Representations of the Local in the Postmillennial Novel

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New Voices from the Margins

Edited by

Milena Kaličanin and Soňa Šnircová

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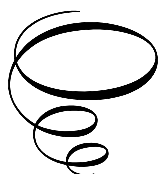

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INTRODUCTION

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LOCAL IN THE POSTMILLENNIAL NOVEL: NEW VOICES FROM THE MARGINS

MILENA KALIČANIN AND SOŇA ŠNIRCOVÁ

One of the key factors that have shaped the postmillennial novel is an acute awareness of globalizing processes and the rising tension between global and local identities, discourses and trends. While at the beginning of the millennium Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman (2001) could complain about the lack of focus on literature in discussions of globalization and culture, this lack has since been redressed in numerous studies over the subsequent years (see e.g. Jay, 2001, Gunn 2001, Israeli 2004, Annesley 2006, Gupta 2009, Siskind 2010, Kirsch 2016). The need to address the relationship of literature to globalization has resulted in the revival of interest in "world literature" (Moretti 2000, Damrosch 2003, 2009, Siskind 2010) and in studies about "fictions of globalisation" (Annesley 2006) or the "global novel" (Kirsch 2016). While the majority of discussions on "world literature" tend to draw on and develop Goethe's concept of a body of literary texts situated above national boundaries and rooted in universal human values, the concept of "global literature" relates more to its ability to express common concerns and issues that are shared by all humans throughout the contemporary world.

The global novel can be seen as one of the most prominent forms of postmillennial literary production, provoking a wide-ranging debate that encompasses attempts to provide a definition of the genre (Kirsch 2016), concerns about its role in the project of cosmopolitan education (Siskind 2010), and criticism for its tendency to dismiss "culture specific clutter and linguistic virtuosity" in favour of a universal appeal (Parks 2010).

Although it cannot be approached as a unitary and unified genre[1], various narratives that fall under this category are related through the thematisation of globalization. Through its ability to address a vast range of topics such as the negative consequences of globalization (hyperconsumerism, terrorism, environmental degradation), global travelling/nomadism/migration, global spaces and "non-spaces" (Augé, 1995), cosmopolitan identities and hybrid identities, the global novel has drawn praise for its undoubted contribution to the construction of global consciousness. Nonetheless, it has also attracted the criticism of those who see the genre as a product of global capitalism represented by multinational conglomerate publishers ("World Lite" 2013, Parks 2010, Deb 2027). Tim Parks (2010) voices the concern that the global novel has lost its connection with the cultural specifics of national literatures and is moving towards a standardisation and simplification of its linguistic and aesthetic means: "What seems doomed to disappear, or at least to risk neglect, is the kind of work that revels in the subtle nuances of its own language and literary culture, the sort of writing that can savage or celebrate the way this or that linguist group really lives". While Adam Kirsch (2016) refutes Park's criticism, he is forced to admit that the national/local aspect represented in the global novels under his scrutiny "gains dignity, and significance, insofar as it can be seen as part of a worldwide phenomenon" (12). In Kirsch's reading the global novel is primarily characterized through its positive relation to cosmopolitanism and its capacity to create "global political consciousness" (73).

These postmillennial trends may raise questions about the relationship between the national, local and regional and the global both in literary representations of the contemporary world and in wider social and cultural contexts. On the one hand globalization has led to the weakening of national or local identities and the increased emergence of new identities, such as the "cosmopolitan identity" marked by the sense of disembeddedness or the "global identity" that implies "global self-reflection" and "identification with the total of humankind" (Bornman 2003, 40). On the other, the pressure of globalization has also revitalized regionalism rooted in local identity, more specifically the identity which "harbours emotional and symbolic meanings that people ascribe to a sense of self and the attachment to place" (Tartaglia and Rossi 2015, 107). This rise of regionalism may be related to the increased awareness of the dangers of social atomism and disembeddedness that affect humanity in the globalized world. As Elirea

[1] For example, Adam Kirsch's *The Global Novel* (2016) offers a rich variety of novels, including works by Orhan Pamuk, Haruki Murakami, Roberto Bolaño, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Mohsin Hamid, Margaret Atwood, Michel Houellebecq and Elena Ferrante as representative works of the genre.

Bornman (2003) has written, “in many instances globalization and modernity have brought about the collapse of a sense of community” resulting in the widespread “experience of an identity crisis” (29, 30). The identity crisis may be also related to the fact that “place identity represents physical setting cognitions that serve to define, maintain and protect the self-identity of a person’ (Proshansky et al., 1983, p. 73). However, this emotional attachment to a particular physical place whose uniqueness could become the source of a specific ethnic, regional or national identity has been replaced in the globalized world by migration, nomadism, excessive time spent in cyberspace or in uniform “non-places”, such as supermarkets, multinational chain stores, corporate offices, hotels or airports. Postmillennial individuals can find themselves trapped between the unavoidable pressure of globalizing processes and the need to identify with a local place and belong to a community. Many experience the ongoing struggle to find a new “glocal” ways of living, which include the “innovative hybrid practices that local cultures have invented to assert their identity” (Tartaglia and Rossi 2015, 106). The fact that such a glocalization may emerge in the form of “a döner kebab, recognized as a typical Turkish food invented in Germany” (106), or various foodscapes that help immigrants to create localities in unfamiliar environments of their adopted cosmopolises draws attention to the importance of ethnic food (or the lack of it) in the construction of regional, national, global and glocalized identities. These foodscapes, such as cafés of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi immigrants in contemporary London or the Habsburg cafés in Budapest and Vienna of the more distant past form an integral part of the displaced individual’s ethnic identity. Enduring the preservation of these unique ethnic, regional and local identities remains one of the greatest challenges in the postmillennial world in which global perspectives, global concerns and global consciousness has (often rightly) started to prevail. Although we share Susie O’Brien and Imre Szeman’s (2001) belief that globalization processes “cannot be reduced simply to the extension and intensification of early imperialism” (610) and that former centres and margins appear to be equally exposed to the processes of unification, we also believe that globalisation does not wipe out the dynamics of the centre/margin tensions. On the contrary, it produces new voices from the margins that are often overshadowed by new centres. Whether these new margins are ethnic minorities living in globalized centres of contemporary metropoles, or authors whose national, local or regional voices are marginalized by the works with more global ones, we believe that these margins are equally deserving of the attention of general readers, university students and literary scholars.

