial boundaries - as opposed to interpersonal (or face-to-face) communication that is limited in time and space.[6] S. L. Washburn, an evolutionary biologist states, "[m]ost of human evolution

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6 "[Mass media] free communication processes from the provinciality of spatiotemporally connected restricted contexts and permit public spheres to emerge, through establishing the abstract simultaneity of a virtually present network of communication contents far removed in space and time and through keeping messages available in manifold contexts" (Habermas 390).

took place before the advent of agriculture when men lived in small groups, on a face to face basis. As a result human biology has evolved as an adaptive mechanism to conditions that have largely ceased to exist. Man evolved to feel strongly about few people, short distances, and relatively brief intervals of time; and these are still the dimensions that are important to him" (Gladwell). With the advent of new forms of media, it would be very interesting to observe whether media have effect not only on our society, but also on us. However, it takes much longer time for evolution to show its progress and the study of media is only a short fragment of time that is incapable of showing this effects for now. It is important to mention that it is only owing to the channels of communication that collective knowledge (as a certain set of information) could be passed on. Cejpek (47) differentiates between three eras in the development of social communication:

a) the era of verbal communication
b) the era of written communication
c) the era of electronic communication.

Each of these eras had typical means of transition of information (information channels—media[7]). If we look at this development, we see that newly discovered forms of transmission of information have not lead to extinction of the latter, but very often to their broadening. For instance, books convey information visually, whereas television transmits information both visually and aurally. Evolution of media can be seen as a cycle:

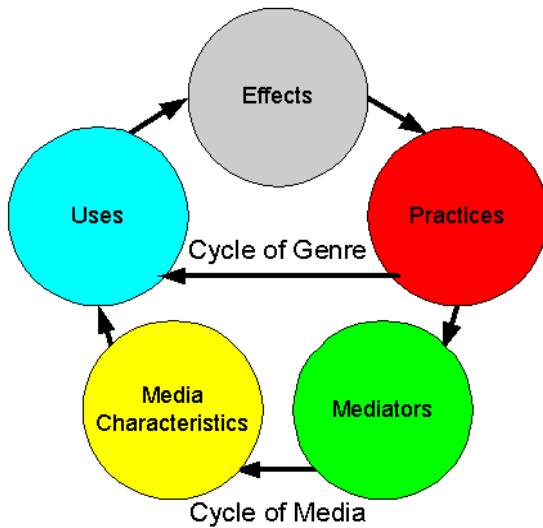7 For more on the difference between the terms *channel* and *media*, see Soták, "Media and language change."

Figure 2: Foulger's model of the spheres of invention
(Foulger, The Process of Media Invention and Evolution)

The sphere of mediators contains "the components from which media are built and the ways in which those components are organized", the sphere of characteristics "encompasses the essential qualities of a communications medium," the sphere of uses is characterised by "the purposes to which a medium is actually applied," the sphere of effects involves "the actual impacts use of a medium has on those that are directly and indirectly associated with it," and the sphere of practices includes "the patterns of behaviour that participants within a medium adhere to when using a medium."

If we define these channels of communication based on the recipient's senses—the traditional Aristotelian channels of ophthalmoception (sight), audioception (hearing), gustaoception (taste), olfacoception (smell), tactioception (touch), but also additional ones - thermoception (temperature), proprioception (kinesthetic sense), nociception (pain), equilibrioception (balance) and kinesthesioception (acceleration) and others, the division can help us see how McLuhan perceived media—as extensions of human central nervous system:

All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their

personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social con- sequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the massage. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the way media work as environments. All media are extensions of some human faculty—psychic or physical. (McLuhan, Quentin and Agel, *The Medium is the Message*)

Following this concept, in which media are extensions of human capabilities, we see that media are still quite limited[8] for now, as they focus on a limited number of human senses - mostly sight and hearing. However, with the arrival of motion sensing input devices, there are signs that the situation might change in future[9] as more senses could be used in order to transfer information data. Without media and without communication (and a certain amount of deviation, as Frank Zappa once declared), no progress would be possible because communication is the basis of every society as every collective action is based on shared knowledge transferred from one individual to another. There are also certain "[t]endencies towards unification of media [that] might, in the end, result in a trans-medium that will play all the roles previously held by individual forms" (Sotak, "Media and Language Change" 397).

Following Cejpek's division of communication eras, we see that all these have one thing in common—the language. "From the very beginning of the dawn of media, language has served as a primary component that media used to transfer information from source to recipients and this crucial function of language in media world is still preserved today" (Sotak, "Media and Language Change" 396). In 1994, for instance, as much as 20% of Rwanda's population was massacred in a clash between the Hutu and the Tutsi. In the genocide, the media played a crucial role as "local radio and print media were used as a tool of hate, encouraging neighbours to turn against each other" (Thompson) while international media, more or less, ignored the event.

