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BIOGRAPHICAL AND SPATIOTEMPORAL PROTOTYPES: “HOMAGE TO SWITZERLAND” AS AN INTERSECTION OF HEMINGWAY’S LIFE AND EINSTEINIAN RELATIVITY**

The paper approaches Ernest Hemingway’s short story “Homage to Switzerland” from two perspectives: biographical and relativistic, as the author inscribed some of his own experiences into this work of fiction, and he was also acquainted with Albert Einstein’s fundamental ideas of time and space being relative depending on the experimenter’s position. The first part discusses the biographical basis of the story and some possible intersecting points between the empirical author and his characters, as one is a degrading misogynist, the other is going through a divorce, and the third man’s father shot himself. The second part focuses on the tripartite construction of the text, whose settings are three interchangeable Swiss towns with conspicuously similar participants in failed conversations. Drawing on Michael Reynolds’s analysis of this story as an experiment in relativity, the paper scrutinises the paradoxical time references which proliferate towards the ending and concludes that there is no dominant time frame. It also includes an experiment based on special relativity, with the train as the main cause of events in the text. Finally, the paper proposes a new starting point in the reading of this story: the third section is the only one that opens in Stanzel’s authorial, not figural narrative situation.

Keywords: “Homage to Switzerland,” biography, relativity, time frames, repetition, inertial frame of reference, authorial narrative situation, figural narrative situation

1. INTRODUCTION

When we take into account the similarities between the empirical author’s personal experiences and the potential analogies in his fiction, it is difficult to dismiss an assumption that Ernest Hemingway’s life, with all its manifestations of a

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sometimes embittered, sometimes laconic masculine aura, plays a relevant role in the interpretation of many of his literary works, and can offer a spectrum of viable solutions to even some of the most cryptic texts, like the short story “Homage to Switzerland.” The paper will shed light on the short story from two different angles: the shorter part is going to address the possible biographical references to Hemingway’s own life, relying on the clues scattered throughout the storyline, especially the pivotal topics from his family history, and the longer section aims at analysing “Homage to Switzerland” through the lens of Einsteinian relativity, which must have been an underlying cause of the seemingly absurd “repetition” of similar events at locations situated in exactly the same time frame along the same railway line.

The short story was in all likelihood composed between March and June 1932, and features three different protagonists waiting for the Simplon-Orient Express at three different stations at the same moment in time (Beegel, 1992: 255). In an August 1932 letter to William Lengel, editor of *Cosmopolitan*, the author was enthusiastic about the narrative: “This is a damned good story – 3 stories in one. The amount of dialogue makes it long in space” (Hemingway, 1981: 367). By that time, Hemingway had gained a considerable reputation as a writer of minimised, often terse dialogues, which generally alluded to the depth of the characters’ situation and required the readers to pay a lot of attention to his iceberg dictum from *Death in the Afternoon* (1932):

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about, he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. (quoted in Johnston, 1984: 69)

The dialogues do not consist of sentences any longer or shorter than we can see in Hemingway’s previous works, i.e. three novels and three short story collections, and the replicas produced in them open up paths for inscribing swaths of interrelated possible worlds that the characters hint at, phenomenologically termed “schematised aspects,” the deepest layer of the work, where it is “up to the reader to fill in the gaps through an act of imagination in which he invests the data of his own existence” (Collot, 2010: 331). As the semantic structure of the text proper only covers one aspect of the storyworld, the reader must develop logical relations between what the text presents and the more expansive field that the text implies. Hemingway offers Lengel a master key to the constructed world in

“Homage to Switzerland,” preparing the reader for an interpretation which should avoid filtering the events in the short story through the author’s biography alone:

It’s a new form for a story. The fact that the three parts all open the same way or practically the same is intentional and is supposed to represent Switzerland metaphysically where it all opens in the same way always and where a young man will not marry a young lady until she has had her original teeth out and her store teeth in since that is an eventual expense that the girl’s father, not her husband, should bear. (Hemingway, 1981: 367)

Hemingway evidently gives the editor advice to accept the story as an avant-garde narrative fragmenting the monadic plot structure, especially with its multiplied setting, which seems to have much bearing on the protagonists’ repetitive behavior and the absurd atmosphere which pervades the triptych. In spite of his optimism, *Cosmopolitan* turned this manuscript down, and it was published in *Scribner’s Magazine* in April 1933.

