

MEMORY AND *REFLECTIVE*
NOSTALGIA IN
"TO THE LIGHTHOUSE"
BY VIRGINIA WOOLF AND
"THE GO-BETWEEN"
BY L. P. HARTLEY

SYLWIA JANINA WOJCIECHOWSKA

Sylwia Janina Wojciechowska, PhD, Assistant Professor
Department of Literature Studies
Institute of Modern Languages
Pedagogical Faculty
Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland
e-mail: sylwia.wojciechowska@ignatianum.edu.pl
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7390-6952>

Sylwia Janina Wojciechowska is Assistant Professor in the Department of Literature Studies at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland. She holds an MA in Classical Philology, UMK Torun, hence her interest in ancient reminiscences in modern literature. She also graduated from Stuttgart University, Germany, as an MA for English and Italian Philology. Her research mainly focuses on British modernist fiction and includes studies on mode and genre, and particularly on the pastoral mode in modern fiction. She has been also interested in nostalgia studies. Her special interest is dedicated to several early modernist prose writers, to Joseph Conrad and Henry James in the first place. She has published a monograph "Re(Visions) of the Pastoral in Selected British and American post-Romantic Fiction" (Krakow 2017) as well as co-edited a volume entitled "Colossus. How Shakespeare Still Bestrides the Cultural and Literary World" (Krakow 2018).

ABSTRACT

The mode of nostalgia for past happiness is central in contemporary accounts of earlier epochs, and it becomes particularly visible in British prose fiction set in the first half of the twentieth century. I argue that in such accounts memories and recollections are shaped by the mode of nostalgia. This paper focuses on the aspects of *reflective* nostalgia as recently theorized by Svetlana Boym. It opens with a short introduction into the history of nostalgia and the experience of war for generating a nostalgic longing for the past. It also elaborates on the etymological issues and implications suggested by concepts of *nostos* [the return] and *algos* [pain]. I would argue that memories featured in British twentieth-century prose fiction are influenced by the workings of nostalgia which may be either idealizing or imbued with pain and sorrow. Consequently, I claim that the focus placed on the act of *nostos* promotes the interplay of nostalgia and the pastoral mode; by contrast, the expression of *algos* rather selects the elegiac mode. Thus, the paper seeks to prove that the different foci of nostalgia influence the modality of the twentieth-century prose fiction, as exemplified in "To the Lighthouse" by Virginia Woolf and "The Go-Between" by L. P. Hartley.

Keywords: *reflective* nostalgia, *nostos*, *algos*, elegiac mode, pastoral mode

INTRODUCTION

The mode of a nostalgia for past happiness is central in contemporary accounts of earlier epochs. In contrast to the near past, easily accessible thanks to technological advances, the distant past has recently lost much of its historical objectivity (Lowenthal 2015, 14). However, the memories of distant past have acquired a temporal dimension which invites and accepts the application of an enhancing filter, namely that of nostalgia. The TV series, “Downton Abbey” (first aired in 2010), or the 2008 television adaptation of Evelyn Waugh’s “Brideshead Revisited”, both of which had high viewer numbers, may serve as convincing examples of a nostalgic revival of interest in the late-Victorian and Edwardian England.¹

Though not free from nostalgic yearning, the first half of the twentieth century was more realistic about the Edwardians: despite their favourable rendition of the past (Edwards in Carle et al. 2018, 15–30), the inter-war recollections of Britain at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are not as ostentatiously nostalgic as recent productions. Obviously, the popular, idealized, literary image of king Edward’s VII reign takes its origin in the historical and social changes; as a WWI pre-war period, it quite naturally assumed the quality of a time of peace and harmony in the accounts following WWI. Triggered by harsh living conditions in the WWI post-war world, as well as by the atrocities witnessed and memorized, the nostalgic structure of public rhetoric became a visible token of the longing for the Edwardian decade. Carle, Shaw, and Shaw argue that this period was generally envisaged as a version of a garden party (Carle et al. 2018, 3ff). Furthermore, in numerous texts written after WWI, the Edwardian era in Britain is recollected in an idealizing manner that features the time as a “mythicised version [...] of summer” (Edwards in Carle et al. 2018, 27).² However, although it sounds rather an oxymoron, their nostalgia does not preclude provocative

¹ See also Angela Piccini’s “A Survey of Heritage Television Viewing Figures” referred to in: Lowenthal, D. (2015), 103. Consider the success of a post-humorous work by Edith Holden, “The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady”, first published 1977.