This book offers a collection of papers that present discussions on a variety of novels, including works by Irish-Canadian, British, American, Serbian, Australian, Iraqi and Maori authors that present a rich variety of voices from the margins and experiences of living in the postmillennial globalised world. The broad theoretical framework of the book focuses on the tension between the global and the local and has been inspired by the research conducted within **VEGA Project 1/0447/20: The Global and the Local in Postmillennial Anglophone Literatures, Cultures and Media, granted by the Ministry of Education, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.** The individual contributors have enriched this framework through their specific theoretical approaches that include postmodernist, postcolonial, linguistic, altermodernist, diasporic, comparative and other perspectives.

In the first chapter entitled **Local Geographies, (Dis)Placements, and Global e-Romance in Emma Donoghue's *Landing***, Michaela Weiss compares and contrasts the current trends of e-communication and non-stop availability in the modern world with the desire to remain outside the reach of modern technologies and to interact with others on a purely personal level. These opposing trends are exemplified in the analysis of Emma Donoghue's novel *Landing* that revolves around a modern long-distance e-romance and simultaneously explores the theme of commitment to one's local landscape and community. Following the development of an epistolary romance between a cosmopolitan Irish flight attendant of Indian origin and a homely curator of a local museum in Canada, Weiss discusses the concept of a global e-romance while focusing on the local (geographical and communal) concerns of two lovers from different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds who must negotiate their individual ideas of placement. The governing idea in this article is that the future of e-romances largely depends on an individual willingness to accept a partial displacement and embrace the multicultural urban environment so that a new shared hybrid ground could ultimately be reached and acknowledged. The theoretical framework of the article relies on the critical insights of Baudrillard, Giddens, McLuhan, Smith, Duffy, Soja and others.

Silvia Rosivalová Baučeková's article **On the Margins of the Centre: Immigrant Foodscapes in Three Novels of London** focuses on an analysis of the three novels (Zadie Smith's *NW*, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and John Lanchester's *Capital*) from the perspective of the various waves of migration that have played a crucial role in shaping life in contemporary London. The narratives presented in these novels are populated by a myriad of immigrant characters that come from different social and cultural backgrounds. In Rosivalová Baučeková's opinion, the common

denominator for these diverse characters is their struggle to forge a small space for themselves within the vast city, i.e., the attempt to create a sense of locality and belonging. Special attention in the article is paid to the foods that people cook, eat and share, the tastes and smells of the food and the spaces in which food-related activities are carried out. These activities are seen as valid demonstrations of the creation of a sense of attachment to a place. Ultimately, Rosivalová Baučeková concludes, despite the fact that these characters' roots lie elsewhere, food allows them to build new lives and new homes in London. The combined critical views of Bhabha, Bornman, Dixey, Hough, Mintz, Sutton, Tuan and others constitute the theoretical background of the chapter.

The third chapter, **Representation of Regional Identity in Julia Darling's Novel *The Taxi Driver's Daughter*** written by Elena A. Tuzlaeva, offers a multidimensional representation of the identity of England's North East based on a realistic portrayal of Newcastle upon Tyne in which the features of the city's landscape, social climate and linguistic environment merge into a single whole. Tuzlaeva emphasizes that Darling's references to various places in the city serve as a means of both specifying the locality in which the action proceeds and also of acquainting the reader with the city's past—both recent events such as the unemployment of the 1980s and more distant episodes such as the history of Jesmond Vale. Darling creates this effect by relating the characters' reminiscences of their own lives or through descriptions of local history lessons. While sticking to topographical accuracy, Julia Darling also "re-thinks" and "re-creates" certain sites on the map of Newcastle in order to fit them into the story, which, together with psychological and emotional realism, allows the reader to see the North East through the eyes of its inhabitants. By focusing on a character with no proper educational background who has spent eighteen years doing a job that, as he himself feels, cannot be regarded as a career and his daughter who faces a similar fate, Darling represents the social climate of Newcastle upon Tyne in a highly personal manner, showing how day-to-day family life is interlocked with social issues. By referring to studies by Foote and Snell, Tuzlaeva also points to Darling's limited choice of territorially restricted features and language and concludes that their effective organization in the text accentuates both the geographical and social aspects of regional identity.

Cormac McCarthy's Nomads is the subject of the fourth chapter by Zuzana Buráková. The aim of this article is to show literary representations of nomadism in selected works by Cormac McCarthy inspired by Bourriaud's altermodernism, the central idea of which is based on the absence of the centre, hybridization and nomadism. Buráková emphasizes

the idea that nomadism serves as a dominant topos in McCarthy's fiction and is suggestive of the redefinition of our attachment to place in the twenty-first century. Several representations of nomadism in McCarthy's works ranging from the involuntary nomadism of homelessness as depicted in *The Road* to the virtual nomadism in *Blood Meridian* are examined in the article, which also addresses their relationship to the post-postmodernist treatment of nomadism as outlined in Bourriaud's concept of altermodernism. While in *The Road*, McCarthy presents forced nomadism as a consequence of global cataclysm in a world without borders, in *Blood Meridian* the character of Judge Holden is used to present virtual nomadism as a consequence of untrammelled and uncontrollable technological development. Buráková concludes that these innovative literary representations of nomadism in McCarthy's fiction disrupt the topos of the road as a heroic and linear quest and dismantle the codes of national identities in a globalized world.