2. BIOGRAPHICAL GROUNDS

It has been noted that Hemingway had his private reasons to write this story, because he spent at least one winter at Chamby-sur-Montreux with his first wife Hadley Richardson, and also frequented Swiss resorts with his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer. Around 1930 Hilda Doolittle lived in a villa between Montreux and Vevey with her partner Annie Winifred Ellerman, so the author acquired intimate knowledge of the region and also waited for the famous train on more than one occasion – the bitterest wait was for the Express back to Paris to check on the loss of his early manuscripts (Reynolds, 1992: 261).

Each part opens in a very similar way, with an American waiting for the Orient Express in three interchangeable Swiss towns: Montreux, Vevey and Territet. Due to the train’s one-hour delay, Mr. Wheeler is killing time in a weird communication with the waitress at the station café, whom he even offers a large sum of money for casual sexual intercourse; she refuses his advances, but thinks to herself: “Three hundred francs for a thing that is nothing to do. How many times have I done that for nothing” (Hemingway, 1933: 205). Mr. Johnson begins his conversation with the waitress by asking her to play with him, only to direct his talk at the three station porters in the room – his central topic is his ongoing divorce, to which the Swiss nationals do not respond with much understanding or empathy. Johnson’s question: “You like the married state?” is plainly answered: “Oui. C’est normale” (Hemingway, 1933: 206). Mr. Harris does not offend the waitress in a

way similar to the other two men, but his offer of a cigar to a stranger although he is a non-smoker signals an element of the absurd soon intensified in the talk with the old gentleman who happens to be a National Geographic Society member. This motif may have appeared for parody's sake, as "here the object of satire is [...] the stiffly formal travel literature one finds in Swiss travel folders or *National Geographic*" (Oldsey, 1963: 181). The conversation ends with Mr. Harris's manifestly perfunctory revelation of his father's death, after his collocutor expresses the wish to meet the man: "I'm sure he would have liked to meet you but he died last year. Shot himself, oddly enough" (Hemingway, 1933: 208).

From a biographical point of view, it is easy to inscribe a number of parallels between Hemingway's life and the personal histories of the three protagonists, beginning with the chronotope itself: he was quite familiar with the country, and he never made an attempt at an imaginary historical distance in fiction, but immersed the reader into the temporally unmediated surroundings, and all the three men bear partial resemblance to the empirical Ernest Hemingway, age about 35 being just one of them. At first sight, Mr. Wheeler is a degrading, calculated womaniser, although "he was very careful about money and did not care for women" (Hemingway, 1933: 205). His performance may correspond to Hemingway's philandering facet, and may also imply the fateful winter of 1925/26 in nearby Schruns, Austria, when he began his affair with Pauline, which caused the disintegration of his marriage to Hadley. On the other hand, Mr. Wheeler's alternative role might be that of an object of ridicule – this troubled, uncommunicative man may stand for the stereotype of the money-hungry Jew, when we take into account the author's pronounced anti-Semitism from the decades before World War II (Lovell, 1976: 85). The wine he orders bears "Sion" as the geographic denomination, and at that time there were several dozen varieties of wine with that provenance, as they are made of such diverse grapes as Pinot Noir, Gamay or Cornalin for reds and Chasselas, Sylvaner, Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris for whites (Sion Wine, 2014: para. 3). The reader will never learn the exact make and producer, but the spelling Sion in an intended allusion stands as an alternative for Zion, a place so dear to the Jews worldwide (Lovell, 1976: 85). Mr. Johnson is more open about his relationships than his predecessor, and he manages to assemble a larger company of listeners, although his manners towards the waitress are only a little less despicable than Mr. Wheeler's. This persona may serve as a substitute for Hemingway in the course of his divorce from Hadley, and he demonstrates a similar bitterness at his status of an unattached individual, unlike the representatives of the community he is talking to. The third American, Mr. Harris, does not come off as a

