EVALUATIVE MEANING AND ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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ABSTRACT

In the framework of traditional descriptive semantics, evaluative meaning is defined as an aspect of affective meaning. By virtue of its general positive and negative evaluation, evaluative meaning finds its place in the compartment of interpersonal meaning in functional linguistics. The concept of evaluative meaning is also in agreement with the categorisation of meaning in contemporary stylistics. Having stated its spread and disagreement with logic, the cultural significance of evaluative meaning is analysed in this article. Employing the contextual and binary methods of analysis, it has been shown that much of cultural significance in fiction and the image of culture in general owes much to evaluative meaning. It is both plain evaluation and its emotive component that increase the potential of evaluative meaning in fiction and render most delicate senses in it. In fiction, evaluative meaning ranges from rude and moderate name calling to metaphor and irony at the other extreme. The chosen methods appear sufficient in the analysis of evaluative meaning, while its expressiveness is shown to gain much because of its logical inconsistency.

Like any rational description of language, the linguistic analysis of research material is a fundamental engagement in language study. Like any rational undertaking of man, the linguistic analysis of meaning is expected to comply with the rules of logic and concrete methodological principles. The linguistics of the twentieth century had seen much formalised analysis of language, which definitely gratified some of the authors as an exercise in formal reasoning rather than as an adequate description of natural human language. One of the problems of natural human language is that it is idiomatic and deviant, which means that it often defies logic and this is obvious in the analysis of meaning. A general question that this paper addresses concerns the socio-cultural significance of evaluative meaning. It further concerns rational treatment of the linguistic phenomena to which logic applies in the least. A more specific question would be that of the method which would apply to the analysis of the most delicate aspects of meaning which we encounter in statements like the following:

1) The measurement of ultra-short light pulses was *a remarkable achievement*
    in quantum electronics.
2) I remember Lady Oxford, one of *the most remarkable female personalities
    of the century*, when she was old   (Cartland 1969: 257).
3) Our subjective impression of a poem is *perfectly all right* until someone
    else comes along who disagrees with it. Then it is no good reiterating such
    phrases as 'But I like the poem', 'I think it's *good*'. This gets us nowhere,
    for the person who thinks the poem is *bad* will want reasons for our opin-
    ion. Again, the only thing is to try to rationalize the subjectivity inherent in
    our approach by looking at the language and seeing what is it in it which
    has caused *such a favourable or unfavourable reaction* (Crystal 1968: 68).
4) But literary works never lie wholly within the codes that define them, and
    this is what makes the semiological investigation of literature *such a tanta-
    lizing enterprise*   (Culler 1976: 105).
5) The development of methods by which one can determine, for example,
    which features of bluebird song are communicatively functional for blue-
    birds is probably *the knottiest problem* in the whole field of animal com-
    munication   (Hockett 1977: 131).
6) How *amazing* (Drabble 1971: 21). It's *perfect* (Drabble 1967: 131). David
    thinks she's *awful*   (Drabble 1971: 137).
7) 'Louise looked *quite ravishing* in a coat without a collar and *a wonderful
    fur hat*   (Drabble 1967: 87).
8) In this, her longest and *finest novel*, her first since *the greatly acclaimed
    The Realms of Gold*, one of the best English novelists writing today …*
    gives us a constellation of English lives, each at a crucial point of change
                                                        (Drabble 1977, the front book flap).

It is the question of evaluative meaning in language that arrests attention in the
highlighted parts of the utterances above. Even representatives of general seman-
tics, who adhered to non-Aristotelian logic, acknowledged the weight of evalua-
tions in human language and related them to culture as "the uniquely human trait"
(Hayakawa 1962: viii; Rapoport 1962: 22). All linguists with any breadth of vi-
sion realised the significance of this aspect of meaning in human language be-
cause it is considerable. But logicians saw no place for this phenomenon of mean-
ing. One can consider a recent pronouncement in a course on reasoning: (logical
positivism) "regarded statements of value as meaningless. *Democracy is good.
This piece of art is beautiful.* To say so, is to say I like it. Likewise, statements of
what ought to be done are meaningless" (Zarefsky 2007: s. p.).