In the fifth chapter entitled **Linguistic Invention and Political Satire in the Contemporary Serbian Novel: A Comparative Perspective,** Vladislava Gordić Petković analyses how new buzzwords can turn into signifiers of dystopia and political satire in the age of transition and the expansion of digital technologies. The protagonists' acute awareness of moral hypocrisy, which results in mixed feelings of anger and derision, has become a regular feature of the contemporary Serbian novel. The fiction deals with either the male observation of female identities and fantasies or with the transference of identity in general, but the writers of all generations tend to explore the desire to break from conventional storytelling in order to explore the darker dimensions of technology and the self. With its flood of advertising messages, publicity and text notifications popping up on our computers and mobile devices, modern life suffocates patience and denies any possibility that a loyal friendship or true love might grow out of random contacts. Thus a new, redefined realism promises to be much more than a slight and meaningless alteration of the realistic techniques such as verism or minimalism, being a harbinger of the new artistic sensibility which will influence the discourse of the realistic novel and change the currents of narrative practices.

Igor Maver writes about **Andrew Riemer's Diasporic Novels between Central Europe and Australia** in the sixth chapter. Maver touches upon the characteristics of the processes of globalization, cross-fertilization and transculturation that make diasporic literature and culture particularly important and ever more contemporary. The notion of diaspora entails the collective cultural memory and social capital of the past being transported overseas or across borders and also suggests an acknowledgement of the

old country as a concept deeply embedded in specific features such as an individual language, culture, religion, customs, eating habits or mind-set. Diasporic Australian writing such as the work of Andrew Riemer connects the past and the present and forges new notions of fluid and transnational Central European identities. This idea is represented in the article through a thorough survey of Riemer's diasporic novels: *Inside-Outside*, *The Habsburg Café* and *A Family History of Smoking*. Maver concludes that Riemer's work is a representation of his obsessive attempts to portray himself: he seeks to recover his submerged Hungarian/Austrian/Central European identity and by contrast to simultaneously define his new Australian identity.

The seventh chapter entitled **Authentic Marginal Voice of Iraq: Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* Compared with Shelley's *Frankenstein*** written by Karzan Aziz Mahmood concentrates on Saadawi's novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, a modern version of Shelley's *Frankenstein* that represents a potent expression of the voice of marginalized Iraqis. The novel is based on authentic stories as experienced by ordinary Iraqis which contribute to the creation of an autonomous Iraqi version of *Frankenstein* in the context of Iraq in the years following the US invasion. It borrows the main antagonist and protagonist from Shelley's novel and transfers them into the peripheral and true voices of Iraqis. In addition, the contextualization of the original text plays a significant role in Saadawi's version of *Frankenstein* through the change of setting and perspectives (from science and ethics to war atrocities and destruction). The article displays the roles of Shelley's characters and their appropriation in the Iraqi text and demonstrates both the English and Iraqi contexts and textual backgrounds. Mahmood believes that the Iraqi version of *Frankenstein* has revolutionized the English original by prioritizing marginal, authentic voices.

In the eight chapter, **Witi Ihimaera's "Brave New World": Visibility and Recognition in *The Uncle's Story***, Rudolf Sárdi writes about Witi Ihimaera, a pioneer in indigenous and Pacific literature who became the first Maori writer to achieve widespread recognition through works such as *Tangi*, *Pounamu*, *Bulibasha*, and *The Whale Rider*, the last of which was adapted into an internationally acclaimed film. While his works focus on the depiction of Maori culture, highlighting the complex nature of the Maori experience in modern New Zealand, his novel *The Uncle's Story* poses broader questions about sexual identity, leadership, recognition and the future prospects for the tribal society. The article examines how Ihimaera's novel addresses the issue of being gay in a monolithically structured Maori community by raising the problem from the personal to

the universally recognizable level. The novel itself is an exploration into the theme of the self and the other in the Maori community where the protagonist, Michael Mahana, discloses his homosexuality to his family and draws parallels between his own journey of self-disclosure and that of his uncle. Through a reading of his uncle's diary, Michael reconstructs a sequence of dramatic events which also lead to the revelation of his own identity. In order to emphasize the importance of the family past and its potential bearings on the personal present and global future, Sárdi claims that visibility and a redefinition of the boundaries of identity for underrepresented indigenous gay communities can topple the hierarchy-making and reactionary patriarchal attitude at the novel's heart.

The book is primarily aimed at scholars in the fields of literary, gender, postcolonial and food studies, but it would also be of interest to a broader readership involved in explorations of literary works in the context of globalizing processes. The collection of papers can also serve as useful and interesting material for students since it offers insights into a selection of postmillennial novels that deal with the most pressing issues of contemporary life.

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CHAPTER ONE

LOCAL GEOGRAPHIES, (DIS)PLACEMENTS, AND GLOBAL E-ROMANCE IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S *LANDING*[1]

MICHAELA WEISS

The globalized world offers equally globalized opportunities and forms of interaction between and among people. Yet alongside the endorsed e-communication and non-stop availability in the online world, there runs a simultaneous desire to be outside the reach of modern technologies and to interact with others on purely personal, physical level, or not at all, as the popularity of dark and/or solitary retreats manifest. The accommodations and negotiations of the opposite trends, ideologies, and sensibilities have become staple features of the current social, cultural, and political scenes, and are visibly manifested in the rise of globally uniform public cityscapes and the concurrent emphasis on the preservation of original housing, which is true also for the countryside, where the modern family houses contrast with the regionally specific architecture. The global is thus in constant dialogue with the local, freedom of travel is contrasted with fear of dislocation, and the absorption and consumption of world cultures clashes with the tendency to safeguard and propagate national or regional cultural traditions; what remains and is perhaps more globally visible and marketed, is the desire and even right for romance, leading to what Mary-Lou Galician calls the "romanticization" of love and relationships leading to unrealistic expectations, depressions, abuse, or violence (2009, 1-2).