² For an analysis of the trope of the summertime and the pastoral convention in modern prose fiction, see Wanitzek, L. (2014), in: Fludernik, M. and Nandi, M., 252–256.

and critical undertones. Consequently, an examination of the nature of nostalgia in selected twentieth-century literary accounts of Britain before WWI seems worthwhile. The aim of the article is to delineate and analyze the nostalgic interface in two novels memorizing a WWI pre-war period recalled as a time of peace and happiness, namely “To the Lighthouse” by Virginia Woolf and “The Go-Between” by L. P. Hartley. The former offers a re-consideration of late-Victorian and Edwardian childhood and adolescence, whereas the latter is a fictional account of a seemingly idyllic Edwardian childhood as remembered by the elderly protagonist. Similar at first glance, the accounts diverge in terms of their scopes and modes deployed: while Woolf’s memories are focused on complex relations within the family, Hartley’s view is broader as the recollected past serves as a commentary upon the issues of social belonging and cross-class interactions. Likewise, the nostalgic mode in “To the Lighthouse” and “The Go-Between” is idiosyncratic in both cases. While in the former nostalgia is devoid of Arcadian idyllicism and is centred around aspects of *algos* [pain], in the latter the nostalgic mode is enriched by pastoral nuances. Dissimilar as they are, both renditions actually debunk the myth of the golden era of WWI pre-war England. In the following sections I first explore the etymology of nostalgia as well as its application in the social context. Then, I identify the points of intersection between memories and nostalgia in the processes of remembering; in doing so, I particularly focus on the mode of *reflective* nostalgia as defined by Svetlana Boym. Finally, I apply the theoretical outline in my reading of “To the Lighthouse” and “The Go-Between”, respectively. I argue that while in the former *reflective* nostalgia is deployed in its elegiac inflection, in the latter the concept of a *nostos* favours an intertwinement of the modes of *reflective* nostalgia and pastoral.

NOSTALGIA: ETYMOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

Linguistically, nostalgia is a quite recent phenomenon: it entered the European vocabularies no earlier than 1688, when a Swiss medical student, Johannes Hofer, coined a term which originally denoted a pathological phenomenon of *nostalgia*. In his “Dissertatio medica de nostalgia, oder Heimweh” (1688),³ Hofer described an

³ The year of Hofer’s publication has caused confusion as some copies, including the one I have consulted, are dated to 1678 while the proper date of the original publication is 1688. More detail in: Dodman, T. (2018), 41–44.

extreme longing for one's home which he found a curable disease. A closer look at the original title page shows that the novelty of Hofer's research is marked by a curious mixture of Latin, Greek, and German in the manuscript. The introduction of a Greek concept, *nostalgia*, into a Latin title must have indicated a terminological shortage to describe a phenomenon which is still difficult to categorize (Shaw and Chase 1989, 2). To be more precise, Hofer, then a young student, availed himself of a German equivalent which he translated into Greek as a capitalized ΝΟΣΤΑΛΓΙΑ [*nostalgia*]. In the second chapter of the "Dissertatio", Hofer introduces the term as "composed of two sounds, the one of which is *Nostos*, return to the native land; the other, *Algos*, signifies suffering or grief" (Hofer in Illbruck 2012, 5).⁴ To the physician dealing with a mysterious disease affecting the brain, nostalgia appeared a rare affliction of disordered imagination ["*imaginatio laesa*"] undermined by the mental projections of one's missing home.⁵ In his recent examination of Hofer's original dissertation, Illbruck identifies four stages of the condition, among which, allegedly, it was only in the first stage that the pain [*algos*] was registered by the patient who created images of home in his/her mind; by contrast, the other stages were believed to induce exhaustion and apparent indifference to the stimuli to the real world, which was believed potentially fatal (Illbruck 2012, 63). Thus, the semantic charge of Hofer's linguistic compound, i.e. *nostalgia*, was merely descriptive of the first stage of the described phenomenon, which became a probable source of his doubts as to the formal legitimacy of the coined term.⁶

Although today nostalgia has become de-medicalized, Hofer's academic diligence in delineating its symptoms and explaining the etymology still attracts academic attention (Illbruck 2012, 5–30, 61–77; Dodman 2018, 16–43). Considered from a comparative literary

⁴ In the 1678 copy, which is stored in the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, Poland, the fragment reads as follows: "[...] remque explicandam praecisius designans, quam Nostalgias vocabolum, origine graecum, & quidem duabus ex vocibus compositum, quorum alterum Nosos [sic] Reditum in Partiam, alterum algos dolorem aut tristiam significat" – italics and capitalization original; the Greek words are inserted in Greek characters; the comparative form suggests linguistic meticulousness. See Hofer, J. (1678) [sic], 5.