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8   When seen as extension of humans.
9   See for instance Cameron Chapman's article on "The Future of User Interfaces" available on the web.

Communication Model

I tried to find a model that would represent and visually enlighten my view on the process of communication. However, no model I came across was complex enough until we discovered a model presented by Davis Foulger who presents his ecological model of communication that "asserts that communication occurs in the intersection of four fundamental constructs: communication between people (creators and consumers) is mediated by messages which are created using language within media; consumed from media and interpreted using language" (*Models of the Communication Process*). Previous models[10] did not reflect the fact that recipients are no longer passive, but they take active participation in the process of communication. The producers of messages no longer draw their audiences into, what Sennett termed the *crowd silence*, but the interaction has become two-way. Whereas traditional forms of media, like books, radio, or television (in a traditional sense) were more concerned with delivering messages to mass audiences, modern forms of media, e.g. the Internet, are characterised by "narrowcasting" (as opposed to broadcasting), because the recipient must filter (the process that was originally dedicated to the media and not to the consumer) an immense set of data in order to receive relevant information and eventually he/she provides feedback or replies and thus changes the source of future transmissions. In Foulger's model of communication,

> [a] medium of communication is, in short, the product of a set of complex interactions between its primary constituents: messages, people (acting as creators of messages, consumers of messages, and in other roles), languages, and media. Three of these constituents are themselves complex systems and the subject of entire fields of study, including psychology, sociology, anthropology (all three of which study people), linguistics (language), media ecology (media), and communication (messages, language, and media).

In digital world we live in, traditional models of communication do not simply reflect the state of new media and the way they affect our everyday lives. Whereas in mass communication a relationship between

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10 Foulger, *Models of the Communication Process*

senders and recipients was considered para-social, the relationship between the two is no more one-way, but the recipient (or consumer, if we follow the Foulger's diagram) can become the creator when he/she provides replies, or gives feedback.
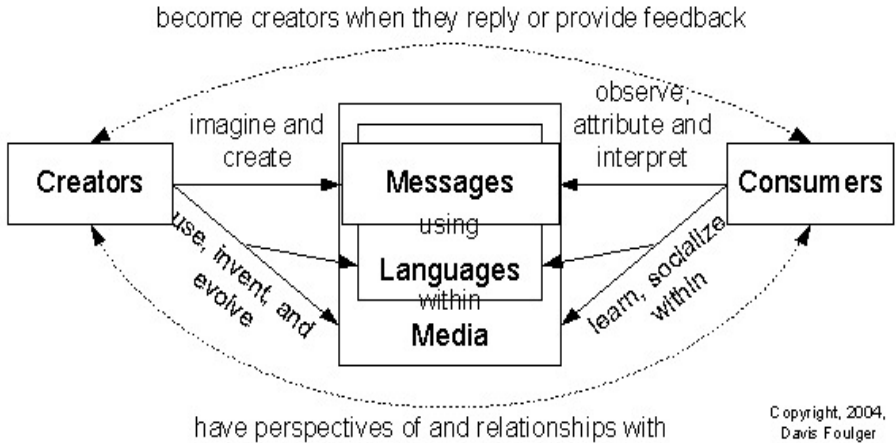

Figure 3: Foulger's ecological model of the communication process (Foulger, Models of the Communication Process)

Media cannot exist without people who use them for transmission of information, nor can they exist without language in which information are transmitted. Therefore, when discussing effects of media,[11] we have to take into account all three aspects: media, society and language.[12]

Often, the process of mediatisation is linked to modernisation and expresses a set of social changes connected to emergence and development of new communication channels. Schulz characterises the processes, as follows:

1. Extension: The ability of the media to delimit temporal and spatial distancing, extending "the natural communication capacities of human beings" and expressing "cultural techniques in an anthropological sense ... or, in the words of McLuhan:

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11 With their relay, semiotic and economic functions (Schulz) and the notions of commonness as predispositions.
12 See Habermas' concept of public sphere (Soták, "Media and Social Change").

media are 'the extensions of man.'"

2. Substitution: The media "partly or completely substitute social activities and social institutions and thus change their character," for instance "television viewing replaces family interaction" and other media events "like televised Olympics, coronations or visits of the Pope take on and substitute ceremonial and commemorative functions of national or religious holidays" (Schulz 89) and as Jan Jirák adds, computer replaces television (13).