   Evaluative meaning may be defined as calculated or judged assessment of
the quality, importance or value of something or somebody or a spontaneously
expressed opinion of the kind, quality or category of somebody or something.

Cf. (2), (3), (6) and (7) above. This definition attempts to encompass both the conceptual meaning[1] of the word and its contextual meanings which relate to concrete instances of its use and cannot be exhaustingly accommodated in dictionaries. This definition also suggests that adjectives and adverbs are the principal carriers of evaluative meaning. With a few exceptions that relate to conceptual meaning, adjectives and adverbs, indeed, convey evaluation. Adjectives of colour and names of material would make exceptions but even these adjectives may become evaluative through the extension of their meaning figuratively. For example:

9) This means, figuratively, the old *wooden warships* (*OALD*).
10) The actress gave a rather *wooden performance* (*LDOELC*).
11) It was a small *iron casket*.
12) She was known as the "*Iron Lady*".
13) I think you have to have a man of *iron will* to make some of these decisions (*CIDE*).
14) "*an iron hand* in a velvet glove" (*LDOELC*).
15) The lights changed to *red* before I could get across.
16) Doris Lessing referred to herself as the old *Red*.

Most adjectives and adverbs are not only evaluative in sense but express subjective evaluation, as examples (10), (12), (16) indicate. Adjectives and adverbs of subjective evaluation are fairly general semantically. One can realize this when comparing such synonyms as *wonderful* (= 'something you enjoy very much, that gives you great pleasure and is extremely good'), *lovely* (= 'something you enjoy very much, that gives you great pleasure and is very attractive') and *delightful* (= 'something that gives you great pleasure and is very attractive'). Minding these definitions drawn from the Seventh Edition of the *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*, one can deduce that these complimentary adjectives differ basically in their collocative meaning,[2] while their conceptual meaning is virtually identical and means high praise. Therefore it is possible to conclude that adjectives and adverbs of subjective evaluation generally group around two poles of meaning – the positive and the negative. For example: *good*: *perfect, lovely, amazing, excellent*, etc.; *sweetly, pleasantly*, etc. vs. *bad*: *terrible, horrible, awful, ghastly, frightful*, etc.; *rudely, sourly*, etc. (cf. Mednikova 1954; Drazdauskiene 1970: 109-111). Although this generic semantic distinction which relates to the meaning of adjec-

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[1] "Conceptual meaning (sometimes called 'denotative' or 'cognitive' meaning) is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication, and … integral to the essential functioning of language in a way that other types of meaning are not…" (Leech 1976: 10).

[2] "Collocative meaning consists of the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment" (Leech 1976: 20-21).

tives and adverbs of subjective evaluation had been drawn in the framework of traditional and descriptive linguistics (Mednikova 1954), the categories of the positive and negative evaluative sense are so general and neutral that they fit in the framework of functional linguistics.

Evaluative meaning, which centers around two poles of the positive and negative evaluation and which belongs to a broader category of affective meaning, would enter the interpersonal component in the meaning potential of language. The interpersonal component of language maintains the potential to express social and personal relations, attitudes and feelings. The clause as "the entry point into a network of options which constitute the meaning potential for the expression of processes" includes various participant functions and relations. The clause can be downgraded to the words of the language as its ultimate components of meaning (Halliday 1976: 21). Thus, interpersonality as a macro component of meaning stretches to the meaning of concrete words. In the present case, these words would be adjectives and adverbs of subjective evaluation along with all other words expressing affective meaning. The meaning of evaluation and attitude may have independent prominence in the clause but it may also influence and merge with modality, the basic constituent in the "interpersonal" component of meaning. The concept of evaluative or, more generally, affective meaning thus comes to be accommodated in the functional conception of language and theory. In pragmatics, too, evaluative and affective meaning would feature as a resource in providing implicature and explicature while understanding utterances (cf. Blakemore 1992: 57-59, 156-159; Verschueren 1999: 32-36, 42-44, 137). In the context of the present paper, this semantic categorizing is acceptable theoretically and useful methodologically as it simplifies the method.

