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Bakalářská práce

Analýza Deptfordské trilogie  
od Robertsona Daviese  
An Analysis of The Deptford Trilogy  
by Robrtson Davies

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### **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis undertakes an analysis of *The Deptford Trilogy* by the contemporary Canadian author Robertson Davies (1913 - 1995). It explores the main protagonists and their lives. It focuses on crime and evil, as well as on psychological effects, especially Jungian psychoanalysis, within the trilogy. While focusing on the main themes such topics as mental illness and social norms, behaviour and faith are touched as well. The thesis further searches for autobiographical elements in the trilogy and the entities by which the author was most influenced. It underscores the importance of the trilogy for Canadian literature in general.

### **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce analyzuje *Deptfordskou trilogii* od Robertsona Daviese (1913 - 1995), současného kanadského spisovatele. Předmětem rozboru jsou hlavní protagonisté a jejich život. Práce se v rámci trilogie zaměřuje na zločin a zlo, stejně tak jako na psychologické efekty, obzvláště Jungovu psychoanalýzu. Při zkoumání hlavních témat, jsou zároveň nastíněna témata duševního onemocnění a sociální normy, chování a víra. Práce dále prozkoumává autobiografické prvky vyskytující se v trilogii a prvky, jimiž byl autor ponejvíce ovlivněn. Je zde také podtržen význam této trilogie v celé kanadské literatuře.

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## 1 Preface

I have chosen this Bachelor Thesis topic as the writer Robertson Davies strongly pulled my attention when introduced to us during the lessons in Canadian literature. This specific kind of literature is little known within Czech readers and is infrequently taught within the Czech educational system. During our basic and high-school education students get relatively standard readings of English and American literature and perhaps some in Irish literature. On the edge of the education syllable (if included at all) are Australian and Canadian literatures and culture. Those last mentioned usually wholly depend on secondary school teachers' interest and preferences. Very often, if the Canadian items are touched at all, they are often mixed with American ones – as we usually do not distinguish between America as the North America continent and America as the United States of America.

I found reading Davis' first novel interesting. I was glad that while working on this thesis I could discover that one of his many novels was re-issued in the Czech language. It is the novel *What's Bred in the Bone*, first published in Canada in 1985 and in Czech translation in 1994. In the same year *Fifth Business* was also first published in Czech by the publishing house Sfinga. Translated by Zuzana Kulhánková under the Czech title *Pátá postava*, it has not been re-issued yet.

Some libraries erroneously consider this book as American and not Canadian literature and do not distinguish between the two, just as they often do not distinguish between Irish and English literature.

Another point which I find very bewildering is neither many libraries nor book shops do not further distinguish between Robertson Davies and Rodney Davies. Both are writers on striking topic and both are interesting in death generally, but of different kinds and from different

points of view. Whilst the English writer Rodney Davies has described in his books nonfiction experiences of people who were buried alive and undertakes and examines the topic from historical and scientific point of view, the Canadian novel writer Robertson Davies was a fiction writer and is often classified as the writer of magic realism and fiction.

That is why the aim of my heart is to point at a writer who is worthy to be read as an outstanding one and who by his writing has brought the literary fame to his home country Canada even without any conscious awareness of doing it so. In the autumn of 2013 Canada gained even more fame when Alice Munro, a very successful short story writer, won the Nobel Prize in literature.

## 2 Introduction

Davies wrote three sets of trilogies *The Salterton Trilogy*, *The Deptford Trilogy* and *The Cornish Trilogy* and two extra novels *Murther and Walking Spirit* which he devoted to his wife Brenda, the woman he had chosen for his lifelong friend (cf. Davies in Grant 1994: 219), and *The Cunning Man*, his very last one. Here we undergo the one which is known better than the others. *The Deptford Trilogy* consists of three volumes: *Fifth Business*, first published in 1970; *The Manticore*, 1972 and *World of Wonders*, 1975. These novels are strongly connected to one another; nevertheless they may be read separately. However, revealing the trilogy chronically as the volumes were first published by the author brings a greater thrill with unexpected links while at the same time the novels deeply explore the characters. Only the very last pages of the third volume free the tension that had been built up within *Fifth Business*. In *Manticore*, the burden of the story is inherited and its successor, the main protagonist, goes through the process of working through the past that his father bequeathed to him. *The Deptford Trilogy* is aptly depicted by Ryan Porter:

Each of the Deptford novels consists of the reminiscence of a successful man who spends his formative years in small-town Ontario: the narrative of *Fifth Business* consists of a letter Dunstan Ramsay has written to his former headmaster at Colborne College; *The Manticore* is largely made up of the writings and reminiscences of David Staunton while undergoing Jungian psychoanalysis; finally, *World of Wonders*, while narrated by Ramsay, is dominated by the voice of Magnus Eisengrim (Paul Dempster), a childhood resident of Deptford who was kidnapped by carnies at a very early age. [The]Deptford [Trilogy is] product of memory. (Porter 2011: 165)

In this way we can say that the three novels equal to three imperfect memories of three characters and three specific means of narrative methods. As *Fifth Business* and *World of Wonders* employ the outgoing scheme by the occasional use of the method of a letter and a film



shooting, *the Manticore* is in its whole focused on the inner method using psychoanalytical treatment.

In this trilogy Davies covers a big part of his own life-time as well as a big part of the period that historians call "*the short century*". The plot had started on December 27, 1908, only six years before the World War I broke out and five years before the writer was born. In this way he depicts the conflict in the tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the just-starting formation of new modernity. From his perspective, however, it was not clear what it would look like and what it would be about. In the subtext of the story Davies touches the dread of World War I trenches as well as the economical welfare of the 1920's Canada as well as the experience of the Great Depression of the 1930's followed by World War II. All this narration ends up in peaceful time of technological progress that is reflected in a film shooting. In retrospect of the main events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the writer does not include the Cold War at all. This may be due to fact that this event was not as keenly felt in Canada. From the narrator's point of view, the story starts at the point of his childhood, when he is a small-town lad at the age of 10 years and seven months and ends up somewhere in the time of the real writer's current time of his work on this trilogy, that means in the late 1960's (*Fifth Business* and *Manticore*) and very early 1970's (*World of Wonders*), when the narrator is a retired teacher. Dunstan Ramsay has moved to Europe to find the mystery and secret that had begun in his childhood, and to make a kind of reunion with the man whose birth much influenced his life.

The trilogy, especially *Fifth Business*, was significant with its function in Davies' life as well as in the whole Canadian literature. At the age of fifty-five the lifelong newspaper writer, theatre lover, the author of the *Salterton Trilogy*, an already settled professor and the Master of Massey College felt that his "best writing is still to come" (Davies in Grant 1994: 481). It was only *Fifth Business* that opened the door for Canadian novel

writing to enter the world, including the USA. Even though Davies had some problems with the editors acceptance at the beginning, the readers thought otherwise and “many Canadians began to accord Davies the status of a national treasure” (ibid: 518) since the trilogy has been issued.

Judith Skelton Grant calls Davies “a man of myth” which is reflected, among others, in the way he adopted the idea of writing *Fifth Business*. At the time of being the Master of Massey College and under the influence of reading Freud he paid much more attention to his dreams. In one of them a serpent told him about the necessity to write “the book he haven’t written yet” (cf. Grant 1994: 464). “Davies took this as a warning from his unconscious not to repeat himself, not to attempt pure family history, not to pursue others’ in preference to his own” (ibid).

The first novel soon extended into an unintended trilogy as Davies says:

It was never my intention to write a trilogy, or even to write the second book. It just happened. The story ran on, and required to be told. I have answered all enquiries about a trilogy with an assured No up to this time. But I have changed my mind. (Grant 1994: 505)

The rise of the trilogy was in this way a natural reaction, the fulfilment of a specific need of the story itself.

The whole work can be felt under the influence of Davies’ study of Carl Gustav Jung that resulted in Davies’ newly mastered ability to “speak with new frankness about his deepest convictions instead of masking them with humour or concealing them” (Grant 1994: 461).