⁵ J. Hofer formulates a hypothesis that the images of real objects are rendered in the brain in form of a motion of spirits, which he calls "spiritus animales" (Hofer 1678, 6).

⁶ In his "Dissertatio", J. Hofer directly invites other physicians to term the phenomenon differently; he even suggests *Nosimania* and *Filopatridomania*, both inserted in Greek characters within a Latin text (Hofer 1678, 5).

angle, it seems plausible to assume that Hofer's search for a proper term was influenced by the works of ancient, canonical authors. As a matter of fact, the meaning of both early-modern constituents, that is *nostos* [the return] and *algos* [pain], is consistent with their classical, linguistic usage. Arguably, the first description of a soldier suffering from pangs of anxiety and a nostalgic longing for his abandoned homeland is to be found in the "Odyssey", in Book V: it opens with Athena's words of sympathy to Odysseus who, held captive on Calypso's island, bemoans his plight with much pain.⁷ Even if the word *nostos* [the return] is not used in Athena's speech, it does appear later in Book V in an analogical description of the hero by the nymph, Calypso: she approaches Odysseus, who is sitting on the shore, lamenting the impossibility of his return. The Homeric "narrative of return" (Su 2005, 1) is perfectly consistent with the implied semantics of the modern coinage, i.e. *nost-algia*. Thus, the inferred, modern neologism stands in conformity with the classical, linguistic record of both the components. *Nostalgia* legitimately indicates psychosomatic disorders experienced in a distant corner of the world when the speaker acutely feels the absence from his/her home. However, as Svetlana Boym rightly argues, the semantic charge of Odysseus' *nostos* implied a mythical character insofar as its execution was a part of a mythical ritual (Boym 2001, 7–8); by contrast, modern nostalgia connotes the feeling of irrecoverable loss and the impossibility of a mythical return (Boym 2001, 8). By the beginning of the twentieth century, nostalgia had indeed become a modal tool to express a longing for a return to a destination that had become no longer approachable due to the radical changes in the conception of time and space brought by modernity.

NOSTALGIA: SOCIAL CONTEXT

From the historical perspective, the experience of war appears a major factor that proved conducive to the spread of nostalgic feelings in Europe. When describing the suffering of his patients in the late seventeenth century, Hofer did not initially emphasize the fact that they were soldiers sent to serve in the army far away from home. As some scholars argue (Dodman 2018, 41–42), the reasons might be personal: since he was concerned about the well-being of his fellow citizens, the doctor evaded any official reference to a military conflict

⁷ Arguably, in order to emphasize the acuteness of pain, Homer uses the plural form of *algos*, i.e. *algea*.

in the area of Moulhousen, where he then lived. In addition, the reason for disregarding the potential imminence of war in his medical diagnosis seems to be the adopted angle of examination: as Illbruck puts it, “nostalgia, for Hofer, [was] an imaginative appetite which, lacking that which it desires, turns upon itself, seeking solace in the established supply of the brain’s imagination only” (Illbruck 2012, 39). Unresponsive to reality, Hofer’s patients were believed to concentrate exclusively on the individual images reproduced in their brains; in fact, Hofer described nostalgia as a symptom of an afflicted imagination, i.e. “*symptoma imaginationis laesae*” (Hofer 1678 [sic], 6), which did not involve an act of recall. It may be hypothesized that Hofer approached nostalgia as an expression of a temporary, individual anxiety that disregarded wider, cultural context.

However, it is a fact that a surge of nostalgia in Europe coincides with the advent of modernity; moreover, it appears a by-product of the exposure to the destructive, “total” warfare (Rousseau in Bouce 1998, 126f). Although scholars have recently questioned the idea of the alleged “totality” of revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (Rothenberg 1978), it still remains a fact that the period from 1792–1815 was a theatre of war in which the feeling of nostalgia played a substantial role. As Dodman convincingly argues, “neither a ‘discovery’ of the scientific revolution nor an abstract Enlightenment concept (let alone a Romantic ‘mood’), nostalgia came into being upon the rapidly expanding and ever-more-gruesome battlefields of eighteenth-century Europe” (Dodman 2018, 45). A plausible inference is that nostalgia’s origins depend upon conflict and are, in fact, “rooted in pathology and the experience of war” (Hemmings in Clewell 2013, 37). This premise holds true for the political turmoil of WWI: the nostalgic twentieth-century accounts are founded upon the recollections about the WWI pre-war period. By the twentieth century the dynamics of nostalgia had shifted from private and individual to public and national context; at the same time, the term had lost its scientific connotation and became a productive phenomenon emerging in the fields of literature, psychology, and cultural studies. However, while it is agreed that nostalgia has a reactionary nature sensitive to social, economic, and cultural tensions (Su 2005, 121) – particularly dramatic and profound in the twentieth century – the appraisal of the phenomenon remains an unsettled issue: today the negative connotation of nostalgia as emblematic of outdated and backward tendencies interfaces with a set of positive associations rooted in tradition, continuity and integrity (Lowenthal 2015, 31–54).