The spread of evaluative meaning would be a factor of credibility in the present investigation. In a very concise summary of verbal communication, one can assume that evaluative meaning is profuse and positive in the phatic use of language, although irony is not inconceivable in this sphere of language's functioning. Contrariwise, evaluative meaning is common, direct and often negative in strenuous referential use of language. For example:

17) It's *very kind* of you to say so.
18) '… how *enchanting* to see you!'   (Drabble 1967: 119).
19) 'What *an adorable baby*!'   (Drabble 1971: 36).
20) How *deadly*!   (Drabble 1967: 60).
21) But Elizabeth's wintriness thawed when she found that not only was she placed on George's right hand … but that every dish was started with her, and she even asked Irene if she had been painting any of *her sweet pictures* lately
                          (Benson 1978: 246).

22) … David immediately turned on the charm. / 'Old friends of Emma's?' he was saying in no time, 'Oh you must come back and have a drink.' / They *knew better than to accept*, but they were *delighted*

(Drabble 1971: 53-54).

23) … She has two children, whom she brings up in the most conventional middle-class way, fearful about their manners and their futures

(Lessing 1981: 357).

24) I am feeling that he's *terribly off the point…*   (Lessing 1981: 359).

25) '… But I swear I'd think she was *awful* anyway. She's *so bloody middle-class*. And she's ever *such a socialist*   (Lessing 1981: 366).

26) *Pretty clothes* and *exciting hats* stimulate their imagination and make them feel they too are *glamorous* and *attractive*   (Cartland 1969: 164-165).

With minor exceptions, such distribution of evaluative meaning holds true cross-culturally. The spread of evaluative meaning in English has been invest gated to a degree (cf. Cruz Cabanillas 2006; Martinez 2006), while negative or ironic evaluative meaning has bee shown to dominate in the vocabulary naming woman and the female world in several languages (cf. Grauberg 1989; Strazhas Kameneckaite 1990; Kiełtyka 2005). This paper, however, will focus on evalua tive meaning in English. Its aim is to highlight the significance of evaluative meaning in reflecting culture in imaginative literature and to test a method of analysis.

What has been called evaluative meaning here has had other names in linguistics. Evaluative meaning would identify with affective meaning[3] and, as an aspect of connotative meaning, with biased and emotive meaning. As has been mentioned, it always expresses either positive or negative sense in subjective assessment (cf. Hayakawa 1964: 82-92, 44-53, 107; Leech 1976: 10-27; Jackson 1988: 58-60). As the definition given by Leech (1976) shows, affective meaning incorporates evaluative meaning. It is just that the concept of affective meaning basically rests on biased sense as the most frequent examples of unfavourable names indicate (cf. *fascist, racist, socialist*, etc.). Incidentally, the descriptor *evaluative* features in the explanation of affective meaning by Leech (1976: 58). Biased (purr words and snarl words) or affective meaning (Hayakawa 1964: 44-50) has been mistrusted by theorists who deliberated the success of verbal communication (Ogden – Richards 1923: 149, 202-205, 223, 239; Hayakawa 1962: vii). These authors brought out how the success or failure of communication depended on the speakers' "attitudes towards their own utterances".

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3   Affective meaning names the personal feelings of the speaker reflected by his language, "including his attitude to the listener or his attitude to something he is speaking about" (Leech 1976: 18).