### 3 Crime and Evil

In *The Deptford Trilogy* Davies depicts life as a space where it is difficult to distinguish or judge. To a great extent, in this life space of human being there mix acceptable standards with deeds and thinking that are much below or totally out of this standard. This way of viewing life comes out of Davies personal attitude and conviction that he feels about himself as

a person of strongly religious temperament, but when I say "religious" I mean immensely conscious of powers of which I can have only the dimmest apprehension, which operate by means that I cannot fathom, in directions which I would be a fool to call either good or bad. (Davies in Lucking 2000: 44)

Thus *The Deptford Trilogy* is full of crimes which appear at different levels. Even though there are many trespasses, there is only one proper police investigation. Although there is a great amount of trespassers, there is nobody to be sentenced by the law for their deeds. David Lucking therefore points to numbers of ambivalences in the trilogy. Davies somewhat underlines these ambivalences by creating the second book *The Manticore*. In it we get to know a successful lawyer to a great detail. But the point is not his career but his personal stubbornness and confusion. He has to cope with his personal situation as he who normally judges the crime meets crime in his own family and he turns out to be the one who is the most affected by it. On the contrary, in *World of Wonders* the reader follows the child victim of crime who turns into a world-wide famous figure.

Despite the number of unmistakable crimes and thrills depicted, the trilogy cannot be considered a pure crime novel in its whole. It wholly omits the character of the detective, for example, as one finds the kind of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. The main investigations Davies focused on consisted of one's soul.

### 3.1 The Connection of the Whole Trilogy

These books of the trilogy are linked with just one rock hidden in a snowball that was thrown on December 27, 1908.

...idea that a single event might, though circumscribed and seemingly trivial in itself, generate a maelstrom of infinitely ramifying consequences, and thereby become a catalyzing or even destructive influence in an incalculable number of individual lives... (Lucking 2000: 47)

Lucking further compares this particular snow ball with:

The conventional metaphor of a stone being cast into a pool and generating an endlessly proliferating series of ripples, though never explicitly invoked, [...] and in view of what this particular snowball contains might even have inspired it. (ibid)

The whole story works not only as ripples but also *snow ball effect*. It influences what is in the way and takes it with itself to produce even greater disaster. In this way of meaning the stone is being passed as a relay through the stories – its particular keeper in a time carries its burden and becomes the main member in this relay run of human souls.

The stone functions not only as a symbol of man of stone and a tough character but also of mental instability. Both of these are covered in the trilogy as Davies applies the former on Boyd Staunton and the later on Mrs Dempster. What is more, the character of Mrs Dempster functions as a parallel tie of her son Paul (Magnus Eisengrim), Boyd Staunton – her attacker and Dunstan Ramsay – her nurse.

To make the bounds among the triangle of the main protagonist stronger, Davies uses another not that obvious connection. For this purpose Davies implies the magic tool of the Brazen Head of Friar Bacon in the trilogy. The Head was great idea of Liesl, Magnus's manager, and was greatly supported by Dunstan Ramsay to be put in action (cf. Davies 2001: 198-199). It was the Head that finally announced the mystery of

Boyd Staunton's death. Even though the Head first appears towards the end of *Fifth Business*, its message is to be carried and researched from that moment within the subsequent books of the trilogy. In this way, this active support of placing the Head into Magnus' performance is one way how Ramsay, Boyd's lifelong friend, unconsciously participates the mystery of his death.

The snowball "anticipates the dynamics at work in *The Deptford Trilogy*" (Lucking 2000: 47). It works as the main dough whilst the Head works as the filling of a cake that Davies feeds his readers with.

### 3.2 The Crime of the Village

Deptford village is the core place where all main characters share as their birth place and mainly the place of their childhood. It is a typical small town with its conventions and stereotypes based on the nineteenth century morality and expectations. All the characters leave the place and never return. They all move "from [this] provincial setting to a globe one" (Jackson 2005: 101). It was not only the physical move but also the move of the stage of their mind. It was the step to get out of the rule of the officials, churches and ruling families (cf. Ibid: 102) to the rule of their own. All three characters become rulers of their lives. It is the step from modernity into the post-modernity.

Deptford is the place that splits Percy Boyd Staunton and Paul Dempster but after sixty years they are united as Boy Staunton and Magnus Eisengrim. It stresses their different social statuses and personalities but the same eagerness for wealthy and successful life. Here the reader watches two main transformations. One is of a wealthy parents' spoiled child into an egocentric entrepreneur and politician who builds up his enormous wealth and fame but with no taste for life. The other is of a

never accepted and in all ways neglected and misused child who later embarrasses his adult life in his egoism that he builds up around himself.

Davies does not write a common sweet story of the poor and the rich. He rather hits the point of a selfish, egocentric human heart that rises from different cases.

### 3.2.1 Empty Faith

Deptford is a traditionally Christian village of 500 subjects and 5 denominations. There is quite obvious difference of a true faith and trust and the kind of faith without trust. Yet there is an immense emphasis on moral law and duty with lack of sense of love or the ability of being subtle. This all has its roots in the type of Christian teaching and adopted style of life:

...what concerns the relation of body and soul the first Church and the Synagogue accepted a kind of Hellenistic-like way of thinking ("Plato's dualism, Stoicism and Hellenistic-Roman culture"). It is well known, that ancient and medieval Christian thinkers adopted Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical system and that is the way they considered their body and its manifestation as fleeting, sinful and wicked. (Dillard 2003: 248) [My own translation]

This way of thinking is adopted as well for sexuality as for other approaches of life. This was widespread till the early twentieth century. It is the way of devotion Comenius fought against. It misses a big part of blending purity and the fullness of life Jesus Christ is teaching about and a man has had the problem to understand and to embrace.

In contrary, the Deptfordians create a system of morals and approaches which they do endorse. Not to fit into their system means to be at the edge of the society or to be excluded. This attitudes lead to a kind of Christianity without Christ. Instead of the fullness of life it brings separation and cruelty. Instead of full leaning on Christ in personal lives,

it brings judgment on other people's lives. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:13). Deptford's judgementalism that replaces the faith leads to a cruelty that affects people lives to a great extent.

In this manner they do not bother to distinguish between a loose woman sexually and a single-minded lady. They are fast to adopt the quickest and shortest attitudes without any further interest in investigating the situation and any follow-up work with the doer of the crime. After their first effort of giving the help they soon become tired of it. One of the worst crimes that can be considered within the trilogy is passing adults' judgemental attitudes to their children who publically tortured Mrs Dempster with their dismissive public laughter. This altogether leads Mrs Dempster into a great deprivation and isolation so that she finally ended up in a mental hospital.

### **3.2.2 Fathers and Husbands**

The most alarming behaviour is depicted on Mrs Dempster's husband who from a great love to her at the beginning turns out to be hopeless. His hopelessness is followed by the beginning of his cruelty. He fully misses his task as a husband and father. Mr Dempster is shown as a father who is not able to accept his own child. At first he is shocked by the baby's appearance. At the same moment he proves to be incapable in joining in the process of saving his son's life from the first day. Later, when his son is kidnapped, he makes no attempt to search for him nor show feelings of being sorry and missing him.

Nowadays psychology knows well that a father's failure in his position opens the door to endangering his child to be more likely a future victim of a crime. In this way Mr and Mrs Dempster's child Paul (Magnus

Eisengrim) becomes abused and neglected within his own family. It is what nowadays psychology calls the Child Abuse and Neglect syndrome (CAN). This syndrome rises from his mother's mental illness and the father's inability to pass basic love and acceptance to his son. The child becomes vulnerable in his feelings and hungry for any small signs of positive responsiveness. This trust to be a trap for him and thus becomes a victim of SCA (Child Sexual Abuse).

Davies in this way points to a child's situation that today's psychologist, psychiatrist and NGOs fight against as it has been ever presented in societies. In *World of Wonders* we meet a couple of characters who are sympathetic to Paul but at the first decades of the twentieth century have no means to react on his behalf without endangering themselves.

