

The Spatial Structure in *Scoop*

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1. Introduction

The works of Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) mostly treat decadent themes decorated with satire of the upper class, black humour, and Catholicism. *Scoop* (1938) is one of the trilogy along with *Black Mischief* (1932) and *A Handful Dust* (1934) based on Waugh's travelling experiences. *Scoop* is only one which deals with the journalism among his works and Waugh satirizes a depravity of the journalistic world. The setting of the novel is Ishmaelia (namely Abyssinia). *Scoop* consists of three chapters and narrated by a third-person narrator.

In 1935, when Waugh was thirty-five years old, he himself went to Abyssinia as a correspondent of *The Daily Mail* because the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-6) had broken out there. *Scoop* is based on Waugh's on-site reporting experiences as a journalist.

This paper will address a spatial structure in the text, specifically, *Scoop* contains a conflict between country and city. In these spaces, Salter represents a sense of value in the city, while William, who is a protagonist in the novel stands for countryside values. This study aims to analyse the two characters' psychology and action in various spaces.

2. Salter's experience of the country and the Garden City

Salter is a journalist in *Beast*. He resides in "Welwyn Garden City" (*Scoop* 36) where he finds elements of "blameless domesticity" (36), also his idea of domesticity is described as "His [Salter's] annual holiday was, more often than not, spent at home [...]" (36). He clearly regards domesticity as important.

Welwyn Garden City is constructed in 1919 at Hertfordshire. It is the second Garden City in England. In general, Garden City has various functions in order to deal with the upsurge in the number of city labourers into sprawling urban areas along with the centralization of the city population and subsequent environmental pollution. Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), a social reformer, regarded Garden City as one of the solutions of such problems. Garden city was deployed in the suburbs, and it is designed as commutable areas of megalopolis and possible connection with nature. Megumi Arai (1961-) argues that "Suburb" or "suburban" is meant as a preservation of middle class status; as the lower-middle classes attempted to enter a circle of middle classes in the late 19th century. Consequently,

“suburb” contains a defensive notion of the upper-middle class who had already had residence in the country, and who jeered at the lower-middle simple-minded adherence to a sense of class distinction. The upper-middle class sees lower-middle class consciousness as an imitation to that of theirs. Additionally, whereas the upper-middle has a strong connection to the society’s authority and tries to retain the territorial sphere, the classes below the upper-middle tried to focus on their domesticity as they were not able to belong to the controlling body of society. In the place cited, “blameless domesticity” or “his annual holiday ...”, legibly indicates a virtue of the classes below upper-middle.

Salter has a discriminating concept of country: “[...] there was something unEnglish and not quite right about ‘the country’, with its solitude and self-sufficiency, its bloody recreations its darkness and silence and sudden, inexplicable noises [...]” (36). Moreover, Salter goes to the country in the last phase of the novel because he has to meet William who lives in the country. When Salter takes trains to the country, he regards country passengers as

“[...] as civilized people should when they travelled by train, had sat down squarely quite close to Mr Salter, rested their hands on their knees, stared at him fixedly and uncritically and suddenly addressed him on the subject of the weather in barely intelligible accents; there had been very old, unhygienic men and women, such as you never saw in the Underground, who ought long ago to have been put away in some public institution [...].” (226).

This quote denotes that Salter is disgusted by the manners and fashions of the country people. For him, they are unsophisticated and unsocializable. “[c]ivilized people” denotes socializable people in the city; thus, Salter thinks that he cannot find his place in the country, in other words, he considers himself “the other” when there. Moreover, Salter tends to focus on collectively cultured atmosphere in the city. In the quotes, “Underground” describes a space representing institutionalized and “civilized” behaviour, Salter feels at ease in the Underground as a comfortable space. Erving Goffman (1922-88), a sociologist, argues that “civil inattention” has civility and rules of etiquette. Gregory W. H. Smith, a sociologist, summarizes that “civil attention” is “[a] rule of ‘civil attention’ constrains the conduct of unacquainted others on the street, persons walking past each other silently being likened to passing cars dipping their lights.” (Smith, “Goffman, Erving” *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology Volume IV* 1997) In other word, the moment a person glances at others, he/she averts their eyes to others, a sign of urbanness as they ought to pretend their indifference to others in public spaces and they indicates that they are not curious about others in public spaces. Salter was disciplined in such physical behaviour by the socialization.