confident conversationalist either, but he soon shifts from awkward exchanges with the waitress to a dialogue with an old man who perceives a likeness to a fellow-member of the National Geographic Society (Harris's father). The fundamental intersection of Hemingway's and Harris's biographies certainly lies in the mention of the father's suicide, and even the manner of execution is identical. If we take the replica literally, it can be concluded that the story takes place in 1929, although that is not the only shrouded temporal marker in the narrative. Unusual for a Hemingway story, each character is styled "Mister," each uses language to dispel the boredom of the wait for the delayed train (and the clouds of existential angst they feel), and each is aware that he will not meet the chance acquaintances ever again (Flora, 2004: 5–6).

3. RELATIVISTIC INFLUENCES

However, if the text is read through a relativistic framework, the conclusions as to the exact time of action can be reached much harder, if at all. The very triptych structure facilitates the introduction of a multiple point of view, given that they contain the paratextual details like captions of each American and the location at hand. The three openings bear so much resemblance to one another that they could be mistaken as identical when read superficially:

Inside the station café it was warm and light. The wood of the tables shone from wiping and there were baskets of pretzels in glazed paper sacks. (Part I, 204)

Inside the station café it was warm and light; the tables were shiny from wiping and on some there were red and white striped table cloths; and there were blue and white striped table cloths on the others and on all of them baskets with pretzels in glazed paper sacks. (Part II, 205)

In the station café at Territet it was a little too warm; the lights were bright and the tables shiny from polishing. There were baskets with pretzels in glazed paper sacks on the tables and cardboard pads for beer glasses in order that the moist glasses would not make rings on the wood. (Part III, 207)

As can be clearly seen, all the descriptions include the core elements of the shiny tables, baskets of pretzels, warmth and light, with the indispensable frame of the café where all the details of the *mise-en-scène* are placed. The only place name is Territet, although all the captions indicate the settlements' names before the dramas unfold. This detail deserves more attention, and it will be analysed separately later.

The relativistic reading of this short story was inaugurated by Michael Reynolds in the essay “‘Homage to Switzerland’: Einstein’s Train Stops at Hemingway’s Station,” first published in the collection *Hemingway’s Neglected Shorter Fiction* (1989), edited by Susan Beegel. He notices accurately that “Hemingway seldom uses geography carelessly” and that “the three geographical points in his story are out of their proper order” (Reynolds, 1992: 256). The train coming from Saint Maurice should pass through Territet first, then Montreux, and finally Vevey; in addition, the real Orient Express never stopped at minor stations like Territet or Vevey. On the other hand, these three stations play an important role in Hemingway’s experiment in the theory of special relativity, since they make up three checkpoints within a larger frame of reference, i.e. the 20-kilometre-long stretch of railway in the diegesis. This inertial frame of reference has constant velocity, and it does not offer any acceleration to the train that could affect its motion in a way different from any other point of its journey (Steane, 2012: 55).

Each section of the short story exhibits fundamental ambiguity in the characters’ mutual understanding, as the waitresses do not comprehend their American guests’ initial allusions, nor are they supposed to. None of the three porters in the longest, central part of the text can genuinely relate to Mr. Johnson’s predicament, and throughout their conversation, it is evident that the American makes awkward efforts to garner sympathy – that is simply prevented from happening due to the Swiss men’s more rigid social and marital codes. Just for propriety’s sake, the oldest porter once says: “It is understandable [...] I understand it” (Hemingway, 1933: 206). Furthermore, Hemingway gives the reader fragments of Mr. Johnson’s imperfect French and soon shifts to the narration in English, but the four men spoke much more French than reported in the story: “He had stopped clowning with the language and was speaking good French now and had been for some time” (Hemingway, 1933: 206). The bias between his emotional frankness probably stemming from his search for human warmth and their hardly penetrable restraint visibly persists in the section, as soon as the porters must repeat to one another that “monsieur is going to divorce” in a matter of minutes. When he realises that all they remember is his immediate separation from his wife, Johnson ruefully concludes: “You’re not interested in my troubles” (Hemingway, 1933: 206). Additionally soured by the fact that his wife does sports and is amused by them, unlike he is by the tediousness of his profession as a writer, he gloomily leaves for the platform 45 minutes before the train’s arrival. Claude Lovell succinctly interprets the motive for Mr. Johnson’s initial conduct:

He approaches these lower-class men with a gesture of largesse that is supposed to throw them off their feet. These porters are unsophisticated folk who remain unimpressed by the self-aggrandizing gesture. They, in fact, have the edge on him, for they have marriage (Lovell, 1976: 81).

In the relativistic intersection of cultural norms, he does not find assurance that divorce is not personal failure – on the contrary, his hope that talking about the divorce “would blunt it” falls through in a nameless warm and light café, in a casual encounter with three nameless porters, a universe apart from him. Just as he does not understand the formulaic social contacts, evident in his wonder at the toast with the interchangeable “prosit” and “salut,” Mr. Johnson does not realise the extent of inapplicability of his cultural mores to a foreign space. His opening up to the three diametrically different men in a language that is not his own reflects his unawareness of the unbridgeable gaps in diverse human communities, which only intensifies his solitude on the platform, “in the snow [...] falling heavily” (Hemingway, 1933: 207).

This section features another instance of relativity in exact dating, and it concerns the drink that the four men are enjoying during their conversation; Mr. Johnson clumsily asks for the best champagne with a wrong interrogative pronoun: “Laquelle est le best?”, only to receive the one-word reply: “Sportsman.” (Hemingway, 1933: 206). This detail also serves the purpose of finer characterisation, revealed later in the conversation, when it turns out that the only one amused is Mr. Johnson’s wife, and he is bitterly reminded of what he will lose at the dissolution of his marriage (Lovell, 1976: 85). Since there may be many alcoholic drinks offered under this umbrella term, archival materials were found to be of invaluable assistance in this case. In a 1930 civil court decision from Geneva in a litigation between Société des Établissements Mousset et Coron and Champagne Strub, Mathiss & Compagnie, regarding the similarity of names of several brands in question, these appear: “Le Sportif,” “Strub Sportsman Da Capo” and “Sportsman’s demi-sec Blankenhorn.” It turns out that the Strub company registered its brand “Sportsman” in the Institute of Industrial Property in Bern under the patent number 67 423, on June 5, 1928. On the other hand, Mousset et Coron had registered their own brand “Sportsman” on May 5, 1923, but they never publicly sold their products under the designations “Sport” or “Sportsman” –

instead, they used the brand “Champagne Strub” (Jurisprudence: Suisse, 1931: 31).¹ Following this lead, it is only logical to assume that the story must be set either in 1928 (less likely, due to the registration date and the months it takes for a wine brand to become famous), 1929, 1930 or 1931; the *terminus ante quem* could be early 1932, very close to the time of the story’s composition. In accordance with the third section, the year of Mr. Harris’s (and Hemingway’s) tragic death in the family could plausibly be 1928, and the story may have been set in 1929.

It is the third section of the short story that disturbs any linearly based temporal classification, which was analysed in Reynolds’s article in several possible time frames – in the references to George Shiras III’s photographs of wild animals, the panorama of the Sahara Desert, an Arab praying towards Mecca, and to Lawrence of Arabia. The first three details direct us to the year 1911, denoted by the aside comment: “That was nearly fifteen years ago.” By this account, the year 1926 may be the acceptable date for the setting of the story (Reynolds, 1992: 259), although Harris’s collocutor does not pinpoint the year authoritatively, leaving the reader in the zone of the included middle. Harris’s cryptic mention of David Belasco does not find a shred of understanding on the waitress’s part, which only goes to show his childish lack of resourcefulness in elementary intercultural communication; judging by this awkward starter, he is by a notch more confused than Mr. Johnson. This replica undermines any certainty about the year 1929, because the information on his being “dead now” (Hemingway, 1933: 207) necessitates a change in the timeline: David Belasco, an American theatrical director, playwright, producer and impresario, died in May 1931. This alteration draws the reader further from the approximate fifteen years after the *National Geographic* publications, but it is quite in keeping with the relativistic episteme – the short story gains another pivotal point and begins to distort the concept of uniform, linear time, following in Einstein’s footsteps in the dismantling of “the Newtonian world of fixed, certain, mechanical processes,” which left us “no more absolutes except one: the speed of light. All else became relative” (Reynolds, 1992:

¹ The author would like to express his gratitude to enologist Petar Samardžija, M.Sc., editor of the *Svet pića (World of Drinks)* magazine, for a precise explanation of proprietary differences between the alcoholic drinks *champagne* and *vin mousseux* – the designation *champagne* is a registered trademark for sparkling wines made in Champagne, and *vin mousseux* is used for other regions. Seen through this supplementary lens, Mr. Johnson’s misuse of the term *champagne* in Switzerland fits in well with his general ignorance of the country’s customs and characteristics.

257). To make the exchange even more absurd, Mr. Harris is not even sure that Washington is the headquarters of the National Geographic Society, which may serve as a conspicuous indicator of Hemingway's intention to create a new form for the short story genre. Careful as he was with geographic locales, he also meticulously planned who and what to include in these pruned dialogues, so the warning tone of the instructions to the *Cosmopolitan* editor should be trusted: "It is submitted to be published as it is with no changes and no deletions" (Hemingway, 1981: 367).

An unintended complication may arise from a literal following of Reynolds's otherwise excellent article, and it concerns the reference to T.E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, who fought alongside the Arab guerilla forces in the Middle East during World War I. When Mr. Harris mentions Colonel Lawrence's book, his collocutor, identified at the end as Dr Sigismund Wyer, Ph.D., vaguely remembers that "his book deals with Arabia" (Hemingway, 1933: 208). The book's photographs of certain Arabs in the desert prompted Harris's confusion about the Sahara panorama from *National Geographic*, and Reynolds dispels the doubt: "Hemingway's reference here is to T.E. Lawrence's *The Revolt in the Desert* which was not published until 1931 and which Hemingway bought that September" (Reynolds, 1992: 259). The men are probably talking about that exact book, but it was first published in England in 1927 by Jonathan Cape (*OCTLE*: 382, s.v. Lawrence, T.E.), and its first US edition was printed in the same year by the George H. Doran Company in New York (Biblio.com, *Revolt in the Desert*). At this point, the biographical information on Hemingway's purchase of the volume gives way to the interpretation of the short story in a relativistic manner, which is now supplied by yet another humorously plausible time frame – the period between 1927 and early 1932 appears as the new time lent.

After discussing the possible large-scale historical context of the storyline, which varies by the factor of years, we will pay some attention to the internal chronology of the events related to the train's hours-long journey. To that end, we created a diagram with the most relevant changes in the plot structure. In physical terms, an event is defined as a point in spacetime, without a specific duration in time or significant spatial extent (Steane, 2012: 40–41), so it can be represented as a dot in a chart. In order to show how relativistically the story was executed, we now give a visual representation of the events following the worldline (a line representing the history of a particle/body) of the train itself. To Einstein, the only possible way to measure time and the simultaneity of events was by means of identical clocks placed at different positions, whose pointers had the same positions

in the event’s vicinity (Einstein 2005: 32), which Hemingway followed almost verbatim.