Paul never meets his father no his mother again and never even gets the longing to do so. When he was told about his mother's fate, he showed no feelings. The question that arises here is how much he must have been hurt or stubborn for him to hold this kind of attitude.

Boyd Staunton is another example of a great failure in the father position which is anticipated from his parents' upbringing. As a result of the paternal failure of fathers, their sons, David Staunton and Magnus Eisengrim, lead their lives without becoming fathers by themselves. The tough childhood trained their sons, on one hand to be successful and overcome all kinds of obstacles they meet on their ways. On the other hand it sets them into the isolation and makes them impotent in the task of sharing their lives and passing it on to the new generation.

### **3.2.3 Urban and Rural Similarities in Attitudes**

Even though Dunstan tries hard, especially by volunteering himself into service for the First World War when he is under the age, he never gets



totally rid off the attitudes he acquired in Deptford. But on contrary he finds similarities in the cities and worldwide.

For example, he finds out that the hatred Europeans from cities cherished against the former German empire after the end of the World War I is the same kind of hatred people of small town Deptford expressed (cf. Porter 2011: 181).

Dunstan's [...] illusions of Deptford as a parochial complement or antitype to urban modernity rapidly dissolve upon his return to the town. Deptford, Dunstan's reminiscences suggest, is fully implicated in the economic, cultural, and martial forces that shape the globe, and it is hardly a home place within which the core of a cultural identity supposedly resides. (ibid: 180)

Here in Dunstan's feelings and life experience Davies intercepted the great shift of the world. The World War I somehow converged people from different backgrounds. Dunstan, in his late evaluation, compares the old fashion thinking depicting a village life as immoral "behind the lace curtain" but having "a rigid piety [...] in the street" with the urban areas:

Our village [...] was more varied in what it offered to the observer than people from bigger and more sophisticated places generally think, and if it had sins and follies and roughnesses, it also had much to show of virtue, dignity and even of nobility. (Davies 2011: 8)

Davies in this way highlights that this small-town conventions are more or less a stage of mind than a place of dwelling. This becomes obvious in the trilogy in experiencing the same kind of crimes, ignorance and egoism, notwithstanding the setting.

### 3.3 The Man without Face

The biggest challenge within the trilogy is Percy Boyd Staunton. Even though he is present only in *Fifth Business*, the influence of his life and the mystery of his death is the substance that is always present in the subtext in *The Manticore* and *World of Wonders*.

Boyd Staunton is an extremely tough man who never hesitates to reach the leading position and gain people and situations for his personal profit. In this way he does not hesitate to pursue the most beautiful girl of the village with the goal wearing her as a flower in his lapel, just to bring him the fame and glory. Over the course of years he finds out she is not suitable for the job of being his wife, and she becomes worn out trying to suit him. He escapes his husband's duties and does not take care for her. Thus as Boyd's wife she becomes deeply depressed.

Boyd is the kind of man who pushes people away from himself - his wife dies the way that puts a question mark whether her death was really his intention or if she had committed suicide. Even though physically the event appears like a suicide, mentally it was a murder. A few years later the same enigma arises over Boyd's death. His death is displayed as the biggest mystery to Canadian society within the plot and serves as the spice for the remainder of the trilogy. Boyd's son flies to England for his studies, later he summarizes it as: "I wanted to get away from Father and save my soul, insofar as I believed in such a thing. I suppose what I meant by my soul was my self-respect or my manhood" (Davies 1977: 196).

The core of Boyd's character is in his acquired kind of know-it-all attitude and his desire for wealth and political power. Even though he studied law, which is to be based on old Roman law, he never neither adopts nor longs for any kind of justice. Additionally, he does not adopt or long for inner beauty and astonishment that Greek philosophers considered the highest attributes of rulers. The only picture of

admiration he ever looks at as his idol was the Prince and later the King Edward VIII, the only English king who abdicated the throne and royal duties for his personal desires. It was the personal encounter Boyd had with the Crown Prince that had charmed him, but it was merely a glimpse of fame and power. Generally Boyd is the man who never marvels at anything, neither wonders or is astonished by pure life. On the contrary he always knows best. Plato says: "It is a philosopher who the astonishment belongs to; indeed, there is no other beginning of philosophy than this one" (Platon 1995: 29) [this Czech translation from the Greek was rendered into English by me]. Plato, in the book *Theaitétos*, recorded a Socratic dialogue in which Socrates contemplates what the difference is, if there is any, between knowledge and wisdom. He finds the answer in a s t o n i s h m e n t. Boyd is a man of knowledge; nevertheless he never adopts any wisdom. The mere knowledge and ambitions led him to be stubborn and do hard and cruel deeds of psychological torturing of his beloved. He never was able to accept his first wife in her fullness. He was not able to pass and share any loving attitude towards his children. All his deeds were led by his love for money and his ambition of belonging to Canadian high society. Boyd never went through the process of giving birth to a thought. Even though he came from a well situated family and received a good education, he never absorbed the habit of delivering deepness to which the democratic world has been called already by Socrates. In the world of wealth, Boyd was one of the richest and most influential men of Canada. Nevertheless, he was totally incompetent and infertile regarding the thoughts of life.

Jung sees the root of a stubborn old man in his total loss of anima. The question is whether Boyd ever had one. The way of life he adopted in his childhood became obvious after he crossed his middle age. "After reaching the mid-age of man's life, the permanent loss of anima means the decrease of vitality, elasticity and humanity" (Jung 1997: 184) [my

own translation]. Here is the connection to his childish mischief and the aftermaths which Boyd has never felt sorry about and never even contemplated about. His family never took care for the physically and mentally injured neighbour Mrs Dempster and never investigated what had happened. Boyd was never told by his parents what he had done wrong. His parents never let him carry any responsibility. Yet his accomplice Dunstan was otherwise.

Boyd never confessed any of his guilt even when he is told that he should. Brown described Boyd's attitude towards guilt: "[...] Staunton, a man without memory, living only in the present, has indeed forgotten the event and cannot understand the guilt that Ramsay expects him to feel" (Brown 1976: 355). Boyd never felt any kind of guilt, neither after throwing the snowball and causing the madness of his neighbour nor after his wife's death. Since he was totally guilt-resistant, Boyd, the man who had thrown the hard rock covered in white snow, became a man of hard heart covered in shining wealth.

In contrary Boyd's old victim Magnus becomes a man full of wonders who even wants to be "wondered at" (Davies 2001: 195). There are two extremes: a man for whom a wonder has no value in his life and a man for whom a wonder become the essential meaning of his life. Those men are connected first in their childhood and later in their advance age they meet again thanks to their life-long mediator Dunstan. Concerning a wonder, Dunstan has been searching after it. The attitude of wondering and wonders are those that have been provided to him through all his life. It is the Dunstan's sense of guilt that bounds all three together.

In contrast to either Boyd or Magnus, Dunstable Ramsay is a wise, observing gray figure, a man of no extraordinary life. The former ones are much otherwise. Dunstable, Boyd's live long friend and rival and

Paul's (Magnus') nurse and care-taker, is a man of astonishment and curiosity.

Boyd is the only character who does not investigate the wonder of life. He just takes life as it is and uses it to its maximum and walks through it with a strong face. Not like that is his death that turns to be his cry for miracles. His death is a sign of an inability to cope with his self-sureness any more. He turns to be a fragile man who is led to deep waters enclosed in his car only by a single sentence pronounced by his victim and murder that offers death as a solution to his despair.

"Desfacing" Boyd posthumously, by his second wife and his children's step-mother, serves symbolically for the empty value of Boyd's vacant life. Even though he gained enormous wealth, was among the first politicians of Canada, he left nothing of special cost and value for his descendents. He left just his body, the symbol of materialism. There was no smile, no positive emotions - no face that he could pass further on. He was buried the way his lived. His material body went through gorgeous funeral but without his face. He could not even be the "man of two faces" as the proverb says. In Hebrew no singular form for the word face exist but only the plural form. This encourages the idea that a man's identity can be integrated only through enriching of all of his faces – via the attitudes and values he has. Since Boyd had NO real face of his own – no attitudes and values worthy to be succeeded - the only thing he left behind was depression and despair.