As a result, Salter undisguisedly estimates that the country is ugly and savage as is shown in his discriminative consciousness as it becomes a manifestation of representative suburban narrow-mindedness.

3. William's experience is a labyrinth city

William's experience in the city becomes a contrast to Salter's. William, opposite to Salter, has an instinctive dislike of the city which is full of bustle and hustle. William receives a telegram from the *Beast* in the beginning of the novel, and then he takes a train to London. When he arrives at Paddington station, he feels "[...] the atrocious city was all around him." (34). The city represents oppression as walls intimidate William. Similarly, when he arrives at Fleet Street, his impression of the area is described "The megalopolitan building, numbers 700-853 Fleet Street, was disconcerting. At first William thought that the taxi driver, spotting a bumpkin, had driven him to the wrong address." (34). As a confusing space, "wrong address" is used in this scene, expressing William's psychological condition – bewilderment and confusion – with the representation of the city complex in the text.

Such transformation from the city as a collective body of people and information to a confusing complex for William hints at the city as a labyrinthian space using two images; walls and wrong address are intuitively recalled for him who is out of place. The images of the labyrinth of the city also are placed prior to a rhetoric on the text.

'Forgive me' said William, 'I'm afraid I know very little about journalism.
What is U.N.?'
'No kidding?'
'No,' said William, 'no kidding'
'Never heard of Universal News?'
'I'm afraid not.' (77-8)

This scene describes Corker (a correspondent of *Universal News*), who teaches journalism to ignorant William. They happen to be co-passengers to Ishmaelia, and Corker starts to talk about news in Ishmaelia, William does not comprehend. Apparently, the quote seems trivial and comical. Nevertheless, William overwhelms Corker with questions, a sign which indicates William's naivety and ignorance in the journalistic world; in other words, the form of parrot-like query indicates that the talk is redundant and repetitive, a vicious circle. William strays into a professional labyrinth. Corker tries to educate him about journalism, nonetheless, William simply embarrasses Corker and overwhelms Corker with his basic queries concerning journalism. Such excessive queries suggest that William wanders into a blind alley. Trivial talk becomes an analogy of the labyrinth which ties William's query to spatial

and rhetorical strategy of the text.

4. An encroachment of the lies in journalistic world and William's representation of the country space.

Corker starts to talk about two journalists. One is "Wenlock Jakes" (80) who is the highest salary earner, another is "Hitchcock" (80) who is a Wenlock Jakes in England. The former created a fake provocative article about an outbreak of the revolution in the Balkans (in fact, the revolution did not break out there) which effectively triggered off a revolutionary movement. Jakes is ironically awarded the Nobel Peace Prize through his false accomplishment on the battlefield. Although Hitchcock also continues to write articles without any legitimate realities, his journalistic performances are acclaimed. This hidden immoral side of the reports sarcastically relates that the articles are not only foregrounded by journalists and received as a fact, but also the journalistic world was too ironically supported by the wrong information. Such a corruption of journalism is prevailing and it indicates a complicated and ludicrous world of the media.

Fleet Street, as already mentioned, is the journalistic headquarter which widely ranges street numbers 700-853. There are a number of press buildings which emanate stately authority, nevertheless, the interior of the space figuratively represented by lies, and journalists disguise the falsehood. Fleet Street, in the text, is paradoxically supported by lies. Such reversal of truth parallels William's problematic representation of the country space.