A recent study which partly deliberates the question of evaluative meaning discussed in the present paper is "Lexical stylistics" (Cassirer 2003). In an overview of the field, the author finds that "all semanticists seem to agree" that cognitive and non-cognitive factors of signification differ in language. Evaluative meaning in the present paper would identify with non-cognitive aspects of meaning. He himself chooses the term non-referential elements of meaning and points out that this "subject has not been satisfactorily researched and specified" (Cassirer 2003: 3). The terminological diversity in this field, for which he refers to Leech (1976) and Lyons (1957), is an extra item of evidence confirming the fact that the field awaits research (Cassirer 2003: 4). On the one hand, neither descriptive, nor structural or generative linguistics favoured semantics with its deviant and unstructured subject, as Cassirer (2003: 3) confirms by a quotation from Leech (1976: 2-9). On the other hand, researchers tended to identify stylistic meaning with the social aspects of meaning and designate it by degrees of formality. This line of reasoning had not been controversial but it was pursued so rigidly that the emotive elements had been removed out of focus in linguistic description, as Cassirer confirms with reference to Jakobson (1966: 353).

Cassirer (2003) challenges the existing works in semantics on the grounds of the insufficient description of the stylistic value of the word. He maintains that the categorization of words according to style level is determined contextually and is "relatively easily established". The aspect of the "emotive overtones" is another dimension in the stylistic value of the word. It is "controversial and less self-evident", but has to be included into the stylistic value of the word (Cassirer 2003: 2). Cassirer sets a task to himself to study and define the stylistic value of the word in its relation to style level while encompassing the "emotive overtones" of meaning. This author aims at providing "a foundation for systemic notation of style factors in dictionaries" (Cassirer 2003: 8) specifically concerning Swedish as a second language, and he draws on *The measurement of meaning* by Osgood (1957) and other authors. He focuses on three aspects of meaning discerned by Osgood – evaluation, potency and activity, which "undoubtedly correspond to properties which semantics terms 'affective', etc." (Cassirer 2003: 4). Cassirer assumes that it is credible to establish "prototypical style values for the words of a language" because "prototypical meanings on the 'cognitive' side of signification" are accessible drawing on research in psycholinguistics. He further turns to the concept of language in use to distinguish "between the meaning of an isolated word … and the meaning of a word in operation" (Cassirer 2003: 5), solely with the view to design a framework of the description of the meaning of the word in lexicography.

The choice of the material and its analysis in Cassirer's work lend a possibility to the linguist to gain an insight into the nature of evaluative meaning. First, this author analyses evaluative or biased words, such as: *wonderful*, *chance* and

promise, *risk*, *threaten* and *sadist* while arguing that these words show that "stylistic variables are lexicalized in language" (Cassirer 2003: 5). Second, Cassirer clearly distinguishes what he calls the "emotive overtones" in the meaning of the word and contrasts it with the degree of formality that is also a part of the meaning of the word. Third, drawing testimony from the componential analysis of the selected words, Cassirer argues that the positive and negative value of the respective words is not arbitrary. Irrespective of whether "these factors are to be assigned to the semantic or the stylistic dimension of the words", these value factors, or the evaluative sense (in my terms), are inherent in the words. The assumption is that the evaluative sense is so essential in the meaning of the words of subjective evaluation that "one who does not grasp these value factors … cannot be said to fully understand these words" (Cassirer 2003: 5).

This is an important point to my concept of evaluative meaning. As is well known, evaluative meaning, like connotation in general, may be contextual or adherent. Its most obvious cases would be metaphor and irony, as well as various random connotations in different contexts. But evaluative meaning may be inherent. Evaluation which is part of the word's meaning by being inherent in it makes even the simplest words stylistically marked. The evaluative sense of concrete words confirmed analytically and recorded in British and American dictionaries focus the attention of the analyst by directing him to the significant in the word's meaning. One has to be familiar with the connotation of a fat and slovenly woman in the word *cow* in American English as with the slang status of this noun to perceive how coarse Rhett Butler was in his thoughts of women in the following quotation: "When I think of my brother, living among *the sacred cows* of Charleston, and most reverent toward them, and remember his stodgy wife and his Saint Cecilia Balls … – then I know the compensation for breaking with the system" (Mitchell 1973: 238). Similarly, the British English connotation of a mean unpleasant woman in the word *cat* is insufficient to read adequately the meaning of Scarlett's words in the following quotation: "But they'd suspect it was your bedroom and that's just as bad. … Everybody will be talking about you and saying you are fast – and anyway, Mrs. Merriwether knew it was your bedroom." / "And I suppose she'll tell all the boys, *the old cat*" (Mitchell 1973: 161). In American English, the noun *cat* connotes a woman who makes spiteful remarks. Only provided this dictionary definition, a foreigner can get the precise meaning of Scarlett's words. Indeed, a lack of familiarity with or the neglect of the evaluative sense of the words which possess it would make one's understanding and reading incomplete.