All the above-listed tendencies and opposing concepts are discussed in Emma Donoghue's (b. 1969) novel *Landing* (2007), which explores

[1] This paper is a result of the project SGS/1/2020, Silesian University in Opava internal grant "Přístupy k textové analýze v 21. století" (Twenty-first Century Perspectives on Text Analysis).

negotiations between a modern long-distance e-romance, and the commitment to one's local landscape and community that forms an essential part of the lovers' identities. This modern love story is set simultaneously in the city of Dublin, and a small town of Ireland, Ontario, following the development of an epistolary romance between a cosmopolitan Irish flight attendant of Indian origin and a homely curator of a local museum in Canada. While the lovers are of different age, ethnic background, and social class, their romance can thus be called intersectional, negotiating not only Síle's Indian heritage but also both lovers' sexual orientation, gender, age, and geography, in sense of landscape vs. cityscape and created vs. traditional communities.

In *Landing*, Donoghue explores the aspects of location, community, identity, and romance in connection to the concept of home, discussing the geographies of both "Irelands" as well as the communities that identify with their homelands. As the title suggests, "landing" is understood predominantly as a social and personal belonging and bond to both land and people, and is closely linked to Donoghue's concept of romance, which she considers the true basis of home. In *Landing*, the search and desire for one's place in the world is presented from an external perspective of a mediator between the two distant cultures, providing details that define the featured locations, which in turn, define those who "landed" there.

Donoghue's romance contrasts not only two disparate regions: the country of Ireland and a small Canadian town of Ireland, Ontario but also very disparate lifestyles and approaches to homeland: Síle O'Shaughnessy is a 39-year-old sophisticated flight attendant of Indian origin living in Dublin, while Jude Turner is a 25-year-old British Canadian archivist who lives in a small town of Ireland, Ontario in a house where she was born. The women meet on a plane from Toronto to Dublin, where the attractive flight attendant, Síle, helps Jude overcome the shock of a sudden death of a passenger from adjacent seat. While their romantic relationships are complicated: Síle has a girlfriend, while Jude has occasional sex with her ex-husband with whom they are formally separated but never had the money or need to divorce, the globe-trotter and the first-time flier soon find themselves entangled in exchanging letters and later, for the convenience and speed, emails and phone calls.

The attraction and fascination between Síle and Jude reflects the mutual interplay between globalism and localism, i.e., the perception and interpretation of globalization and localization, and their mutual negotiations on identity level. Tim O'Riordan and Chris Church highlight the social and political aspects of such interpretations, understand globalism and

localism as “processes of responsiveness and adaptability that are mediated and defined by various institutional arrangements and swirling patterns of social expectations” (2001, 3). Both concepts thus must be understood as unstable and fluid due to the constant negotiations of personal, social, and cultural values. Jude does not have a personal email—considering it “the lowest form of human communication” (Donoghue 2008, 25)—mobile phone, or even a credit card, while Síle cannot live without them. Jude cooks at home, Síle frequents restaurants and hipster bistros. Jude lives on a tight budget, Síle can afford to live comfortably in the capital. The lovers are almost the opposite when it comes to race, social and financial status, religion, or worldview, still they feel almost immediately attracted to each other, setting aside all differences but one: geography that is closely linked with communal identity.

The immense of influence of patriotism and cultural rootedness is demonstrated on Síle’s friend Jael, who felt she needed to leave Ireland to shake “off Mother Ireland's bony claws for good” (Donoghue 2008, 40) and settle elsewhere, or alternatively, nowhere. Instead, she moved back to Dublin, found a job and started a family. While Síle does not feel any “bony claws,” Jude cannot understand the desire to discard one’s cultural heritage. As a proud Canadian, she defends her homeland against Síle’s prejudice and mocking, while reminding her that Canada is not the only country that is used as a target of social stereotyping, referring to the Irish being classified as Irish:

> this area is not entirely populated by the “Waspy pioneers” of your imagination. Gong Leung goes into Cantonese whenever she’s bitching about the customers. Their daughter Diana looks totally Canadian and it occurs to me it’s because she wears braces. My friend Gwen always says you can tell a Brit (meaning, from your islands) by the bad teeth, but I've assured her that yours are extremely white and even. (Donoghue 2008, 68)

As advocates of their respective national heritage, both Síle and Jude are critical to the presentations of their national or regional histories to tourists. In her museum, Jude strives for accuracy and hopes to make her exhibitions alive yet not by making them sentimental or cute:

> “In North America we tend to ‘Disneyfy’ the past into this sugar-coated nostalgia product, all bonnets and merry sleigh rides—”
> Síle nodded. “The Irish do green marble shamrock jewelry, misty ruins, Enya whispering and moaning over the PA.”
> “Exactly! And let’s nobody mention infanticide or lynch mobs.”
> (Donoghue 2008, 24-25)

The image the places or nations targeted at tourists are "cutified", simplified, and made entertaining, disregarding any measure of authenticity, as long as these attractions are marketable and sell well. The rising popularity of tourism therefore leads to creation of artificial spots and distorted and commercialized histories, and along with the current trend to visit one spot once, marketers have to continually search for new places of interest.