MEMORIES AND *REFLECTIVE* NOSTALGIA

In his comprehensive, recently revised study about memory, “The Past Is a Foreign Country” (2015), David Lowenthal states that “the awareness of things past comes less from fact finding than from feeling time’s impact on traits and traces, words and deeds of both our precursors and ourselves” (Lowenthal 2015, 1). The present article is focused on the character of the awareness in its nostalgic inflection. However, although hypothetically nostalgia and memory seem similarly involved in the processes of remembering, cultural critics draw a distinct line of division between them and dismiss nostalgia as politicized and biased. As John Su observes, some critics argue that “nostalgia signifies inauthentic and commodified experiences inculcated by capitalist or nationalist interests” (Su 2005, 2). Such a dismissal, Su further argues, “occlude[s] crucial aspects of contemporary Anglophone literature” (Su 2005, 2). This article examines one of the aspects, namely the nostalgic inflection of childhood memories which cannot be dismissed as insubstantial or redundant. I wish to argue that nostalgia plays a significant role in both novels and their *reflective* character helps formulate a literary critique of the family and society on the cusp of a new era.

Since like nostalgia,⁸ memories are not uniform in nature, my analysis merely addresses a certain sub-kind of nostalgic memories. According to Lowenthal, memories can be subdivided into several kinds, among which he lists habit, recall, memento, or reverie (2015, 305–310); obviously, not all of them are imbued with nostalgia. The scholar asserts that “memories occupy a hierarchy of habit, recall, and memento” (Lowenthal 2015, 306). He further explains that while habitual memory is focused on facts and past acts, recall centres around “past occurrences and states of being,” and, finally, mementoes form a selection of “few reminders” (Lowenthal 2015, 306). The taxonomy does not include the final category discussed in this context, i.e. reverie, which Lowenthal classifies separately as a subdivision highlighting remembered feelings rather than facts. It seems that it is mainly in mementoes and reveries that nostalgia surfaces since, as Lowenthal puts it, “contemplative musing elicits explicit but hazily dreamlike bygone scenes” (2015, 307).

⁸ Consider S. Boym’s differentiation between *reflective* and *restorative* nostalgia as described in “The Future of Nostalgia”, 1–56. See also F. Davis’s typology of First-Order, Second-Order, and Third-Order Nostalgia in “Yearning for Yesterday. A Sociology of Nostalgia”, 17–29.

This paper concentrates on two novels whose narrative frames involve childhood recollections rendered from the vantage point of an adult speaker and modified through the mode of nostalgia. The point of convergence between the novels is the WWI pre-war setting and the post-war perspective of the protagonist.⁹ Not only are both “To the Lighthouse” and “The Go-Between” framed as novels pivoted about a re-consideration of past bonds and emotions, but they may be received as examples of what Svetlana Boym termed *reflective* nostalgia (2001). The preliminary description of the phenomenon in *The Future of Nostalgia* reads as follows: “Reflective nostalgia is more concerned with historical and individual time, with the irrevocability of the past and human finitude. *Re-flection* suggests new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis. The focus here is not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the meditation on history and passage of time” (Boym 2001, 49).

In the context of the present article, the issue of duration and the passage of time seems particularly significant as *reflective* nostalgia promotes a prolonged reflection on the past. This reflection either seems to involve, and indeed highlight, the speaker’s heartstrings in literary texts which thematize pain [*algos*], or consists in a mental return [*nostos*] to a by-gone relation, place, or moment. Hence, in both novels the past is approached and recalled in a manner that invites contemplation, even though the contemplation might be painful and distressing. A closer analysis of “To the Lighthouse” and “The Go-Between” reveals that the nature of their nostalgic angle diverges in tone and mode. In the former it shapes the topography of personal recollections, whereas in the latter the memories of the protagonist are interwoven with images partaking in common memory. Thus, *reflective* nostalgia deployed in “The Go-Between” creates space for a critique which concerns the individual as well members of a community. This is possible because, as Boym states, *reflective* nostalgia may be deployed against “shared social frameworks of memory” which serve as “common landmarks of everyday life” against which personal recollections are fanned (Boym 2001, 52–53). While overlapping, both individual and collective memories incorporate voices of social critique which, unlike those preserved within national memory, are open to multiple lines of narration.