Words with strong affective meaning can stimulate the listener's reaction or expose his ignorance. Words which are known as biased words (e.g. *a fascist, a sadist* or *a fanatic*) tend to elicit a denial in response and with good reason (cf. Cassirer 2007: 4) because their evaluative sense diminishes their conceptual

meaning and "the word becomes a manifestation of censure". This is the effect of words with strong affective meaning. This would not be the case with adjectives and adverbs of subjective evaluation unless one applied the negative words directly to someone in person. Otherwise, adjectives and adverbs of subjective evaluation are milder semantically because of their generalized positive and negative sense and because of their functional distribution with the aim to please, to encourage and to involve even through the negative sense and emphasis.

Appreciating the stand of the linguists who defied the use and abuse of emotively coloured words and the resort of unscrupulous speakers to words with affective meaning to the detriment of communication, one cannot miss the point that, like all affective meaning, evaluative meaning is significant in imaginative literature. In fact, until one keeps to the level of conceptual meaning in fiction, one cannot grasp overtones of meaning, one cannot perceive images nor appreciate them. As a common name to associative meaning, reading between the lines is well known to sensitive educated readers, not only to literary scholars and to linguists analysing literary texts. All sensitive people perceive associative meaning in literature and in communication, although they may not be familiar with the terms denoting it. But the sense of affective and stylistic meaning in fiction is more significant to scholars than to average sensitive readers.

To appreciate the art of and the language in fiction, one has to turn to associative meaning in which evaluative meaning has an important role to play. Associative meaning, which includes affective, stylistic and evaluative meaning, rests on the connotation of the word (Leech 1976: 14-18). In their "pragmatic study of language", Ogden and Richards (1923: 188), for instance, mistrusted connotation as "a dangerous term". The role of connotation in imaginative literature has been emphasised by semioticians, though. Barthes (1989), for instance, reasoned that to identify a random phrase in fiction and in routine language is to show that it is only the medium of language that creates the image of reality in fiction. But this is not a simple representation. Barthes argued that language represents reality only as a socio-culturally determined medium (1989: 282). The writer creates and the reader perceives the image of reality in literature only in as much as they both share in the culturally significant meaning of language. The realism of literature can in no way be verified because literature "is dissociated from an immediate social context and its meaning has to be self-contained" (Widdowson 1979: 69) and because it is impossible to know whether or not literary events "have somewhere a latent existence" (Miller 2002: 45). Yet literature has the power to enclose a reflection of reality and to transfer its image not infrequently in recognizable shapes (cf. Miller 2002: 20). This complicated relation between literature and reality is materialized through connotation and never through denotation (Barthes 1989: 283). Accepting this concept as trustworthy, I shall at points replace the term connotation by the term

associative meaning because my focus centres on evaluative meaning. Connotation remains an inherent property of language however its function varies and the processes whereby meaning is perceived may merge or spread in time.

Thinking of the process in which the image of reality is gleaned by the reader, the perception of meaning when its different aspects accumulate simultaneously and separately acquires significance. Minding that fictitious reality can be often perceived in recognizable shapes without any factual testimony, the analyst has to conclude that it is different types of associative meaning which, owing to the power of connotation, stimulate imaginary perception of things and relations in literature as recognizable. One can consider, for instance, the representation and perception of the emotive reaction of a personage by the reader in the following excerpt from a modern novel. It is the end of a telephone conversation between two sisters. The caller had arrived from Paris to take part in her sister's wedding and telephoned her sister Louise from the Paddington station in London. Here is the end of their conversation:

> */…/*
>
> 'Where are they all at the moment?'
> 'Having tea.'
> 'Oh, I see. Well, you'd better go and join them.'
> 'See you', said Louise, and rang off. Not for her a diminuendo of 'Well, it's been nice hearing you, and you too, thank you for ringing, good-bye, good-bye, good-bye, 'bye then, see you, 'bye then', off
>
> (Drabble 1967: 13).