3. Amalgamation: The media are not sole elements, but they amalgamate with other real-life activities. Schulz clarifies: "As media use becomes an integral part of private and social life, the media's definition of reality amalgamates with the social definition of reality" (89)

4. Accommodation: Many social activities are affected by the sole fact that the media exist, as "the media industry contributes a considerable part to the gross national product" or "[t]he media provide jobs and income for a large number of people" (89) .

The reason for enlisting the processes of mediatisation is to show the complexity of effects of media on society. Communication is a sub-system that is in correlation with other sub-systems of society and all sub-systems affect one another. For instance, a political sub-system affects economy or education, media affect politics, media affect language, language affect politics, and so forth.[13] "Markets, politics, policies, exploitation, and marginalization all need an ideological basis. Such ideologies require production and reproduction through public text and talk, which in our modern times are largely generated or mediated by the mass media" (Van Dijk 28). The media were constantly evolving into new forms using technological innovations (as can be seen from the following division):

Propinquitous Interactive Media	Intimacy, Face-to-face Interaction, Social Dancing, Small Group Interaction, Brainstorming, Family Interaction, Participatory Games and Sports, Classroom discussion

13 For more on the effects of media on the society see Soták, "Media and Social Change."

Live Presentational Media	Speeches, Lectures, Town Meetings, Judicial Proceedings, Ritual Ceremonies, Legislative Assemblies, Mobs, Theatrical Performance, Bonfires, Political Rallies, Live Musical Performance, Sporting Events, Puppet Shows
Static Art Media	Cave Paintings, Bas Relief, Oil Paintings, Dioramas, Quilts, Pottery, Sculpture, Architecture, Animatons, Photographs, Filmstrips, Holographic Recordings, Signs, Billboards
Correspondence Media	Letters, Notes, Memos, Business Correspondence, Telewriting, Telegrams, Telex, Facsimile, Tape Letters, Personal Video, Recorded Telewriting, Electronic Mail
Publishing Media	Books, Daily Newspapers, Magazines, Video Recordings (Videotapes, DVD Video, etc.), Weekly Newspapers, Journals, Recordings (Records, CD's, Cassettes), Newsletters, Merchandise Packaging, On-line information, Online databases, Online services, Electronic Publications, Multimedia Documents (VideoText)*, Billboards, Direct Mail Advertising, Microforms
Telephonic Media	Telephone, Teleconferencing, Intercom, C.B. Radio, Ham Radio, Family Radio, Videophone, VideoConferencing, Internet Telephone (CU See Me), Instant Messenger
Dynamic Art Media	Silent Film, Motion Pictures, Film with Subtitles, Talking Animatons, Lightboards
Broadcast Media	Broadcast Television, Cable Television, Satellite TV, Digital TV, Radio, Talk Radio
Interactive Mass Media	Hypermedia, Video Hypermedia, Computer Conferencing (Newsgroups, ListServes), Cooperative Composition, Voice Mail, Electronic Bulletin Boards, Streaming Audio and Video, Voice-into-text concurrent interaction, Virtual Reality, Interactive Television

Table 1: Media categorisation (Foulger, The Processes of Media Invention and Evolution 2002)

New innovations affect, or re-shape, traditional forms of organisation. As with emergence of new media when old media do not disappear, so do these forms of organisation. They change, alter, evolve, but never vanish. "We see all around us the redefinition and revival of family values, religion, nationalism and ethnic identity as different cultural groups and social movements search for new forms of identity. It is in this context that Giddens refers to 'the establishment of new traditions'" (Slevin 23).

So far, we have been talking about information, its production, processing, transfer, but have not analysed their impact of society. I will try to evaluate theories of change focusing on deployment of information in media and their effect on the crowd.

Changes on the Macro-Level of Society

Malcolm Gladwell in his book *The Tipping Point*, presents a very interesting idea how individual changes can affect the world on a larger (local or global) scale. He states that "[i]deas and products and messages and behaviors spread just like viruses do." If we look at our definition of a human being as an information system, this notion suddenly looks very feasible, because as an information system, humans can (and do) get "infected" (not in a negative sense) and they further "infect" other members of their society. We mentioned that all human knowledge is learned via imitation. This explains how changes in society occur, whether these are language changes, or other social changes. In order to understand any change, we must look at the issue using a bird's eye view. These changes happen both on micro and macro levels of societies. If a person is a system, then a society (the crowd) is an organism that constantly changes depending on the states of its individual members. For the change to be successful on a larger scale, several requirements must be fulfilled. Gladwell presents fascinating examples of accounts that serve as a basis for his theory of the tipping point - the three rules of epidemics:

1. **The Law of the Few**. The idea behind this is that a few people can trigger the change. "Social epidemics [...] are driven by a handful of exceptional people. [...] It's things like how sociable they are, or how energetic or knowledgeable or influential among their peers."
2. **The Stickiness Factor**. In order for the idea to have impact, it must be "sticky." In other words, "there are specific ways of making a contagious message memorable; there are relatively simple changes in the presentation and structuring of information that can make a big difference in how much of an impact it makes."
3. **The Power of Context**. A setting is vital for the notion to be of significance. It says that "human beings are a lot more sensitive to their environment than they may seem."