As a conservative defendant of localism, Jude Turner does not ascribe travel (or for that matter, tourism) any significance and is dismissive about its value. Tourism and travel, while accepted as a common and essential feature of modern life, can, however, only be possible, when there is leisure and resources, and Jude does not have either. When asked to "hop over" to England to visit her ailing mother, Jude is terrified of crossing the Atlantic, feeling that travel is something "that people wrongly assumed to be compulsory, like cell phones or gym memberships" (Donoghue 2008, 3), defying Jean Baudrillard's claim that "[t]ravel is a necessity and speed is a pleasure" (1993, 54). As an inhabitant of a small town, her workplace is situated only a few hundred meters from her home and she seems to appreciate the slow pace of her birthplace. She does not even feel the curiosity or need to learn from or about other cultures or even to adopt a different life perspective. As Mick Smith and Rosalleen Duffy note, travel and tourism have become associated with virtue since the Grand Tour, as it manifested the individual's independence from their social structure. Though the purpose of the travel was not to "immerse oneself in a different culture" but to gain a sufficient detachment to adopt a new and original view of one's character and place in the society (2003, 54). Yet Jude feels satisfied with her placement and embraces her role in the community, nor does she view travel as a self-betterment tool. The only reason she is willing to set out on a journey, is her mother's failing health. She is content with her way of life and has never thought of adopting the modern and/or global habits.

Unlike Síle, Jude does not spend her afternoons or weekends at malls, on the contrary, she finds such anonymous and uniform places appalling: "The Detroit airport was worse than a mall: fluorescent lights, announcements, stray children, suitcases mummified in plastic wrap" (Donoghue 2008, 6). Síle feels at home in the globalized culture and standardized spaces of the airports and accepts them as a common, established feature of a modern life. However, as Donoghue manifests on Jude, the globalization can only occur within business- or tourist-attractive places. The access to global products and technologies is not unlimited and in certain areas can be viewed as superficial, useless and intrusive. The rise of isolationist

perspective, valuing the regional or national over the global can be understood as one of the direct results of globalism. This tendency is demonstrated on Jude, who, echoing Plato's reasoning for banning poets from his Republic, finds globalism potentially harmful to the social identity and community, as the awareness of other cultures and global brands and products makes people unhappy with what they have:

> "I've become a shocking coffee snob," she explained. "At home in Dublin, there's this one Italian café on the docks I have to trek to whenever I have a day off."
> "So you were happier before, when you didn't know any better?"
> "Well—I suppose," she conceded. "You don't reheat yours in the microwave, at least?"
> "I haven't got a microwave." (Donoghue 2008, 19)

Donoghue demonstrates that globalization and globalism may be understood as common and omnipresent part of the current world, turning the world into what Marshall McLuhan called "the global village," in his collection *War and Peace in the Global Village*, yet what is often overlooked is the variability of cultures, especially at less desirable destinations, and above all, the absence of global globalization.

Cityscapes, Globalism, and Communities

While Jude lives in a small local community that does not belong to tourist hotspots and does not aspire to become one, Síle in the increasingly globalised capital observes its gradual shift towards more uniform global space. She misses its original, less sophisticated parts, including the raw beauty of markets she used to love: as the tourist hunt for original local products turned these spaces into decorative replicas (with the horse market removed).

She still nostalgically recalls "the surrealism of bareback lads clattering down my street," (Donoghue 2008, 33) while noticing the irony of her sentiments that come from an assimilated Indian Irish woman who works at a bustling Irish airport, and is enjoying her Italian coffee with her current partner Kathleen, a senior administrator of Dublin's vibrant top hospital. Kathleen perhaps best articulates the collision between the desire for progress and development and the concurrent complaints and fear of uniformity and dislocation:

> "God, we're ungrateful mockers. In our student days, didn't we sit around griping that Ireland was trapped in the nineteenth century, and then the

> minute the money flowed in and it jumped to the twenty-first–" "We've a lot to be ungrateful for, especially in Dublin," Síle protested. "You pay an arm and a leg for a fragment of sea bass, everybody's stressed and rude and booked up a month in advance..." "At least you're not the only brown face anymore." […] "That's true. In fact, compared to the women in chadors I hardly look foreign at all." (Donoghue 2008, 34-35)

The issues of otherness and foreignness are crucial for Síle due to her origin. When reading the electronic digest of *Irish Times*, she finds an article discussing the position of foreign correspondents who need to adapt to the new land, though only to a certain extent, as they must keep their distance to retain their external perspective. Síle finds this distance keeping demanding, realizing that she and her family became fully absorbed in the Irish culture, more specifically, in the capital's urban culture. She dismisses the countryside, as she feels that in the city environment she can feel more as an insider, especially due to the intersections of her race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Síle's affection for the location and her value for the community, becomes apparent when her best friend Marcus (who came to Dublin from Britain) buys an old house in the country. She is distressed about losing her friend, teasing him that "[c]ountry bumpkins drive everywhere and get fat" (Donoghue 2008, 83). Yet Marcus cannot be deterred from his move, as he feels he has never felt at home in Dublin, especially as he spent all his young age on the move. Hoping to change his mind, Síle suggests that there are no gay dating opportunities in the conservative countryside, implying that his identity as a gay man may not only be unwelcome but could create a barrier between Marcus and the locals, resulting in Marcus remaining single and isolated. The community Marcus and Síle are a part of is largely based on urban life style. Bellah et.al (1985) even talks of "lifestyle enclaves" that are based on "a degree of individual choice" that liberates them from ethnic or religious bonds (73). In this case, from their national, ethnic, and gender affiliations.