⁹ “To the Lighthouse” also includes passages written from the child’s perspective, which is beyond the scope of this article. For an extensive analysis of the issue, please, consult the 2018 article of N. Salmose, entitled “‘A Past That Has Never Been Present’: The Literary Experience of Childhood and Nostalgia, *passim*.”

ALGOS AND REFLECTIVE NOSTALGIA IN "TO THE LIGHTHOUSE"

Woolf once admitted that "To the Lighthouse" was her most autobiographical novel, in which she re-examined the complicated relationship between her parents (Woolf 1985, 108). The novel thematises the loss of the mother as acutely experienced in a place of former happiness – a holiday house at the seaside where the family, together with their friends, enjoy the summer. The perspective that governs the discourse in Parts 2 and 3 in "To the Lighthouse" is that of a backward glance, with the recollections of order and routine in Part 1 accentuating the chaos and loss in the subsequent sections of the novel. Consequently, the feeling of acute longing, which generates *algos* [pain], is triggered by reminiscences of a certain place re-imagined at a certain moment in time.

I wish to argue that in "To the Lighthouse" the account of a summer holiday at the WWI pre-war English seaside, in fact, deploys Boym's *reflective* nostalgia in its elegiac inflection: the recalled childhood is devoid of pastoral traits, and instead the novel resonates with pain, i.e. *algos*, felt at the realization of past happiness. This kind of nostalgia is not idealistic; neither does it simplify past events. On the contrary, it formulates provocative questions about the condition of things past while highlighting the sense of loss. According to Boym, since the subdivision of nostalgia is not concentrated on the potentiality of a re-construction of the past, *reflective* nostalgia in this case "thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately" (Boym 2001, XVIII; emphasis original). Focused on *algia*, "To the Lighthouse" exemplifies this kind of nostalgia discourse, which chimes in with the elegiac mode which shapes it.

The feeling of loss in "To the Lighthouse" is transmitted through both images and rhetoric. The portrait of a late-Victorian family on holiday – a premise which draws, at least formally, on the Victorian portraiture tradition¹⁰ – inspired by the author's childhood recollections, is sketched both figuratively and literally: in the opening scenes, Mrs. Ramsay sits at the window as a model for a picture being painted

¹⁰ The interface of the arts and literature certainly deserves a detailed examination which is beyond the scope of the present article. More on the Victorian revival of interest in the art of literary portraits see: Iser, W. (2010), 6–14; 129–155. Cf. also a PhD dissertation entitled "The Ekphrastic Phantastic: Gazing at Magic Portraits in Victorian Fiction" by D. M. Manion.

by Lily Briscoe. The plot reveals numerous fractures in the portrait of the family and the relations between its members. By virtue of its mode, *reflective* nostalgia, it invites and skilfully employs literary forms and modes which trigger powerful emotions in the readers: pathos enhancing satirical derision, on the one hand, and melancholy accentuating elegiac mourning, on the other. Contradictory in mood, the satirical fragments dedicated to the father figure, Mr. Ramsay, do intertwine with melancholy evoked by the recollections of the beloved mother; the result is a convincing account of family life at the turn of the centuries.

Arguably, it comes as no surprise that nostalgia and irony intertwine in the novel which is pivoted around loss. It is worth noting that satirical irony in the fragments depicting the quick-tempered *pater familias* is more than a mere vehicle of criticism towards the long-standing patriarchal culture: it is a means of the neutralization of the nostalgic longing for the past (Lowenthal 2015, 141); as Lowenthal asserts, “neutralizing its relics tames the past” (2015, 140). Recalled in mementoes, the figure of the father in “To the Lighthouse” loses its lasting, overbearing potency due to the satirical mode with which these memories are imbued.

By contrast, the *mater familias*, Mrs. Ramsay, never becomes a butt for ridicule or mockery. The fragments centred on the mother assume a different mode: they represent nostalgia conflated with melancholy. With an emphasis on her beauty, in the first part of “To the Lighthouse”, Mrs. Ramsay seems to personify the Greek idea of *kalokagathia*,¹¹ i.e. outward and inner beauty combined with wisdom and a noble character (Kulesza 1991, 320). Mrs. Ramsay is portrayed as the unappointed and yet the undisputed master, able to establish order within an otherwise unstable family. Part 1 of “To the Lighthouse” emphatically closes with the sentence “For she [Mrs. Ramsay] had triumphed again” (Woolf 2002, 89), which directly voices what formerly has been merely implied. The next two sections of the novel emphasize this line of argument by creating images of a dilapidated house and a family paralyzed by several deaths. Conducive