What the reader perceives while reading this end fragment of the telephone conversation and the accompanying comment in it is that the caller remains unhappy about the abrupt end of the conversation. It is the single verb *rang off* which notifies the reader of the abrupt end of the conversation. It is also the structure of the negative statement, which renders a very straight negative evaluation of the caller. These are the means conveying the negative impression which is painful to the sister who had called on arrival. The associative meaning of the loneliness and tiredness of the caller could be gleaned from the whole chapter rather than from this conversation. So we find here the caller displeased only at the abrupt end of the conversation. But the musical term *a diminuendo* does not only name a possible gradual closure of a conversation. It additionally connotes the expected pleasure that the protracted contact can possibly render by the decreasing sound. The *good-bye* repeated several times, which had not been uttered, strengthens the impression of the speech that could have pleased the caller. Although no special devices have been used by the author, the reader remains with the impression of a lonely and unhappy young girl who had not

heard any sweet or intimate words, and not even the commonest words repeated, which would have implied the speaker's appreciation of the telephone contact. So much associative meaning can be gleaned from this excerpt, and the reader perceives this meaning quicker than the analyst.

There is one further point in the associative meaning to the analyst. The analyst who assumes that this interpretation of the associative meaning in this excerpt is correct has to share the culturally determined evaluation of the abrupt end of the conversation as unpleasant and the possible prolonged talk as pleasant. The analyst has also to share the feminine feeling and the negative reaction in such situations to appreciate the caller's emotions. Most Europeans would be familiar with such sharing. Thus the analyst can claim a more or less complete understanding of the sense of the quoted excerpt, which his sharing in cultural values provides for him. If it is true that men care less for the speech for politeness sake (cf. Holmes 1995: 37-39, 47-49, 129), men would derive less emotive appreciation of the displeasure of the caller in this excerpt even if they shared common European culture.

Evaluative meaning as explained fixes the culturally determined sense of this conversation. Without the comment "Nor for her…" and the explication of the psychologically agreeable end of a conversation, the abrupt *rang off* would be neutral or culturally misplaced. The analyst unfamiliar with the West European conversational routine could consider the abrupt end of the conversation the best possibility available. It is the negative evaluation conveyed by the comment "Nor for her…" that limits the interpretation of the sense to the standard of the conversation of Western tradition. No other reading but the disappointment of the caller is the correct interpretation of its sense here. Evaluative meaning does fix the range of meaning in interpretation. Evaluative meaning is culturally bound since culture is, in a sense, the heritage of different forms in a system of values.

All socio-culturally significant sense derives, in fiction, from evaluative and emotive meaning, which allows comparisons and suppositions on the most delicate scale of appreciation. It is, indeed, within the range of connotation and on this level of delicacy that culture and cultural values can be perceived in their true identity. Literary representation would be misplaced and unrecognizable without the delicate evaluative meaning. It is through the subtlest evaluative senses that we recognize culture in fiction, perceive its consecutiveness and credibility, subconsciously record its identity and deduce its image in rational analysis. Associative meaning in general and evaluative meaning in particular or connotation, in Barthes's (1989) terms, does hold a relation between imaginative literature and reality. No other evidence being available in the perception of fiction, it is the slightest evaluative senses that build up an image of identifiable culture for the reader and the analyst. The difference is that the reader perceives culture through evaluative senses subconsciously and instantaneously,

while the analyst spares the time and effort in identifying culture in imaginative literature not infrequently while devising cumbersome mechanism of analysis, which exceeds the delicacy of the object.