Even though Boyd Staunton and Magnus Eisengrim seem to be as different as chalk and cheese, in the middle of their souls they are very similar. They are both men with stubborn heart and eagerly following their goals. Dunstan, their mediator, starts spends his childhood in intensive friendship with one of them and finishing it with the other, weaving the connections in between.

## 4 Psychological effects

Robertson Davis is a man of depth. In the speech that he gave in 1989 at his former school, the University in Toronto, he calls his generation the “inheritor of what may be called the Freudian Revolution” (Davies 1997: 127). This is somewhat bound to what he wrote almost thirty years ago that “Freudian psychoanalysis [...] has so greatly influenced fiction and poetry during the past forty years[...]”(Davies 1990: 65). Yet Davies points at the shallow writing of his colleagues who used this outstanding topic. He highlights their only sketchy knowledge of Freud’s works that flooded the novels of that time (cf. Davies 1990: 65-66). Davies generally does not accept perfunctory use of any kind of knowledge in novel writing. He later decided otherwise and within following fifteen years he set a new standard of psychology and fiction writing.

### 4.1 Jungian Analysis

Within *The Deptford Trilogy* Davies reveals the extraordinary quality of deep feelings and understanding of the human soul. Furthermore, he shows an extensive knowledge of Jungian psychology with which he works through with his protagonist throughout the whole novel in *The Manticore*. Davies has studied both Freud’s and Jung’s psychologies. Jung’s archetypes are much connected with magic and myth compared to Freud’s physiological structure of his analysis. This Jungian myth structure is much closer to Davies’s personal interest in myth and symbols as well as his whole approach of life.

The love for myth is reflected in the choice of the title for the second volume where the novelist chooses less known figure from the Greek-Persian mythology.

[...]fascinating is his revelation of his [Davies'] own encounter with magic. Few of his readers will be aware of the vision that gave the central image, and indeed the title, to his novel *The Manticore*. (Gibson in Davies 1998: 117)

According to the need of Jungian analysis this Manticore creature plays the main role in the main character's therapy.

In *The Manticore* David Staunton, Boyd Staunton's only son narrates his decision and experience to undergo a Jungian psychoanalysis to help himself uncover the mystery of his father's death. He chooses it even though he is not sure what it means as this is still quite new in psychological practice of that time frame in the plot. Nevertheless he prefers it to the Freudian analysis, just as the author does. Freud is well known on the American continent at that time already. The character makes a decision to relocate all the way from Canada to Switzerland for his personal discovery. As the character is acquainted with the fact that Freud's therapy focuses on sex and he leads a bachelor's life, he proclaims:

I had not known what to expect, but I rather thought I would be put on a couch and asked about sex, which would have been a waste of time as I have no sex to tell about. (Davies 1977: 9)

At that time David is already a middle-aged, extremely well situated and independent lawyer. The reason that caused him to leave his home for a great deal of time and spend a fortune on the chosen therapy is to find peace for his shaken soul. His soul was desperately longing for the name of the killer of his father. Yet it is not the first death in the family he comes across. He had faced similar situation with similar questions at the death of his mother when he was a teenager. His mother used to be a beautiful girl who gained Boyd's heart and in this way the social position that her parents wanted for her and the village seemed proper for her. Yet she was psychologically tortured by Boyd in order to reach the social achievements he demanded of her. The deaths of both

David's parents are covered with the same unanswered questions for him that are being repeated after twenty years: "Who killed?" or "Was it a suicide?"

Now David, who is within his job position strong in his abilities and experienced in cross-examining people who are being judged, is himself facing the situation when he is being examined. He does not trust psychologists, particularly women, in this position. Trying to find out the answer to his great question, he confronts both.

I was losing grand. This was humiliating. I am a fine cross-examiner and yet here I was, caught off balance time and again by this woman doctor. Well, the remedy lay in my own hands. (Davies 1977:17)

As Freud's goal is the body from which the psychological aspects reveal themselves, Jung's aim is revealing through archetypes. David comes across the *anima* and *mother* archetypes. Jung explains that *anima* is a kind of woman soul in a man's life. This is what had been reacting before his personal existence and in this way it goes far beyond his conscience. Jung finds the root of archetypes and especially anima in the first primitive mythology, the Greek philosophy with its Gnosticism as well as in classical Chinese philosophy (cf. Jung 1997: 170). As Jung says he borrows the Latin term *anima* meaning soul (the psychological part of human being that is not embodied). It has neither physical nor chemical basis but it is the part of human being that is strongly connected to the world round him (ibid: 183). This works in a man as an unconscious, automatic process.

In this way the psychotherapist Dr Johanna von Haller leads David strictly to his soul. Through his desire to discover the murderer of his father, he is led to go deeply into his own being. He is challenged to put off the image of a perfect, professional lawyer to reveal himself as a man with feelings and needs. In the middle of this search, in his dream



he sees himself as a mythological creature he never heard of – a manticore. This mythical entity and its objectification are described as a spiritual truth. The truth is that independent David finds himself being under control of his *mother* and *anima* in one figure – Dr von Haller to whom he has been tied up with a nice gold chain. However, suddenly a self-confident attorney is done and on the contrary a man emerges with underdeveloped feelings, which can be very dangerous and sharp (cf. Davies 1977: 163-164), a man who is deeply depressed by his past, by his former experience. Jung writes that a human soul makes evidence of its life by reacting to all kinds of human experiences one has gone through (cf. Jung 1997: 166). That is why David turns into a man who needs leading. With the material the chain is made of it can be deduced that the leading is provided in a very uncomfortable way. Definitely it is costly for David. Costly in both meanings – in the matter of money he has to pay and the matter of causing him troubles as it brings a loss of his gained attitudes toward life. Nevertheless, it becomes precious as it turns into a treasure as it is bringing a new life attitude into his way of viewing the world and himself.

The whole process of liberation is highlighted within the last chapter of *The Mantacore* which is called “My Sorgenfrei Diary”. Sorgenfrei is a village in Switzerland. Davies created this village symbolically. There is a great meaning in its place and name. It is situated high in the Alps, so one can have a beautiful view which is echoed in the idea of the eagle view representing the notion of being against narrow-mindedness. From that height one has great view into the depth of the landscape or symbolically into his own soul. It can be frightful and beautiful. In the German the name *Sorgenfrei* means “free of worries”. The Swiss village Sorgenfrei is the place where David throws away the stone, which had been found in his father’s mouth after his death and which David carried all the time as a talisman and the great burden of his mind. Who killed? It is the same stone by which David’s father had caused worries and

difficulties in other people's lives without ever expressing a hint of pity. Sorgenfrei is the place where David frees himself from the past – the oppression of his father's demands and rejection from being disinherited. It is the place where he cuts the tights to his childhood and becomes a man.

But before he is able to do this, he has to pass an adventurous way of finding himself. To achieve this, he has to rid himself of this artificially-created dignity. This happens physically twice. First it happens at the beginning of the story when he must undergo the physical check out at the doctor before being processed to the therapist. This he finds quite humiliating. Secondly at the end of the story in a dark cave where fear overtakes him and while crawling lying down in total darkness his body lets all humiliating process happen to him. In all these processes Davies has bound a human being as body and soul into one indivisible entity.

Through this whole process of finding himself, David is accompanied by two women guides: Dr Johanna von Haller who leads him through the therapy and Liesl whom he meets afterward. Liesl is Magnus's *anima* and *mother* too. She has a practical influence on both men. She is the one who brings David encouragement to finish physically with the past and face his future eagerly. She leads him to practical deeds to accomplish his mission and the point of being the hero of his own life.