Though sexual orientation and urban hispterism form an essential part of the group identity, another important aspect is the locational proximity and close personal ties. Migration or moving out of the city is therefore perceived as a danger to the group cohesion. When Marcus admits that Dublin is not mentally fulfilling and he cannot call the city his home, Síle feels their communal bonds will be disrupted despite his house being only a two-hour drive, while at the same time she is engaging in a romantic relationship with a Canadian. Though, as Bellah et al. observe, romantic relationships often develop into a condensed lifestyle conclaves that are often fulfilled in chosen spaces that enable their personal lifestyle without

being actively engaged in the local communities (1985, 74). Jude, on the other hand, feels strong personal and communal ties to her birth town its regional history. Her sense of identity is linked to the place so strongly, that she feels resentful of her father who left the family and moved to Florida.

She accuses him for abandoning his roots in exchange for mild climate and new love, feeling irritated by the sense of sunny weather resounding in his voice and behaviour: “his voice had had a kind of indecent merriment to it, a quality of sunshine” (Donoghue 2008, 52). She still fondly thinks of the time the whole family was together in Ontario despite their financial struggles: “the Turners had been broke, but Jude hadn’t cared; what did she need pocket money for, when all the things she liked to do were free and she knew so many of the locals, it was like living in a book?” (Donoghue 2008, 52-53).

Due to Jude’s distrust of modern technology and fear of displacement, Síle sees her as an obsolete dinosaur, while Jude calls her partner a Rechabite (Jeremiah 35:7): “Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents: that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.” In an afterthought, Jude discovers a topical aspects of the Biblical metaphor and views the Rechabites as modern global nomads who avoid settling not to become attached and therefore vulnerable. In one of their email, she asks Síle: “Do you see yourself as an elusive road warrior who’ll never get walled up in one place and have to barbecue rats like us settled folk?” (Donoghue 2008, 58). Her admiration of the seemingly free and emotionally detached nomads is mixed here with the realization of a major and insurmountable difference between the couple: the willingness to settle.

Síle often emphasizes her need of freedom (though she does not specify what exactly she means), her arguments predominantly refer to the consumer opportunities and the variety of food and culture available to the city-dwellers. So it is more the urban environment than Dublin specifically she seems to thrives in: “Small-town life has always given me the creeps—no cinemas (I’m such a film slut I’d see two a day if I had the time) or music venues or juice bars when you need a strawberry-pear smoothie—the hideous homogeneity—how can you bear it?” (Donoghue 2008, 61). Her sexual orientation and race make her feel more secure in cities that attract minorities. Jude, on the other hand, despite her love of women enjoys the slow pace of the small town that lives in harmony with the Canadian nature. She does not fear communal life nor does she feel oppressed as Síle who prefers to “feel free as a kite” (61), though as Jude

correctly observes: "if you've ever flown a kite you may have noticed they have to be anchored firmly by the string or else they flop out of the sky?" (Donoghue 2008, 65). Yet, Síle due to her origin and feminine look, faces more complex identity negotiations than Jude, as her Irishness is constantly disputed. A bartender Dave tells her he could not believe she was Irish, because she did not look Irish. Síle does not seem surprised by this remark, adding: "And the funny thing is, Dave, I've been told I don't look like a lesbian, either" (Donoghue 2008, 131). Unlike the butch-looking Jude, Síle is never fully seen for what she is and, instead, emphasizes her economic independence, mobility and cosmopolitan nature.

To show each other the beauty and attractiveness of their respective spaces, both lovers become observers of their localities, depicting what they find appealing or what they think might appeal to their partner. By closely reading their hometowns, they create a geographical personal identity map, disclosing the values and perceptions of the speaker:

> You know, this crossroads community (officialspeak for a one-horse town) really isn't so "hideously homogeneous." We've got flower-arrangers and fundamentalists, yeah—and last year someone did chalk RUG MUNCHER (i.e., me) on the door of the museum—but also a gay-run guesthouse, two Web-site designers, a day trader and a Buddhist. When you live in people's pockets you learn how out there some of them are. […] Uh-oh, on reflection that's going to confirm all your prejudices about rural creepiness, isn't it?" (Donoghue 2008, 64)

As Síle cannot so easily point out the peculiarities of her cityscape, she is taking Jude for virtual walks around the city, showcasing her favourite spots: "So today I've brought you to my favourite Dublin Italian café to teach you what real coffee tastes like. I've also ordered you an impeccable *torta limone*. We're gazing out at the boardwalk erected along the Liffey to give it the look of the Seine, but the tourists slip-sliding along in the rain with plastic bags over their heads do slightly spoil the impression" (Donoghue 2008, 72).

While Jude's observations reflect her love and a true sense of belonging to the place, Síle highlights uniform urban experience that can be obtained in any western city and does not mention anything specific of Dublin, even the Liffey's bank is unfavourably contrasted with Seine. While at the beginning of the novel, Síle was emotionally invested in the city of Dublin, even nostalgically remembering the markets, after terminating her relationship with Kathleen and having her best friend moving to the country, she seems to occupy what Augé calls a "non-place"—a tourist-adapted, uniform city spaces, global food chains, malls,

airports, or hotels that denies the possibility of attachment to the place. These originally historical and historically-bound places become "anesthetized", "desocialized and artificialized" (Augé 2009, 73). As an immigrant flight-attendant, Síle never developed closeness to Dublin or Irish culture, at least not to such a degree as the patriotic Jude to her hometown and Canada.

By giving each other a tour round their home towns, Síle and Jude hope to erase the sense of foreignness and remoteness both of the disparate places but also of their identities, showing each other who they are not only by choosing the locations of interest but by ascribing them certain traits or importance, turning their geographies into love letters but also their personal reflections.