William is a person who resides in "Boot Magna" (26) which is a fictional location in the countryside of England. The Hall and the garden are depicted with decayed images, especially, the trees are described as,

"[...] had suffered, some from ivy, some from lightning, some from various malignant disorders that vegetation is heir to, but all, principally, from old age. [...] some even now, in June, could show only a handful of green leaves at there extremities. Sap ran thin and slow; a gusty night always brought down a litter of dead timber. (26).

Unlike the summer freshness of June in England, this passage obviously denotes decayed and stark images in the garden. David Lodge (1935-) analyzes the above-mentioned passage as follows:

"The trees in the park reflect the state of human inhabitants of the house, a family of ancient and noble lineage now enjoying neither modern comforts nor traditional dignity, its energy and resources almost entirely absorbed by the lavish maintenance of an army of aged bedridden servants. (Lodge, *Evelyn Waugh* 7)

According to Lodge, the decayed garden signifies a reflection of Hole resident's inertia. Although Lodge's reference does not go further, the text can be interpreted that William's psychology is concerned with this decadent space of the country.

When William goes to Ishmaelia as a correspondent, he gets an important scoop from a Russian woman who works for a small hotel in Ishmaelia and William falls in love with her for the first time. When William notices his love for her, the scene is described an image of the deep sea, reflecting his psychology: "[...] huge trees raised their spongy flowers and monstrous things without fur or feather, wing or foot passed silently, in submarine twilight. (147); he finds "landbound" (147); the scene ends up "A lush place" . (147) The "landbound" symbolically expresses solid attachment binding to country. In other words, Africa becomes an emancipated space yet affiliated to his comfort in the country. In addition, "huge trees" and "monstrous things [...] passed away" paraphrases William's desire of subconscious, he knows for the first time his flowering masculinity and "lush" desire.

"Lush Places" are William's country column in *Beast*; his way of writing is slipshod because of "[d]rawing on the observations of a lifetime and after due cross-examination of the head keeper and half an hour with the encyclopaedia, William had composed a lyrical but wholly accurate account of habits of the badger [...]" . (29) It is not based on his real-life experience in the country. William makes up a picture of the countryside irresponsibly in "Lush Places" . In fact, a parish minister originally writes the column on a country. It is a column which William happens to take over due to the death of the minister. The contents of "Lush Places" are "*Feather-footed through the plashy fen passes the questing vole...*" (30) and in end of the story, "*...the wagons lumber in the lane under their golden glory of harvested shaves; [...] maternal rodents pilot their furry brood through the stubble; ...*" . (254) William described brilliantly the inherent nature of the country as like a fresh green space. Nevertheless, an above-mentioned attitude of William's writing denotes whether he really saw a beautiful green is exceedingly unreliable, and also "Lush Places" were open, peaceful and innocent spaces which are irreconcilable with the decayed park. Moreover, a depiction of the beautiful country was almost not seen on the text – except "Lush Places" . As a result, the textual space – "Lush Places" — were notionally formed and idealized by William.

Evelyn Waugh confines himself in his country house after the two marriages, he role-plays showing eccentricity as a country gentleman. Despite such habits, Waugh succeeds in presenting the beauty of the country in *Scoop*.

5. Conclusion

The city (Fleet Street) and the country generally tend to claim opposing schema, in the case of *Scoop*, those space are supported by lies. William who wants to express the country does not have his own language which describes the country, in addition, the journalist's ways of expression fake a truth with lies. On the one hand, both underlies an impossibility of true representation, on the other hand, William is ironically able to represent scoops in the journalistic sphere (and labyrinth as a confusing space for him).

In the case of Salter, the space (especially in the train) limits his range of how to perform and he tends to like codes of conduct in the public space. William does not know behaviour as a journalist, thus, his acting is paradoxically not limited to its space. He is entirely an amateur in the journalistic world and is not disciplined an education of journalism so that he paradoxically wins scoops.

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