But one must remember that they were all men with systems. Freud, monumentally hip on sex (for which he personally had little use) and almost ignorant of Nature: Adler, reducing almost everything to the will to power: and Jung, certainly the most humane and gentlest of them, and possibly the greatest, but nevertheless the descendant of parsons and professors, and himself a super-parson and a super-professor. All men of extraordinary character, and they devised systems that are forever stamped with that character [...] Davey, did you ever think that **these three men who were so splendid at understanding others had first to understand themselves?** It was from their self-knowledge they spoke. They did not go trustingly to some

doctor and follow his lead because they were too lazy or too scared to make the inward journey alone. **They dared heroically.** And it should never be forgotten that they made the inward journey while they were working like galley-slaves at their daily tasks, considering other people's troubles, raising families, living full lives. They were heroes, in a sense that no space-explorer can be a hero, because they went into the unknown absolutely alone. Was their heroism simply meant to raise a whole new crop of invalids? **Why don't you go home and shoulder your yoke, and be a hero too?** (Davies 1977: 265) [My own emphases]

This relief is timed by the author for Christmas. This festive and sensitive time David spends in the presence of the man who last saw his father alive, Dunstan Ramsay and the man who unconsciously advised Boyd Staunton to commit suicide – Magnus Eisengrim (cf. Davies 1976: 351-2). In the house David, Magnus and Dunstable are in the same position of a visitor. Magnus – a long-term friend of Lisle's and visitor, the cause of Boyd's death. Dunstable – a short-time visitor who came to recover after his heart attack shortly after Boyd's death. Finally, David – Dunstable's accidental visitor who is looking for his own way after his father's death.

Here at this time and this company David learns great lessons of grasping his own life. The circumstances do not matter at all. We have to fight our lives alone, try hard to understand ourselves and not let others interfere with it without limitations. We must not be overwhelmed by the world round us. That is why at that particular Christmas time David is advised for his life by his ex-teacher Dunstan Ramsay.

[...] if we are really wise, we will make a working arrangement with the bear that lives with us, because otherwise we shall starve or perhaps be eaten by the bear. - [...] and the moral is my Christmas gift to you, Davey, you poor Canadian bear choker, [...] (Davies 1977: 279)

## 4.2 The Mother Archetype and Anima

Here emphasis must be put on the fact that *anima* and *mother* archetypes very often mingle in a man's life (cf. Jung 1997: 165-6).

According to C. G. Jung, the archetype of *mother* is not much connected with one's real mother. It has rather a lot more aspects and features. As Jung lists, it can encompass: mother, grandmother, step-mother, mother-in-law, a woman with whom a man is in a relationship, nanny, and any kind of mother that is taken from different religions. The *Mother archetype* may have expanding meanings such as church, university, town, ground, earth, sea, substance or the Moon. In contrast, it may have more narrowed connection to the place of birth, garden, rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, or a deep well. In its most narrow meaning it is the womb or any hollow form – a stove, pot; or any kind of domestic animal that produces a kind of help to man (cf. Jung 1997: 192-193).

The main substance of *mother* is the magic authority of womanhood. This can bring into the other person life: wisdom and sense, kindness, all signs of care, it provides growth, fertility and food. Last but not least it is the sign of magic power that leads to rebirth (*ibid*). At one time a man can enter the realm of gods or any metaphysics space accompanied with his *anima* who enters his life in a historical appearance. *Anima* believes in *kalon kagathon* e.i. beauty and goodness (cf. Jung 1997:127-128).

In this way of understanding, we see more man – *anima/mother* influences within *The Deptford Trilogy*. As mentioned above, Liesl continues in this role for David as well as she used to be for Magnus. Ramsay finds his *anima* and *mother* in Mrs Dempster and in myth and saints. Before Liesl, Magnus first finds his *anima* and *mother* in Mrs Therese, Sir John's wife. Boyd seems to be the only one who is not formed or influenced by either *anima* or *mother*. If there is any archetype, it could be only his prostitute. But Davies depicts her merely as a figure Boyd goes to hide or relax from his personal problems.

Nevertheless, there is an obvious role of the *mother* archetype as a place. For David it is the hotel room where he dreams and writes his never-ending thoughts and then the aforementioned cave. For Magnus it was the doll-room in at that time still Liesl's grandfather's house. For Ramsay these were his holiday-trips to Europe to search for his saints. All these places work as wombs for those men. Each of them closes himself up in that specific space. In this kind of hiddenness he let himself go through the process of personal transformation and growth. These places provide a new quality of life.

To be more specific and to depict a specific *mother* figure and *anima* behaviour and their influence we can explore more about Johanna.

As a *mother* figure she is put into the position of authority – the leading one who is facing reality by showing much wisdom and care. These tasks are performed within the professional limits and boundaries. Her mother role is obvious in the strict attitude that leads into the transition of atmosphere during Jungian therapy – which is not in the attitude of the therapist but in the client's development in the whole process of therapy. In the beginning, the physician seems to be hard to David – and indeed she is but not in terms of her likes or dislikes of the client but in order to reach the best results.

Excuse me, please. You are stupid. [...] understanding is not the point. Feeling is the point. Understanding and experiencing are not interchangeable. (Davies 1977: 94)

This calms as the client is able to let himself get deeper into the process and work hard on himself. In the middle of the story, David experiences the transition from hostility of the atmosphere into a friendly one and he is able to open himself up as he had never done before (cf. Davies 1977: 158).

Other *mother* aspects that the narrator David experiences throughout the therapy are on one hand that Dr Johanna von Haller giving advices

to David that are not rarely followed with a kind of explanation. E.g. “Never buy anything unless you really need it; things you just want are usually junk.” (Davies 1977: 73) This advice is rather simple and practical. On the other hand, she offers encouragement when David seems to be disheartened about some facts concerning the situations. E.g. “The truth will grow as we work. That is what we are looking for.” (Davies 1977: 126)

Dr von Haller is infallibly found in the position of *anima* when she becomes a part of David’s dream and as his object of love. While delving deeper into himself, David Staunton experiences an uncomfortable sense of inequality in the conversation. He is finding himself but has no idea who the lady is with whom he is sharing the secret corners of his soul. These hidden qualities of the doctor’s personal life engender a curiosity about her and make David fall in love with her. Here Johanna is exposed as *anima*. As a reaction to David’s feelings the reader can observe a very professional attitude:

I think we should continue as before. [...] I am not ungrateful or indifferent, you know. [...] But still well within professional limits. [...] It is one of those things that happens now and then, because I am a woman. But suppose I were a wise old doctor, like our great Dr Jung; you would hardly fall in love with me then, would you? (Davies 1977: 160)

Here we experience the general part of the male narrator of what is hidden and unknown that appears attractive to him. Jung describes that anima brings ongoing emotions and affects in male’s life. They are pretty rich outgrowths of his fantasies and he can mythologize all his emotional relationships (cf. Jung 1997: 183). Hence falling in love with the therapist of the opposite sex seems to be an emotional-logical reaction.

### 4.3 Other Significant Signs of Jungian Psychoanalysis in *The Deptford Trilogy*

Jung's influence can be found even in other places within the trilogy.

Whenever the topic of archetypes is touched, generally Jung states that they exist as priorities of all human activities and are innate in the ways of pre-conscious and unconscious structure of psyche. It is an individually determined assumption which is notable at the first manifestation of life. (cf. Jung 1997: 178) In this case the most significant sign of Jungism is in Magnus' life as a whole, from how he was born to what he became in his old age, as a famous magician with actors abilities. The clarity of one's character is exactly what the narrator could observe in the very first weeks and months of Magnus' life:

He was one of those people who seem fated to be hurt and thrown aside of life, but doubtless as he knelt by Mary's bed he thought himself as important an actor in the drama as any of the others. (Davies 2001: 13)

This little baby in the way of Jungian perception demonstrates his great abilities and future in spite of being rejected and neglected by the nearest ones. Paul was determined to live and be great on the stage.

## **5 Autobiographical Elements of Robertson Davies in *The Deptford Trilogy***

Even though Davies wrote fiction, his novel's plots are based in part on his own life-experience as the author believes his life to be the main source for writing generally.

To ask an author who hopes to be a serious writer if his work is autobiographical is like asking a spider where he buys his thread. (Davies 1997: 27)

The only worthy writing is the one that comes out of us. In *The Deptford Trilogy*, Davies crossed all limits and barriers and opened his private being up to an extraordinary extent. "Now he was willing to risk the more direct expression of his own feeling and thought that was necessary, as it seemed to him, to realize a character from within" (Grant 1994: 480).