It is true evaluative meaning so plainly conveyed is common in English conversation of the educated. It may be characteristic of the language of fiction only when the author exploits this aspect in the semantic potential of English, as is the case in the above quoted novel *A summer bird-cage* by Margaret Drabble, the novel *The Garrick year* by the same author or in other modern novels in limited contexts featuring routine communication. It is definitely more typical of conversation and not infrequently takes on ironic shades of meaning when quoted in descriptions, as examples (21) and (22) above indicate.

Depending on the style of the author, plain evaluative meaning may not be prominent at all in fiction. To illustrate, one can focus on two comparable descriptions from modern fiction. It is an episode in which Faro crawls on her knees through the grass of the verge searching for the keys of her car from the novel *The peppered moth* by Margaret Drabble and an episode of Ella and Paul arriving to a hedged-in field and spreading a rug on the grass to sit on and probably make love in the sunshine from the novel *The golden notebook* by Doris Lessing. Evaluative meaning is conveyed in the excerpt by Drabble but it rests on evaluation associated with names from the modern culture of the disposables, which Drabble (2001: 334-336) enumerates as she inspects the rubbish in the grass through Faro's eyes. In this case, evaluation features in fiction as a negative attitude to the most glaring aspect of the modern culture of the disposables. It is a significant attitude of cultured people. It is perceived through the sense of sharing and identity with the image in fiction, and there is nothing to search and discover guided by evaluative meaning. The discovery is the sense of sharing in the evaluation through the familiarity with the features of the culture exposed.

The excerpt from *The golden notebook* by Doris Lessing is scantier in evaluative meaning because the landscape is a very limited background to the emotional entanglement of Ella and Paul. The landscape is clean and scantily described in this excerpt, while its associative meaning leads to psychological images. Images identifying a culture do not feature in the excerpt by Lessing (1981). The setting is universal in this episode. Such cultural obscurity owes not only to the absence of evaluative meaning. It depends on the emphasis which Lessing places on Ella's thoughts as she analyses Paul's behaviour and on her awareness of the man's physical presence and inclination. The intensity of the author's focus does create a psychologically motivated scene which is culturally universal and only vaguely reminiscent of the tastes and choices in the West.

To discover the sense of evaluative meaning in fiction, Chapter LII from the novel *Gone with the wind* by Margaret Mitchell has been analysed. Two methods were combined in the analysis. The contextual method when applied al-

lowed to study the meaning of evaluative speech in co-text, in contexts of situation (cf. Halliday – Hasan 1990) within the Chapter analysed and within the complete novel. It was supplemented by the binary method of analysis known from semiotics (cf. Greimas 1989: 43-86), which originally had been based on the Saussurian descriptive linguistics. The opposition between the positive and negative evaluation was the binary opposition in the analysis.

Evaluation is permanent in the speech of the personages in the Chapter under analysis. Strong evaluative words verging on name calling are especially frequent here. Evaluative utterances are filled with emotive meaning and thus express full associative meaning as is usual in emotive prose. Biased evaluative words appear in Wade's, Scarlett's and Rhett's speech. Wade is mostly given to repeating some of the biased words he had heard among the adults ("Mammy says they're *white trash*") and to uttering his own mostly positive evaluations ("I guess you're 'bout *as brave as my father*; I'm going to go to Harvard … and then I'm going to be *a brave soldier just like him*" Mitchell 1973: 891). Scarlett's evaluations are strong and ironic as she thinks and especially as she voices her sneer at the neighbourhood children, Rhett and the political leanings in the South. Cf. "… *a detestable little brat*, Scarlett thought, *more like an ape than a child*; … and Mrs. Merriwether would as soon have *a free issue nigger* in her *sacred parlor* as one of us; my *gallant soldier laddie*; It's *a Yankee school* and I won't have you going to *a Yankee school*; Your father being *a brave soldier*; They're *good enough for you* - ; I consider this whole affair *a tempest in a teapot*; Oh, Rhett, … you're *funny*; So *the river-boat gambler and the speculator* is going to be *respectable*!" (Mitchell 1973: 893).