¹¹ *The Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* states that the adjective *kalos* [beautiful] was often combined with *agathos* [good] and formed the compound noun, *kalokagathos* [of a beautiful mind, body, and noble descent]. Cf. Pantelia, M., Berkowitz, L., Squitier, K. A. (eds.) [2001] “Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: Online Canon of Greek Authors and Works.” University of California. Web. 25. Jan. 2019. Aristotle writes about the notion of *kalokagathia* [the virtue consisting in a beautiful mind, body, and noble descent] in the “Eudemian Ethics” VIII (1248b).

to the feeling of nostalgia for the past, the war looms in the background: the shock induced by the experiences of the war is not conspicuous but may be inferred from a realization of lack and loss or, disconcertingly, of the presence of a scarf which used to be worn by a particular individual. If intended, nostalgia is a resultant reaction to the view of rooms and spaces once filled with life, or of objects once frequently used, by virtue of the symbolism of absence and negation.

As a prose elegy, "To the Lighthouse" repeatedly strikes a melancholy note since a sense of transience and the irreversible process of change feature in the narrative. This is seen first, in melancholy reflections on the march of time which "had become, she [Minta] knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past" (Woolf 2002, 80), and second, as a consequence of intertextual references such as the nostalgic poem by Charles Elton, *Luriana Lurilee*. The abrupt break with the former life is also suggested by the unexpected shortness of Part 2 which stands in marked contrast to the extensive Part 1. Finally, loss and transience are suggested by means of symbolic objects such as an empty, decaying home or uninhabited rooms. As Lusty observes, the method of describing abandoned places and rooms characterizes Woolf's post-war fiction, in which she "mimics the use of interiors as repositories of communal memory" (Lusty 2018, 93). In "To the Lighthouse" it also activates individual memory. The past-bias is consistent with the nature of melancholic feelings which, according to Boym, while often overlapping with nostalgic emotions, remain fixated on the past and incapable of embracing the present. By contrast, nostalgia devoid of melancholy allows the individual to concentrate, even if indirectly, on progress and modernity (Boym 2001, 358). Focused on the past, the novel is centred on the psychological aspects of human relations – thus, melancholy evades references to the present moment. As a result, the backward glance, melancholic and reflective, becomes the leading mode in a narrative which is conceived as a prose elegy – an expression of lament for Mrs. Ramsay.

NOSTOS AND REFLECTIVE NOSTALGIA IN "THE GO-BETWEEN"

Set in the countryside at the threshold of the Edwardian era, "The Go-Between" features the major events in the summer of 1900 which involve relations between representatives of the upper and lower classes. The illicit, across-class love affair ends in the tragic death of

the protagonist's adult friend, Ted. On an individual level, Ted's death traumatizes a twelve-year-old boy, Leo,¹² whose development to maturity is stalled as a result. On the communal level, the suicide is a symbol of Ted's social failure in a community of rigid class division and, by extension, of the malfunctioning of an Edwardian social system on the cusp of weakening in the aftermath of WWI.

The structure of "The Go-Between" invites nostalgia: the novel is framed against memories recollected and critically assessed by an elderly protagonist, Lionel. In Chapter 2 he thus describes the process of a re-discovery of his repressed past:

"To my mind's eyes, my buried memories of Bradham Hall are like effects of chiaroscuro, patches of light and dark: it is only with an effort that I can see them in terms of colour. There are things I know, though I don't know how I know them, and things that I remember. Certain things are established in my mind as facts, but no picture attaches to them; on the other hand, there are pictures unverified by any fact which recur obsessively, like the landscape of a dream." (Hartley 1953, 28)

The citation seems a literary application of Lowenthal's categories furnished above: habit, recall, memento, and reverie concur to deliver a coherent image of the past. While recalling the past, Lionel sets out on a trip to a country seat, Bradham Hall, in which he, as a matter of fact, spent the memorable summer of 1900. The physical movement to the place is accompanied by a simultaneous mental journey back to the beginning of the twentieth century, which sketches a "landscape of a dream" in his mind. Such a frame allows for both a critical reflection on the recollected, popular image of Britain at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as on Lionel's individual past. Thus, the act of a *nostos* [a return], performed in reality and also in one's mind, becomes the pivot around which the novel is set. I wish to argue that the *nostos* in "The Go-Between" favours an intertwining of the modes of nostalgia and pastoral.