In reading through *The Deptford Trilogy*, many fragments of Davies' personal life may be found. Some are separately reflected in different characters and are demonstrated step by step as the plot unfolds. Some are obvious and some are hidden. Therefore, some characters have more and some less of the writer's autobiographical elements. Nevertheless, there is no a single character who would reflect the author in his wholeness. Not only characters reflect the author's life, but many situations resemble to those Davies really experienced. On the other hand some places are based on the towns and cities Davies himself experienced while preparing notes for his novels. (cf. Ibid)

Even though a great amount of the author's self within the piece is evident, his writing is still to be classified as fiction. It is the way Davies matches individual entities of his life with historical facts and products of his fantasy together. Despite all the facts he had used, he produced a pure fictional story.



## 5.1 Thamesville

Deptford village is mainly identical with Davies' first home town.

Davies was born in the village of Thamesville in 1913. He lived in it until being nearly six years old. Thamesville became the core home for many *Fifth Business* characters. It was later extended for the whole *Deptford Trilogy*. The main protagonists left their Deptford. Davies, on the contrary, stayed in touch with his place of birth. Through his contacts he could learn more about the small town conventions. In the trilogy he used many true situations and people of Thamesville, e.g. Davies used the place of nearby gravel pit occupied by tramps – including the ban on entering the pit by Davies' parents. A crazy neighbour lady, including her crazy outputs on the square, who Davies' mother took care for. (Grant 1994: 10-15) was an obvious model for Mrs Dempster and much of her difficulties which formed the basis of the most significant character relationships and character motivations in the trilogy.

## 5.2 Newspapers and Writing

At the beginning of *Fifth Business* the reader becomes acquainted with the position of the main character's family position and business.

My family enjoyed a position of modest privilege, for my father was the owner and editor of the local weekly paper, The Deptford Banner. It was not a very prosperous enterprise... (Davies 2001: 9)

In comparison we can find Judith Skelton Grant's note on the start of Davies' life:

He was born in 1913 in a modest house in the village of Thamesville in southwestern Ontario, where his father owned and edited the little local weekly paper. (Grant 2009: 931)

Being a part of newspaper enterprise covered a great part of Davies' early life until his father changed occupations, but writing was never abandoned.

The character of Dunstable Ramsay not only reflects the family connections to newspapers. He wears on Davies' habits of deep and thorough reading and a love for writing, as well as the teaching abilities of both the writer as well as the character. Davies' passion for writing is also passed on to the character of David Staunton who keeps a diary during his treatment. The notes in the diary were kept quite detailed as well as Davies did throughout his entire life time. Indeed, the entries of David Staunton and Robertson Davies may be eerily identical at least partially.

To point out a difference within similarities can underline Davies' passion for writing ever since. "[He] wrote his first piece of journalism [...] at his father's request." (Grant 1994: 75) At that time he was nine and his article was issued on the front page of the *Mercury*, dated February 16, 1923. It was his reflection on lectures on Shakespeare. Davies was found useful in his father's business. (cf. Ibid) On the other hand his hero, Dunstable, just blundered around his father's printer plant in the way he had to be sent away.

### **5.3 Education: Teaching, Boarding School, Master of a School, University Education Abroad**

The character of Dunstable wears in the largest amount Davies' own teaching experience. *Fifth Business* was first published in 1970. At that time Davies had ten years experience as a professor of English at University of Toronto and seven-year experience as Master of Massey College. This personal experience was projected into the character of

Dunstable Ramsay who is a teacher and later the master of the boarding school. This character was formed chronologically at the same time as the writer held those positions by himself.

At the same time Davies' experience of being a boarding school student by himself is imprinted into David Staunton who further follows Davies' steps to Oxford University, England (cl. Grant 2009: 931-2). While Davies spent his youth age in boarding school he was led not only to knowledge but also to his personal adulthood, as he remembered:

Now and then we were given surprising adult treatment. I remember one afternoon, when I was walking in the grounds, the Headmaster met me and said, "Walk with me, and I'll tell you what I remember about[...] I felt that I had been invited in to the adult world, just as I did when the music master, Richard Tattersal, asked me to come to a Sunday rehearsal... (Davies 1997: 36-7)

This attitude of a leading and carrying hand and ear provided with strict rules and manners that lead to a person's fullness is scattered throughout the whole trilogy. Firstly, in *Fifth Business* Dunstable gives a protecting hand to David while being his teacher and director of high demands at the same time. Secondly, in *The Manticore* we follow David to Oxford where the one-legged bachelor Dunstable is replaced with an old blind bachelor professor, Mr. Pargetter. Finally, in *World of Wonders* we can observe Paul Dempster being taught how to read and write and being led to self respect by an amateur teacher the Fat Woman while being enslaved by Willard the Wizard.

David Staunton bears another of Davies' personal experience as they both departed for their studies abroad. This may set a similar feeling about commuting between England and Canada, the distinct feeling of possessing two homeland countries.

The teachers in the trilogy, whether they are real teachers by their profession or just people who educated somebody as a part of their life

for either a shorter or longer time, are generally mentioned with respect. The same we observe in Davies' attitude toward his real teachers, whether they were good or not. Real teachers became the drafts for the novel characters. "It was such men as these I bore in mind when I was describing the character of Dunstan Ramsay in my Deptford Trilogy." (Davies 1997: 37)

## 5.4 Theatre

As he left Oxford, Davies' ambitions were confidently focused on a theatrical career. (Grant 1994: 202)

Davies was deeply familiar with the English as well as Canadian theatre. This combination is mainly used in *World of Wonders*. Yet as *World of Wonders* extends *Fifth Business*, the first hints of author's theatrical and circus knowledge and experience are already evident.

As Davies got his training in acting, directing, and stage management, he passed these qualities to the character of Sir John Tresize. Both the author and the character took part in a theatre company in London. The character was owner of the company, as described in *World of Wonders*. In this way Davies reflected his love for theatre, as he taught and acted in London at the Old Vic and his wife was an actress and stage manager. All these qualities are projected into the fictional couple Sir John and his wife Milady.

This experience in theatre is also valid for Magnus, who became the stage shade of Sir John in his early adult age. This happened to him under the name Mungo Fetch.

We can observe the same love for Shakespeare in Sir John Tresize and Davies. Davies considered Shakespeare the greatest writer of all time and wrote his dissertation on Shakespeare's Boy Actors.

## 5.5 An Autobiography Writing

Davies never wrote an autobiography. Nevertheless he used autobiographical items as a source of inspiration. Davies' big biographer is Ms Judith Skelton Grant who spent more than ten years researching his life. She was working on his biography during the last years of Davies' life. He himself cooperated on it – retold his own memories, provided her with great deal of material and made comments. Profit was gained from personal encounters when Grant could observe him. It was a dream that convinced Davies “Not Intend to Write an Autobiography” (cl. Grant 1994: 647). Here Boswell reflects:

Davies wishes to die laughing at the autobiographies of his contemporaries [...]. He is known to have a keen appreciation of irony. Perhaps that is why [...] he would do well to remain silent about himself. (Boswell in *ibid*)

With Davies' own words Grant compares him with Magnus Eisengrim:

A man who can stand stark naked in the midst of a crowd and keep it gaping for an hour while he manipulates a few coins, or cards, or billiards balls, throwing out hints, raising expectations, weaving from one to the next in an entertaining and recondite manner, never letting the mask drop. (Davies in Grant 1994: 647-8)

In this proclamation we can only be kept on thinking who Robertson Davies is. Magnus' mask was to hide the young face while his young body was to complete tenacious Sir John's old body in its abilities. It gives the essence that for Davies was to expose and perform what is perfect. What is imperfect is a thing to find, hide and work on in privacy.