Not all ideas have an impact. Actually, the majority of them have no

impact on larger audiences, as the crowd as a living organism carefully chooses which changes it will incorporate. Certain conditions must be met if a change is to happen. Following James Surowiecki's characteristics of the wise crowd, these are as follows:

a) Diversity of Opinions (sociological, conceptual and cognitive)
b) Independence (freedom from the influence of others)
c) Decentralisation
d) Aggregation

Diversity of opinions. At the beginning, there may be a profusion of various alternatives. However, as the time progresses, the crowd decided which changes will flourish and which will disappear. For the group to be successful in choosing the best possible alternation, it is necessary for the group to be as cognitively diverse as it possibly can as each individual possesses different skills that might, in the end, contribute to choosing the best option possible. As organisational theorist James March puts it: "The development [...] depend[s] on maintaining an influx of the naive and the ignorant and ... competitive victory does not reliably go to the properly educated" (Surowiecki 31). If you have a homogenous groups, according to Irving Janis, there is a likelihood that they might "become cohesive more easily than diverse groups, and as they become more cohesive they also become more dependent on the group, more insulated from outside opinions, and therefore more convinced that the group's judgment on important issues must be right" (Surowiecki 36).

Independence. An experiment carried out on 42nd Street in New York in 1968 by psychologists Milgram, Bickman and Berkowitz, in which a changing number of passersby were staring at sky and as this number increased, so did the percentage of people who stopped and stared, resulted in an idea of *social proof* that shows that there is a "tendency to assume that if lots of people are doing something or believe something, there must be a good reason why" (Surowiecki 43). The process that follows is known as *information cascade*[14] (or in

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14 Information cascades can be mathematically represented by the following model called Bayer's theorem: Pr [A | B] = Pr [A] . Pr [B | A] / Pr [B]. For further information see David Easley and Jon Kleinberg, *Networks, Crowds and Markets:*

Gladwellian terms, *epidemics*), in which "individuals [...] are imitating the behavior of others, but it is not mindless imitation. Rather, it is the result of drawing rational inferences from limited information. Of course, imitation may also occur due to social pressures to conform, without any underlying informational cause, and it is not always easy to tell these two phenomena apart" (Easley and Kleinberg 484). However, Gladwell in *The Tipping Point* claims that "some people[15] are far more influential that others, and cascades [...] move via social ties, rather than being a simple matter of anonymous strangers observing each other's behaviour" (Surowiecki 55).

Decentralisation. "The power [to change] does not fully reside in one central location and [...] decisions are made by individuals based on their own [...] knowledge rather than by an omniscient or farseeing planner[; it] encourages independence and specialisation on the one hand while still allowing people to coordinate [...] on the other" (Surowiecki 71). However, the problem with decentralised systems is that there is "no guarantee that particular information will find its way through the rest of the system" (Surowiecki 71).

Aggregation. "A decentralized system can only produce genuinely intelligent results if there's a means of aggregating the information" (Surowiecki 74). Without an agent who is capable of collecting and evaluating the information of individual decentralised members of the society, the change cannot happen. For instance, on market, the price is the aggregating mechanism.

As we can see, social change can be introduced by a relatively limited number of people if the conditions are favourable. The change, however, must be within certain limits. As with language, every language change that occurs within one particular language adapts to the rules and conventions of that particular language. The same happens with new social variations; they adapt. Any change is possible as long as it fits the cultural framework of the society. Without the cultural framework where no norms and rules apply, the society would not survive if it does not remodify itself. The norms can be introduced from external environment, but the most successful the ones are those that are

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Reasoning about a Highly Connected World (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010).
15 Gladwell calls them connectors, maves and salesmen.

internalised. As with language changes, not all changes in society are welcome by individual members of communities and the attitudes that I mentioned when discussing language change can also be applied here (see p. 94ff).

Conclusion

To sum up, I have presented a slightly less traditional view on human communication and process of change that the communication can trigger. I perceive humans as systems and society as organisms and every change in the organism can be triggered by individual systems of the society if certain conditions are met. New ideas, messages, or even products have to undergo a certain set of procedures before they are applied on a large scale. The question whether changes are positive or negative are upon the individual members of the community. We may never predict if a certain change has a positive, neutral, or negative effect on us. We can only hope that the changes happening around will be beneficial for us and for our children in future.

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