As indicated, in the novel the interface between nostalgia and pastoral becomes particularly visible in the portrait of Britain at the threshold of a new century. In the Prologue Lionel recalls a special atmosphere of 1900 that governed the public discourse: back in 1900 the British hoped for a great century yet to come. Immersed in his memories, Lionel also remembers himself impatiently waiting

¹² For transparency, in the article I refer to the adolescent boy as Leo and to the elderly protagonist as Lionel.

on “the dawn of a Golden Age [i.e. 1900]” (Hartley 1953, 8), a phrase which reads pastoral and evokes idyllic connotations.¹³ A famous pastoral theorist, Peter V. Marinelli observes that the myth of the Golden Age accommodates “the human creature’s universal remembrance of a better time” (Marinelli 1971, 15), that is evokes a temporality registered as definitively lost. Since the famous literary accounts created by Hesiod or Ovid picture the Golden Age as a period of perfect happiness, harmony and balance, such a description of the 1900 connotes peace and prosperity. However, it is worthwhile to note that Hartley applies the topos of the Golden Age in an idiosyncratic way, as it appertains to both the past and the future. In “The Go-Between” the myth of the Golden Age is deployed in a double-edged manner: on the one hand, along the lines of the pastoral convention, it is pictured by the protagonist who retrieves its image from the realm of past experience; yet, on the other hand, it forms a part of anticipatory expectation of a hoped-for future, a future the British were looking forward to back then in 1900. Consequently, heavy with expectation, the recalled atmosphere of the turn of the centuries is shaped by unique, distinctly pastoral traits which, intensified by the weight of memories, are both nostalgic and pastoral in character.

If examined from the angle of the cultural anthropologist, the pastoral trope of a country seat visited during summer holiday¹⁴ may partake of common national memory. According to Boym, national memory “tends to make a single teleological plot” (Boym 2001, 53), which in “The Go-Between” is encapsulated in the image of the Edwardian country estate. It is so because, Su argues, the country house has become “a central icon of British heritage in the post-war era because its presence belies the cultural turbulence” (Su 2005, 121); in “The Go-Between” the turbulence occurs both on the national level, since the protagonist has lived through WWI and WWII, and on the individual level as he was exposed to a traumatic experience

¹³ The myth of the ages of man originated with Hesiod’s “Works and Days” which features five ages of humanity, the first being the Golden Age (vv. 109–201). No mention of summertime is given in the lines, although it may be inferred from the references to a benign nature and peace among the Olympians under Cronos. Ovid gives his description of the ages of man in “Metamorphoses”. He only lists four ages believed to open with the Golden Age.

¹⁴ A similar narrative frame is applied in “The Return of the Soldier” by R. West, “Brideshead Revisited” by E. W., or “A Month in the Country” by J. L. Carr.

during his stay in Bradham Hall. The initial, pastoral quality of Lionel's memories participates in the popular image of the Edwardian country estate cherished by the wider public: the portrayal of a country site, Bradham Hall, endorses the literary trope of the English country houses which form part of national heritage (Wanitzek in Fludernik and Nandi 2014, 269). As Leonie Wanitzek posits, in twentieth-century literature the topos of the English summer often converges with the pastoral topos of a country retreat recollected and pondered as a version of temporary haven (Wanitzek in Fludernik and Nandi 2014, 253–255). Certainly, "The Go-Between" utilizes the topos of a pastoral retreat which, clear in the opening chapters, is overruled in the final passages of the novel. I wish to argue that the rejection of the implied, idyllic quality of the English countryside at the turn of the centuries as featured in "The Go-Between" results from the *reflective* nature of the mode of nostalgia with which the pastoral is intertwined. While Lionel reflects on himself as a quasi-Arcadian youth re-imagined at the beginning of his stay in Bradham Hall, he rejects the presumed idyllic simplicity, with which the site seemed to have welcomed his arrival, as elusive and deceitful. Consequently, the inference is that the deception was bound to occur as the naivety of the adolescent boy clashed with the sophisticated duplicity of the adults belonging to the privileged class in 1900. The pastoral mode proves an effective tool to expose the impossibility of entering an open dialogue between the representatives of different social classes. The issue of class division generates the essential difference between both modes applied in "The Go-Between": while the pastoral presumes and promotes a possibility of cross-class, effective communication (Empson 1974, 3–27), class-related nostalgia often preserves and solidifies class antagonism. According to O'Brien, the antagonism becomes particularly visible when discussing the image of the British country house. The critic claims: "Often nostalgia and elitism imbue the concept of the country house, in both real life and literature: estates seemed to exemplify a golden age with better values and morals, and they belonged exclusively to a certain class of people" (O'Brien 2013, 19). *Reflective* nostalgia applied to "The Go-Between" questions the assumed golden-age quality of the Edwardian society and debunks the myth of their alleged high morals and values. While Lionel reflects on the past, he gradually strips the Edwardians of the presumed, high ethical and moral standards ascribed to them in the public discourse after WWII; moreover, I wish to argue, that the pastoral tropes such as that of a safe country retreat, presumed social equality, or the bliss of summertime help him expose the faults and

charges with a particular harshness. Thus, although the opening of the novel reads as an introduction into re-created pastoral space, the spell is utterly broken in the Epilogue. The Arcadian myth is exploded in a conversation with Marian, a young woman remembered as an Arcadian role-model; there the popular, idealizing image of the Edwardian past, as recalled by the protagonist, is debarred from having idyllic characteristics. In consequence, the mode of nostalgia in "The Go-Between" initially informed by the pastoral mode is questioned and rejected in the denouement. Characteristic of *reflective* nostalgia, the potential of a reflective insight is presented in a systematic critique of the idealized image of the Edwardian epoch.