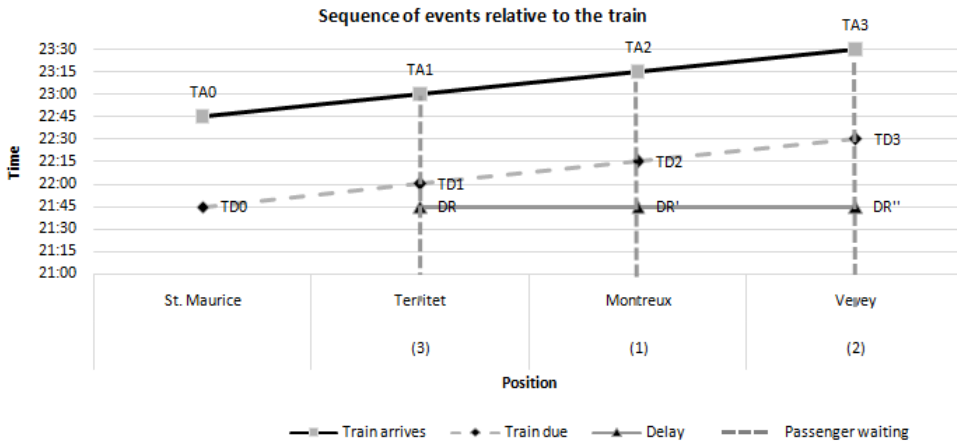


Fig. 1. The passage of the train through spacetime.

Legend:

DR – delay reported (at three different places synchronously, DR, DR' and DR'')

TD – train due (with TD0 at Saint Maurice)

TA – train arrives (again with TA0 at Saint Maurice).

For experimentation’s sake, the journey is divided into 15-minute intervals on the line from Saint Maurice (point of departure), via Territet and Montreux to Vevey (the train’s true geographic order). If the delayed train arrives at Vevey at 23:30, as Mr. Johnson definitely learns in Part II (an hour later than the planned 22:30 arrival), we may suppose that it will arrive at Montreux at 23:15, and at Territet at 23:00. By the same token, the train departs from Saint Maurice at 22:45. In all probability, the information on the train’s delay comes simultaneously to the three stations at 21:45 or a little earlier. Of all the plotted possibilities, these definitely take place: the news of the delay, Johnson’s glance at the clock at 21:45, information that his train is due at 22:30, the end of his conversation at 22:45, and the arrival of the train at Mr. Wheeler’s station of Montreux. The horizontal line represents the propagation of light, or radio signal which communicates the news of the delay to the three stations on the line instantly, hence the zero movement in time. On the other hand, the three passengers do not make any progress through space, but only in time (the vertical lines). The inclined dashed line symbolises the train’s unrealised timetable, and the full line running parallel to it stands for the train’s actual progress through spacetime. If the graph began relative to the first

plotline section (Montreux), the train's motion would be irreparably interrupted after Vevey and the train would be arriving at Territet virtually from nowhere.

One final point concerns both the basic narrative situations and the structural composition of the story regarding the placement of the parts of this triptych. The phrase "narrative situations" is given in the plural and the explanation relies on Franz Stanzel's tripartite typology: authorial, first-person and figural, out of which the last makes use of third-person utterances, but the point of view belongs to a character rather than the omniscient narrator. As Monika Fludernik puts it: "An authorial narrator has an external perspective on the events of the story while the perspective of a figural narrative is an internal one" (Fludernik, 2009: 88). When we take a closer look at all the three openings, we may notice that the first two sections (excepting the "stage directions") begin with already defined existents: "Inside **the** station café it was warm and light" (Hemingway, 1933: 204, 205), but the third part opens with a postmodifying phrase after "In the station café **at Territet** it was a little too warm..." (Hemingway, 1933: 207), which is perfectly acceptable in the first mention of a thing, person or phenomenon. The first two openings exhibit classical cases of Stanzel's figural situation, and the third follows the rules of the authorial situation, where the narrating instance sketches the location, time and characters in such a way that the perspective remains external, and the readers feel gradually acquainted with the storyworld. Hemingway puts the external perspective on the narrative existents at the end, having presented them internally twice before, and the only part that would not require a caption is the very Territet section, where the place name seems redundant – it only seems to be such because the captions do not represent the core parts of a prose narrative, and some initial information on the place should be incorporated into the very fabric of the diegesis. In view of the new form for a story, the captions assume a role that they do not usually have in short stories, and they (in the first two sections certainly) become playfully necessary and engage in a dialogue with the narrative text proper. Examples of Hemingway's figural narration are easy to find elsewhere – "Indian Camp" opens with: "At **the** lake shore there was another row boat drawn up," (Hemingway, 1987: 69), "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" opens with: "Dick Boulton came from **the** Indian camp to cut up logs for Nick's father" (Hemingway, 1987: 73), "The Three-Day Blow" opens with: "**The** rain stopped as Nick turned into **the** road that went up through **the** orchard" (Hemingway, 1987: 81), and so on.