Davies did not write an autobiography yet he used it as a specific genre In *The Deptford Trilogy*. *Fifth Business* is actually written as an autobiography letter of its narrator Dunstan Ramsay. In *The Manticore* David Staunton writes his autobiography and retells his life-story as a part of his therapy. Finally, in *World of Wonders*, Magnus Eisengrim let

Dunstan Ramsay write a fiction autobiography to raise an interest in his person as a conjuror.

## 5.6 Davies Traditionalist

Even though Davies loved myth and in writing he “privilege[d] fiction over non-fiction” (Braz 2009: 1000) he was a great traditionalist (cl. Davies 1997:28). In *The Deptford Trilogy* characters do not produce or race for anything particularly new, but many in contrast, try to recover the past.

They are only being carried on the wave of new world order, using modern facilities but in minds they adhere to the old traditions. It is most seen in Magnus who as the greatest magician of his time built his performance on old tricks but great and serious manners. The manners that are well known to Davies, the manners we was brought into, the manners of great style (cl. Davies 1997: 33). It is also evident in the hagiographical studies undertaken by Dunstable Ramsay.

## 5.7 Ghosts, Myths and Jungian Psychoanalysis, Christianity

Influenced by Shakespeare, Davies was keen on ghosts and was aware of their existence. A kind of mystery is strongly engraved in Dunstan Ramsay, who became fascinated in hagiography, as well as in Magnus Eisengrim, who became the worldwide known magician later in his career.

In recognizing “what one knows in the depths of his own mind” Davies later became interested psychoanalysis both Freud’s and Jung’s ones.

Both the character and the author tend to prefer the Jungian psychoanalyze.

Regarding church going, there can be a certain shift in church belonging find as well in Davies as in his characters. Judith Grant recorded that:

Davies' view on religion [...is] something he took seriously in his personal life. Raised a Presbyterian, he had elected to become an Anglican while at Oxford. But as the decades passed his beliefs become less and less conventionally Christian. (Grant 2009: 946-7)

A very similar shift can be observed in Dunstan Rumsey. Raised in Presbyterian Church, he later become interested in saints which is total turn from his former form of belief and is common in both Catholic and Anglican confessions. Another character whom Davies presents as the one who solve these different forms of Christianity is David Staunton (cf Davies 1977: 82-83).

## **5.8 Unexpectedness and Humour in *The Deptford Trilogy***

The reader is kept in tension while reading through the trilogy. The moment he starts to develop the plot on his own and thinks he knows what will come on the next page – he is almost always mistaken. The author's imagination is immense and his plots always take an unexpected turn. Davies' style of writing strongly reflects his personality. Judith Grant refers of his reaction as of "often unexpected" (Grant 2009: 933). Davies had an elusive element and so did his writings.

Another strong aspect of Davies is humour. In his notes and interviews, Davies reveals his light and humorous approach to serious events and situations of life, yet keeping the depth of the situation. Similarly in his novels. His characters often appeal through ridiculous situations that

would not be ridiculous on their own but for the naturalistic description so that Davies makes the reader chuckle along with them.

Davies is a master of building expectations that is accompanying his strong sense for detail. In the detail he is very naturalistic, which frequently builds the witty aspects of his narration.

## 5.9 Small Hints and Memories of Inner Life

Although the trilogy is packed with autobiographical aspects, not all of them are easy to recognize. It was especially the work of Judith Grant who has discovered more information about Davies' life. It is worth mentioning some of them.

Davies counts his life not from the day he was born but from his very first memory that he can recall.

His first recollection is of an encounter with a deep-red peony on his mother's garden, shortly before his third birthday. Peony-height himself, fascinated by the flower's colour, he looked into its heart, and it became the whole of the world to him. (Grant 1994: 2)

Davies uses this image in *The Manticore* when David Staunton is asked by his analyst to recall his first memory ever. (cf. Davies 1977: 81-82).

## 5.10 Canadian Society and Europe

Davies himself spent so much of his lifetime in the United Kingdom. Especially significant for him were the years of his stay in Oxford, England. He "considers those years the most formative years, [...] which later should play such an important role in his life" (Jackson 2005: 49).



The influence it had is evident in his work. In *The Deptford Trilogy*, Dunstan Ramsay “undergo[es] a transformation during [his] European experience [... and] gets a second chance to live” (ibid).

Through the trilogy the special bond Canada has towards Europe, especially to England, while the USA stands at a distance from Europe. Canada as a Commonwealth nation with Queen Elizabeth as its head of state is naturally identified with Europe culturally and politically. Sabine Jackson tells this about Canada-European relationship:

Europe remains an attractive setting for Canadians seeking educational training [...]. Europe is the place where history is made, where miracles still happen and where education is possible. One must go to Europe to educate spirit and mind. (Jackson 2005: 103)

Education, history, miracles – these all are used by Davies. These are the core of his trilogy.

Another really Canadian attitude depicted in the trilogy is Canada as British a former colony and the attitudes of people toward England. Jackson further explains: “Europe is also the seat of the British monarchy and Canada’s remaining link with the colonial days”. (ibid) Canada as one of British colony took part in both the first and second World Wars. The heroes are personally involved in those events.

Boy’s [Boyd’s] reverence for the British monarchy, especially the Prince of Wales, is partly responsible for his death next to the public pressure. Ramsay's life is preoccupied with hagiography and therefore his relationship with Europe is professional. Yet, it is also in Europe that he learns about himself during his encounters with women. (ibid)

It is necessary here to add that Boyd’s David as well as Paul Dempster (Magnus Eisengrim) found their new self in Europe, not in Canada. This characteristic may be another autobiographical aspect of the author.

## 5.11 The Use and Shift of Names in the Trilogy

Davies had a great passion in changing names which turned obvious within the trilogy.

All three main protagonists have changed their names within the novels:

- Dunstable Ramsay into Dunstan Ramsay (He was renamed by his ex-girlfriend in England.)

How on earth did you ever get yourself called Dunstable? [...] You'll never get anywhere in the world named Dumbledum Ramsay. Why don't you change it to Dunstan? St. Dunstan was a marvellous person and very much like you" [...] "I liked the idea of a new name; it suggested new freedom and a new personality. (Davies 2001: 83)

Ramsay is commonly used for first name. This is similar to Davies Robertson's first name. He got his first name after his great-grandfather's surname – William R o b e r t s o n.

- Percy Boyd Staunton into Boy Staunton (cf. Davies 2001: 99)

The hero who has changed his name the most is Paul Dempster:

- Paul Dempster into Cass Fletcher, then Jules de Grand Mungo Fetch and finally Magnus Eisengrim.

The change of name is always connected with change of character or personal attitude toward one's own life and thinking. The strong connection between the name and the personality is known in e.g. Hebrew and Indian beliefs. This principle of transfer is used in the trilogy with a certain sense that one's name can be changed easily in Canada or North America. The ease of changing names is not in Europe.

### 5.11.1 Names from Davies' Life

Davies used names of people he knew. E.g. Percy – Davies' uncle's first name was Percy. Sam West, a character used in *Fifth Business*, is a name taken after an electrician from Thamesville (cf. Grant 1994: 10). Thus in Davies' fiction even the names have a realistic base.

## 6 Conclusion

When preparing his novels, Davies tried to remember what he had heard when he was a boy. He tried to integrate these specific memories into his novels in the way that was very specific, simultaneously as general as possible. (cf. Davies [online on youtube] 1973) In this way the story is open enough for the reader to read Davies' novels according to his/her own personal experience so that the novel will stay very specific in its plot and characters development.

The personal growth and development of Davies' characters is obvious at many places of the trilogy. In *The Manticore* in the middle of the therapy the main character starts to contemplate the sudden openness of his feelings that he had never experienced before. "Yet was it not urgent need for confession that brought me to Zürich?" (Davies 1977: 158) David's deep need of confession makes him travel across the world to the place he could feel safe for confession. Yet the same need helps him to overcome the uneasiness of his personal character.