Nature, Placement, and Community

Nature does not seem to appeal to Síle at all, she even believes that the Irish midlands should have stayed the lake they once were, though again, her view of the country is shaped by her sense of loss of Marcus, who is willing to exchange their meetings in hipster bistros or Italian cafés for a quiet life in the country. If it was not for Marcus, she would not even feel the need to comment or consider the landscape. When invited to see his house, she is staring at a sheep outside the window, unsettled by the silence, where the only sound she can hear is her heartbeat. When Marcus enthusiastically points out the stones and the field, all she sees is a grey cloud. In this aspect, she could not be more different from Jude who grew up in alliance with nature: she enjoys the sound of snow and ice under her shoes and proclaims to be "proud of the icicle outside my bedroom window, which is almost as long as I am" (Donoghue 2008, 63). She observes the slight changes in nature, the movement of squirrels or dripping trees that signal the slow coming of a short Canadian spring, though this time, she feels alone in her house that was crowded with memories of her deceased mother. Still, she cannot imagine, and does not even want to, to live anywhere else. It is perhaps Jude's simple non-commercial life in a small community and her value for her roots that makes her in more mature. She realizes she has fallen in love and is the first to openly acknowledge it.

Síle, on the other hand, feels frightened, when reading the words "I love you." She realizes that she was filling her life with expensive coffees, shopping, and traffic jams to avoid and cover the void. Now she has to acknowledge that her true life is taking place "onscreen, sentences swallowed and sung back and swallowed all over again. She was made

entirely of words" (Donoghue 2008, 100). Jude's declaration of love made Síle reconsider her life and end a five-year relationship with Kathleen, employing the modern idea of love that is not based on memory or gratitude "unless you were a wife in some nineteenth-century novel. It had to be worth it" (Donoghue 2008, 101). To act upon her feelings, Síle decides to fly to Canada to resolve her emotional confusion.

Wearing her fashionable high heels, she is confronted with the Canadian spring that largely differs from Irish one, feeling lost in the "snowbound, godless wilderness. Distance from Home City Dublin 3285 Miles" (Donoghue 2008, 115). All she perceives is "menacing whiteness". She is further taken aback by the real geography of the place that she radically differs from her mental image based on Jude's letters and her own visualization of Canadian landscape: "In theory she'd known that there would be no mountains, no river, but for the first time it hit her that the hamlet of Ireland was nothing but a few silent streets" (Donoghue 2008, 115-116). Síle's confusion and frustration were not caused solely by geographical distance but mainly the social one. She feels she has travelled back in time: "All this hand-shaking and inquiries after health and happiness, it's so Old World! It must take half the day to get down the street. In Dublin we mostly just nod and mutter 'howarya'" (Donoghue 2008, 123-124). Síle is disconcerted by the local hospitality and interest in strangers that capitals lack. The emphasis on inclusion and hospitality is by no means accidental in contemporary fiction. Scottish writer Ali Smith considers goodness to strangers as "crucial to survival, never mind to immortality, and also simply to obvious being-ness" (Beer & Smith 2013, 142). Síle does not feel comfortable in the community or the flat landscape. As she does not feel any emotional connection to the landscape or its community, she dismisses the small Ireland's community and heritage as obsolete and insignificant. While she lives in a chosen community of friends, Jude grew up in a place-bound traditional community: "But you know, unless you're old stock, here at least a hundred years, you don't count as local […] Dad was third-generation on his father's side, but his mother was a Home Child; she was sent out here from England at the age of nine" (Donoghue 2008, 133). This continuity and shared memory are what keep Jude attached to the place. What Síle, however, fails to notice, are the small signs of spring in the winter-like landscape and the regional historical significance of the places that she finds dull.

> What would Síle be seeing? They passed orchards of low, twisted apple trees, tense with the anticipation of blossom, and tall houses with stately porches, sheltered by stands of cedars, that seemed to disdain any connection with the soil. A gap-toothed barn disintegrating in a riot of

> silvery gray; a big red one with a roof that read CROWLEY FARM CELEBRATING 150 YEARS […] "It's so flat," Síle commented. "No wonder they had to use unimaginative names like 13 Mile Road or […] Line 28!" (Donoghue 2008, 126)

Jude, on the other hand, is a historian of her place, she grew up surrounded by wilderness and her life is paced by the passing of the seasons. She understands that geography and social history form the basis of the collective identity and memory. As Halbwachs notes, memory is connected to location, a place that seemingly remains the same in the course of time. The past is evoked in the present via shared collective perceptions and experience, forming not only the cultural and regional identity but also shared past and heritage (1980, 157). Síle lacks such connection to place. What she, however, finds hilarious, are the places on map that sound Irish or are named after Irish towns: "Dungannon, Birr, Mount Carmel, Clandeboye, Listowel, Donegal, Newry, Ballymote" (Donoghue 2008, 127). Though she has never visited these towns (and never cared to), their familiar sound makes her feel less estranged. She therefore ignores the unfamiliar landscape, focusing instead, on the words, be it the plates on the houses or on map.

The proximity of nature and wilderness is new to Síle, the slow pace, stillness, and above all, silence make her uneasy, as in the city the sound is omnipresent: "'There's nothing like being away from other human beings, out in the middle of nowhere, is there? […] I'd usually have my headphones on, when I'm walking; it's odd not to have a soundtrack. It's so utterly quiet'" (Donoghue 2008, 128). The Canadian landscape with its beauty and history turns for her, paradoxically, into a non-space. Her vision of the place is not altered by the presence of her lover and Síle does not even pretend or attempt at understanding and absorbing the scenery. She tries to translate her urban Irish experience into the Canadian nature, commenting only on the natural sounds that break the deep silence.: "'Is that a robin? Oh no, of course, American robins are much bigger. I mean Canadian robins. I believe they're insanely territorial, or little Irish robins are, anyway'" (Donoghue 2008, 128). She ascribes the birds characteristic features of her and Jude's personalities, turning her biological observations into a relationship metaphor. Her attitude to place and space reflects Edward Soja's claim that "we are becoming increasingly aware that we are, and always have been, intrinsically spatial beings, active participants in the social construction of our embracing spatialities" (2009, 49). Síle's emotional projection into the place becomes evident after she learns that Jude used to have occasional intercourse with her husband, frustrated she call Canada "frozen arse-hole of the world" (Donoghue 2008, 137). Unlike

her, Jude is aware of the emotional connection to her homeland and the importance of continuity and shared memory.