As indicated above, in "The Go-Between" the pastoral interface shapes *reflective* nostalgia also on the individual level: Lionel conducts a *reflective* analysis of himself as remembered back in 1900. Also, in this case, the initial pastoralism, which often shapes the personal recollections of one's childhood, is finally dissipated. In "The Go-Between" the memories, which serve as a material of self-inquiry, are evoked with the help of an object, a diary from the year 1900. Thus, re-discovered after many decades, the diary becomes a symbolic trigger of memories and recollections. Together with other symbols such as the plant, *belladonna atropos*, or Leo's evocative nickname, *Mercury*, the diary is a tangible link to the past: the sight and feel of it releases (in)voluntary childhood memories just as the taste of a cake dipped in tea does in Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past". The act of re-entering the password of the secret diary of 1900 symbolically grants access to his childhood through a gate which, if opened, allows for a *nostos* to a crucial moment of the past. As far as the pastoral convention is concerned, Hartley's nostalgic vision initially features the protagonist as a pastoral hero who recollects his past experiences: poised on the edge between the present and the past, the nostalgic frame of the novel explores the boundaries of what Susan Snyder terms *temporal* pastoral, i.e. a past recalled as a period of lost happiness and wholeness (Snyder 1998, 17f and 187). This aspect puts "The Go-Between" and "To the Lighthouse" on a divergent footing: although both examine memories of one's childhood lived at the turn of the centuries, the former focuses on the interactions within a family as recollected episodes whereas the latter, by virtue of the deployment of *reflective* nostalgia, traces the effects of a disastrous event on a child's personality.

CONCLUSION

The act of remembering is a literary premise in the case of both "To the Lighthouse" and "The Go-Between", yet the novels diverge in their applications of nostalgia and uses of the concepts of *nostos* and *algos*. While Woolf is nostalgic about past relations, she is neither nostalgic nor idealizing about the recalled late-Victorian and Edwardian times; these she satirically portrays by emphasizing the fissures in the widely propagated, popular picture of the family. As nostalgia depends on its perspective, Woolf's nostalgia highlights *algos* which is felt by those who remember and cherish the memory of the dear deceased, even if they cast a critical eye to the far-from-ideal past. Preoccupied with *algos*, the mode of nostalgia converges with the elegy.

Unlike "To the Lighthouse", "The Go-Between" includes a social critique of the community. This is possible thanks to the pastoral inflection of its *reflective* nostalgia. Drawing heavily upon the collective image of Edwardian England, which is nostalgically idealized, the novelist gradually strips it of its glamour, mythical greatness and the sheen of the Golden Age. The picture is tinged with *reflective* nostalgia which "dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from contradictions of modernity" (Boym 2001, XVIII). Hartley is sensitive to the ambivalences; as Anne Mulkeen observes, "Hartley is an explorer of our own age, not a gentle fabler of the past" (Mulkeen 1974, 10).

Featuring social interaction, Hartley's perspective in "The Go-Between" is both wider than in "To the Lighthouse", as it outlines a social panorama, and yet narrower, as it features the arrested development of an adolescent boy. At the same time, Hartley also focuses on the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a period in which visible signs of progress and a readiness for modifications clash with regressive social norms. Like Woolf's, Hartley's nostalgia is *reflective*: it delineates and considers the relaxation of moral norms. Nonetheless, Hartley's deployment of the mode diverges from that of Woolf in its intense concentration on the act of *nostos*; even if portrayed as disastrous in the life of an individual, *algos* seems secondary in "The Go-Between". The reallocation of the main focus of nostalgia is accounted for by the divergent scopes of both novels, as well as by the modal affiliation: while "To the Lighthouse" is a prose elegy, "The Go-Between" endorses the tradition of the pastoral. Hartley's concentration on the literary viability of *nostos* constructs a different nostalgic frame to the plot. Although the novel also repre-

sents *reflective* nostalgia, its workings draw heavily on the pastoral legacy which, clashing with the facts, expose the dangers of idealization.

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