Davies brings to the surface whole list of diverse sensitive topics that make one to contemplate on one's own, such as:

- The human need and possibility of confession (as mentioned above)
- Child abuse
- Addiction to an offender
- No friends (wanted and unwanted friends)
- Unhappy marriage
- Out-of-place position or role in life
- Personal physical loneliness
- Physical and mental diseases in the family
- etc

This list as indefinite as these items are very personal and every reader may be touched by different ones while omitting some others. Still the principle remains! If any of those items is not your own, it definitely is of the world, countries, cities and villages to talk about. Society must deal with them and must endeavour to solve them somehow. On the other

hand, not a single crime within the trilogy is performed by a purely wicked person. Each evil-doer unveils some hints of positive parts of his/her soul. In this ambiguity of the protagonists' reactions and attitudes toward their lives, Davies openly brings forward the reality of individual inner conflicts and the combats they are engaged in.

Though *The Deptford Trilogy* is a work of fiction, readers, nevertheless, come across names they are familiar with from other literary, scientific and artistic fields. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, mentioned in *Fifth Business*, is in fact an Austro-German Psychiatrist who lived in 19<sup>th</sup> century. In *The Manticore* Ramsay is compared with Mr Rochester, the main character from Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*. The writer and scholar C. S. Lewis, as well as for the part of illusion, Davies borrows Goethe's Faust and his cat Vitzlipützli whose name here serves as a surname for Magnus' manager Liesl, so her full name is Liselotte Vitzlipützli. To combine myth, faith and philosophical truth is what Davies called the tool of mystery, the Brazen Head of Friar Bacon, after the English Enlightenment philosopher Francis Bacon.

Just as Davies was significantly influenced by Carl Gustav Jung from the field of psychological, he was considerably influenced by Shakespeare in theatre style. Here it is worthy to mention that Davies wrote his dissertation on Shakespeare's boy actors. Shakespeare's drama and romance is sensed in *World of Wonders*, mainly through the character of Sir John reflecting Sir John Falstaff in *Henry IV, part 1*.

While reading Davies, a proficient reader of classical world literature can experience as similar style that he has already become acquainted with in reading Victor Hugo. It was especially Hugo's novel *Notre Dame de Paris*, also known as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* that became one of "truly formative books" to Davies as he himself declared (cf. Grant 1994: 82-83). This formation can be felt and sensed between the lines. We can

experience a similar tempo and urgency in Davies' *Deptford Trilogy* that we know and have experienced in Hugo's extraordinary writing.

There is no wonder that Davies even borrowed a certain scene from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Hugo's poet Pierre Gringoire as well as Davies' Dunstan Ramsay appear in a life-threatening situation and before losing consciousness both of them are attracted by the vision of the Holy Virgin that connects them with a particular woman of their lives. For Pierre it is Esmeralda and for Dunstan it is Mrs Dempster. (cf. *ibid*)

Other formative writers for Davies were Dickens with his ghost stories and Dostoevsky in his narrative style. These influences are admitted by Davies himself. However, Davies confessed that his great love for reading and proper use of language, facets that later made him such outstanding writer, came from his parents (cf. Grant 1994: 3 and 8-9). From the same source of family roots, Davies habitually quoted from Bible in *The Deptford Trilogy*, especially in *World of Wonders*. Along with the love for classical literature and love for the English language, it was Davies' extraordinary memory he was equipped with that coincided with his ability of being "unusual observant" (Grant 1994: 11) that became the advantage for his novel writing and made him a great writer who brought recognition to Canada.

More characters radiate from *The Deptford Trilogy*, and not only the three main male protagonists: the narrator and teacher Mr Dunstan Ramsey, the magician and conjuror Magnus Eisengrim and then businessman-politician Boyd (Boy) Staunton who was superseded by his son David who became a lawyer. They all influence one another while being strongly affected by females' characters. Yet through the characters of their mothers Davies depicted the problems of society and family roles. Mrs Ramsay is the perfect picture of always working, perfect help and always-know-what-to-do-and-think womanhood. Mrs

Staunton becomes a victim of transfiguration of her husband's wish according to the image of high-society. Finally, Mrs Dempster is made a mad-lady by the society she lives in and at the same time she is a sort of study for hagiography.

In this way, Davies' writing is not only a reflection of personal characters and attitudes but also of the whole society development that was reaching the new type of modernity at that time. Even though Davies has been considered a traditionalist, he did not escaped modernity that his characters have to deal with and he had to live in. In such way he might be called a traditional modernist. To be more specific, Davies characters show an attempt to escape what is by a recent sociologist called the *solid modernity* (traditional one) in longing to reach the *liquid one* (post modernity). This is not that easy as the former bonds are strong. Porter says:

Dunstan's psychic escape from Deptford is never quit successful, and he must synthesize his current individuated self with the undesired collective values of Deptford – what are really presented as the psychical, spiritual, and moral confines places on the individual and enforced by the village collective. Through a process of escape and self-discovery, Dunstan must negotiate the residue of his Deptford past with this evolving present, and his process helps reveal how the small-town convention emerges. (Porter 2011: 166)

The characters as well as Davies himself lived in the moment of history where the old ways of approaching life did not work anymore while the new ones have not yet been come or have not been adjusted. It has been a process of exploring.

Even though the trio of Davies' stories is accomplished with Magnus' explanation of Boyd's death and thus works as the main red line that connects the beginning with the end and builds the tension throughout the plot, it is in fact not the main message. Instead, the main message of the trilogy which Davies passes on to his reader is a change and an exploration of one's self. Davies sees himself as "religious" in the view

of the Latin word *leregere* “[to] consider, to ponder, to examine [,] to examine and reflect upon every sort of experience in a personal way” (Davies in Grant 1994: 649). The times, situations, manners and life positions can change. Notwithstanding the circumstances, it is every specific individual who needs and must find his/her own self which is for his personal use only.

- The end -



## 7 Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na literární dílo kanadského spisovatele Robertsona Daviese. Konkrétně jeho v pořadí druhou trilogii, *Deptfordsou trilogii*, kterou tvoří *Pátá postava (Fifth Business)*, *Mantichora (The Manticore)* a *Svět zázraků (World of Wonders)*.

Žánrem se toto dílo řadí do magického realismu. Davies v něm plně rozvíjí oblasti svých zájmů, v první řadě Jungovu psychoanalýzu. Ta do života postav vnáší tajemno, které se prolíná do jejich každodenních reálných událostí a postojů. Obzvláště v druhé části trilogie, Davies na pozadí mytické postavy odhaluje motivy jednání hlavní postavy. Byť dílo není autobiografií, setkáváme se v něm s mnoha autobiografickými rysy a prvky. Každá z klíčových postav odráží některé z autorových prožitků. Kromě Jungovy psychoanalýzy a okouzlení tajemnem autor dále do trilogie výrazným způsobem vtiskuje svoji lásku k divadlu a jeho historii. Toto je zřetelné obzvláště v třetí části trilogie. Celé dílo je protknuto Daviesovou znalostí celosvětové literatury a biblickými vědomostmi. K oběma byl Davies veden svými rodiči.

Realismus, který Davies používá, je okořeněný humorem. Humor je kořením trilogie stejně tak, jako je kořením života, a to i ve svízelných situacích.

Tato trilogie přinesla nejen osobní úspěch svému autorovi, ale také, a to je ještě důležitější, prosadila kanadskou literaturu v celosvětovém měřítku. Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo vyzdvihnout kanadskou literaturu a jednoho z jejích nejlepších autorů. Zároveň jsem se snažila kanadskou literaturu vytáhnout z „rance“ americké literatury, kterým se většinou zamýšlí literatura Spojených států amerických, potažmo celé Severní Ameriky. Cílem bylo zaměřit pozornost na specifika literatury kanadské.

Při analýze Daviesova díla vyšlo najevo, jakou jedinečnost autor přikládá jedinci. Přičemž za vrchol bytí je považováno pátrání právě po

této jedinečnosti. Autor na hlavních představitelích ukázal proměny, které při vynaloženém úsilí mohou nastat. Snaha najít sebe je stejně náročná jako kriminální pátrání, které celé dílo doplňuje a dodává mu na dramatičnosti.

Proces hledání, včetně nalézání či ztrát, se tak stává hlavní myšlenkou celého Daviesova díla.

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