It is not difficult to conclude that the reader of a figural narrative is supposed to gain both the accurate and wrong insights from the character's point of view, and that this situation relativises the concept of an omniscient narrator and

that of a perfect reader who understands all the facets of narrative representation. That perspective suits Einsteinian considerations quite well, since no safe conclusion can be drawn as to the exact time of action, the ontological status of the individuals (imaginable everyday collocutors or just allegorical figures in an absurd drama), the real distinctive features of the cafés at the towns, and if all the experiments in communication fail analogously, it is not unreasonable to think that in this relative world, where a person is as much a stranger in a strange land as another person is in their own, the reading order could also be changed with respect to the “repetitive” plotline. In terms of authorial narration and a “classically” formulated introduction to the story, the most suitable candidate for the first section in the sequence would unequivocally be the third part, at the beginning of which we learn the location without any paratextual aid, and can get oriented without resorting to the inscription on the “frame” of the vignette. Since no single perspective takes precedence in the relativistic world, and each of the several time frames has a value equal to any other, we could freely invite future readings of “Homage to Switzerland” that begin with the third section, then continue along the railway line into the first and second parts, showing a decentred story which functions as a valid fictional text even if approached and perused from different points of its extent.

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BIOGRAFSKI I PROSTORNOVREMENSKI PROTOTIPOVI: „OMAZH ŠVAJCARSKOJ“ KAO PRESJEK HEMINGVEJEVOG ŽIVOTA I AJNŠTAJNOVSKE RELATIVNOSTI

Rezime

Ernest Hemingvej je opisivao tri sižejne linije u „Omažu Švajcarskoj“ kao tri „dijela“, koji sadrže upadljivo sličan prostorni okvir (stanične kafee u tri gradića) u nečemu što se čini kao isti trenutak, pošto Simplon-Orijent ekspres u svim slučajevima kasni tačno sat vremena. Pisac je bio poznat po detaljnom istraživanju građe koju je namjeravao da preoblikuje u pripovijestima i, kako tvrdi Majkl Reynolds, namjerno je poremetio fizički poredak pojavljivanja željezničkih stanica (Terite, Montre i Vevej). Rad predlaže analizu simultanosti događaja i njihovo nelinearno tekstualno prikazivanje sa dva metodološka gledišta. Prvo, zasnovano na Hemingvejevom priznanju da je to „nova forma za priču...“ i „to što se sva tri dijela otvaraju na isti ili praktično isti način plod je namjere“, vodi istraživanje ka autofikcionalnom prototipu koji je predstavljen u tri varijacije. Drugo pokušava da osmotri sve događaje iz relativističkog ajnštajnovskog svemira, u kome priroda posmatranih događaja zavisi od položaja posmatrača i inercionog referentnog okvira, a sve ih pokreće očekivani voz. Uticaji relativnosti ispitivani su i na osnovu dvosmislenih

vremenskih referenci u tekstu, po kojima se radnja može odvijati u nekoliko različitih, ali podjednako prihvatljivih vremenskih okvira. Na sličan način, rad predlaže i to da je, ako čitalac slijedi jednostavniju auktorijalnu pripovjednu situaciju Franca Štancla, a ne složeniju figuralnu, najpristupačniji ulaz u tekst smješten u trećoj sekciji.

Ključne riječi: „Omaž Švajcarskoj“, biografija, relativnost, vremenski okviri, ponavljanje, inercioni referentni okvir, auktorijalna pripovjedna situacija, figuralna pripovjedna situacija

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