When she visits Dublin, she demonstrates a strong will to get to know the place, to see what shaped her lover. Still, similarly to Síle, she is observing the city via the matrix of her Canadian experience, that is interpreting what she sees in comparison with what she knows: "Many pedestrians—and drivers, too—were talking into cell phones. And how similar people looked—except for the occasional black face, and a lone woman in a veil, waiting for a green light. Very pale faces, mostly; flat profiles, light brown or sometimes red hair" (Donoghue 2008, 169). When discussing the attachment to land with Síle's friends, Jude notes on the uneasy Canadian relationship to the soil: "In Canada, you can't help being aware you're on stolen ground […] Everybody's from somewhere else, originally. Even my friend Rizla—he's from the biggest native community in Canada, the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, but I tease him about the fact that they're actually blow-ins from New York State" (Donoghue 2008, 188-189). While she admits to the Canadian subconscious guilt about occupying a stolen land, she proclaims her strong attachment to the land and her desire to stay at her birthplace.

Her sense of rootedness stems not only from her childhood memories but also from her emotional investment into the house and garden, where she grew her first tomatoes. The space is the source of memories, as Halbwachs argues, "the spatial image alone […] by reason of its stability, gives us an illusion of not having changed through time" (Donoghue 2008, 157). Despite enjoying the trips to Ireland, Jude realizes she could never feel at home in the city, recognizing these exchange trips only as games of sharing lifestyles. While she understands and partly enjoys the raw energy of the city, her communal and national identity and love of nature cannot be so easily erased or overpowered.

Geography and community therefore turn out to be the biggest obstacle to their love. A problem that is eventually solved by Síle who flies to Toronto and after observing the flourishing Indian and Bangladeshi community, she feels she could imagine settling there: it was the first time in years that she'd felt so visually unremarkable, and the effect was oddly relaxing." In the meantime, Jude's museum was closing down as it did not receive a funding project they relied on, and for the first time, Jude observes the town and community from an external perspective, noticing how her efforts of creating historical events turned into family feasts. When she is offered a job at a Toronto museum, she does not hesitate and accepts the offer.

Though Jude is not the only one who has emotional attachment to place. After Síle decides to move to Canada, she suddenly views Dublin as a part of her identity:

> "She walked along old Northside streets, in one memory and out of another, and every corner was a touchstone. Would Dublin miss her at all, she caught herself wondering? To think she'd once claimed to be a citizen of the world, with no particular allegiance to this place! My arbitrary domicile, my grain of sand." (Donoghue 2008, 301)

Unlike Jude who is aware of the emotional and physical ties to the Canadian soil, community, and her house, Síle only realizes that her memories and therefore a significant part of her identity lies not only in her community of friends but in the city itself. Jude, on the other hand, eventually understands the necessity of leaving the past behind, as the geographical place itself has no meaning without people who project their desires, emotions, and visions into it. Remembering the legends of Oisín and Sedna who ventured out of their homeland for love, Jude as well as Síle are ready to leave their comfort zones and relocate for love. As Jude notices: "A place was nothing on its own […] it was only people who carved it into meaning […] She'd misunderstood the old myths. It was when Sedna tried to come home that she'd lost her fingers; it was when he touched his native soil again that Oisín felt his flesh withering away. You couldn't stay in the womb; you had to go voyaging" (Donoghue 2008, 318). Despite the lovers' geographical distance, Toronto has become their shared place, where they can negotiate their new identity as a couple and, at the same time, without compromising their personal identity, be it Jude's patriotism and love of her hometown, which is close by, or Síle's love of the urban environment and her desire to blend in.

In *Landing* Donoghue discussed the concept of a global e-romance, focusing on the geographical and communal concerns of two lovers of different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds who negotiated their placements and their ideas of placements. The future of the long-distance relationship largely depended on their willingness to accept a partial displacement to make space for their new shared hybrid ground that suits their new group identity as a couple. This change and their future was enabled only in the moment, both women started to look for their affinities, instead on focusing on their disparate geographical and social concerns. While it could not be nature that united both lovers, the connecting link turned out to be culture: the desire for romance, love of history and mythology, and above all, the socially accepting multicultural urban environment.

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CHAPTER TWO

ON THE MARGINS OF THE CENTRE: IMMIGRANT FOODSCAPES IN THREE NOVELS OF LONDON[1]

SILVIA ROSIVALOVÁ BAUČEKOVÁ

"Every story is a travel story—a spatial practice." (Certeau 1988, 115)

Introduction: Migration, Locality, Food

Migration is without doubt one of the most defining social phenomena of the twenty-first century. Although people have been travelling and moving to new places throughout the history of humankind, the process has been accelerated in modern times by developments in transportation technology, deepening economic inequality and climate change. In addition, the movement of migrants can now be broadcast in real time through mass media. As a result, the issue of migration looms larger in our collective consciousness than ever before.

Migration is typically thought of as a process occurring on a global scale, and migrants are often construed as a global people. They are perceived as being deterritorialised, displaced, or cut off from a specific location. However, it is equally important to note the second element of the migration process: the reterritorialisation, the settling down of migrants in new places, the creation of new localities, communities, and homes. For immigrants, the process of forging a localised existence is particularly challenging, not only because they are entering an alien, often hostile environment which is already inhabited by others who may not always welcome their arrival, but also because of their continuing ties to

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