Evaluative words are very strong in Rhett's speech. Cf. "*As choice a collection of mules in horse harness* as you could group together; *those parties*; [joking] to give you *a wonderful stomach ache*; because the other little boys' fathers were *such fools*…; be ashamed before *the other little brutes*; *cruel creatures children*; … my daughter grow up outside *everything decent* in Atlanta?... I'm not going to see her forced to marry *a Yankee* … because no *decent Southern family* will have her; You … be *a brave man like your father*, Wade; he was *a hero*; that's proof enough of *heroism*" (Mitchell 1973: 891). Negative evaluation is by far stronger in Rhett's words and it is interchangeable with irony. Cf. "… do you think I'm going to let her … associate with *the riffraff that fills this house*; And *a damned sight too good for you*, *my pet*; Do you think I'd let her marry any of *this runagate gang you spend your time with? … Yankees, white trash, Carpetbag parvenus* – ; The O'Haras might have been *kings of Ireland* once but your father was nothing *but a smart Mick on the make*. And you are *no better*; I'd rather Bonnie was invited to eat dry bread in the Picards' *miserable house* or Mrs. Elsing's *rickety barn* than to be *the belle of a Republican inaugural ball*" (Mitchell 1973: 892).

Although the key of Scarlett's evaluations is not much lower, Rhett's speech is structured with respect to its intensity throughout Chapter LII. It consists of about five stages. First come blunt evaluations and these build up to a turning point, which marks his attachment to Bonnie. Following it, Rhett praises Mrs. Wilkes in the highest key ("Oh, spare me your remarks about her poverty and her tacky clothes. *She's the soul and the center of everything in Atlanta that's sterling*" Mitchell 1973: 892) and then voices his vow to pave the road for Bonnie's superb social acceptance. This is a strong evaluative phrase. Finally, Rhett's speech acquires gentlemanly features as he himself comes to be accepted by the society of the ladies of Atlanta. It comes on account of Rhett's fatherly behaviour.

The evaluative usage quoted above indicates Rhett's manly vigour and strong unpolished character as well as familiarity which is obvious in his attitude to Scarlett. But Rhett's strong evaluative words build up to a climax at which he assesses his way in life. This is marked by a blatant simile: "I've gone through life *like a bat out of hell*, never caring what I did, because nothing ever mattered to me" (Mitchell 1973: 891). And here comes the turning point, the vortex in Rhett's assessment of himself: "But Bonnie matters" (Mitchell 1973: 891). So far it sounds only vigorous and loving. The character is not yet fully exposed in these words. But it comes soon and is overwhelmed with emotion: "I'm going to cultivate every *female dragon of the Old Guard* in this town, especially… If I have to crawl on my belly to *every fat old cat* who hates me, I'll do it. I'll be *meek under their coldness* and *repentant of my evil ways*. I'll contribute to *their damned charities* and I'll go to *their damned churches*. I'll admit and brag about my services to the Confederacy and, if worst comes to worst, I'll join *their damned Klan* – … And you, *Madam*, will *kindly refrain from undoing my work behind my back*..." (Mitchell 1973: 892). This vow gradually delineates Rhett's character and his vigour not only shows, – it acquires the sense of the noblest purpose. His unpolished manner no longer matters.

What follows is a descriptive and deliberative consideration of the cynical changes in Atlanta and evaluation is replaced by evaluative descriptions, ironic deliberations and by stylistically marked names. It is in these sections of the Chapter under analysis that descriptions build up to metaphor. Cf. "... but he and other who sought to check the abuses could do nothing against *the tide that was running*. … there was a generation of children growing up in ignorance who *would spread the seeds of illiteracy down the years*. But with the operation of what came to be known as the governor's "*slander mill*", the North saw only a rebellious state that *needed a heavy hand*, and *a heavy hand was laid upon it* (Mitchell 1973: 894). The emotively charged language rich in associative meaning is dense in this Chapter. Evaluative words are not only strong. They are also frequent. Evaluative and emotive words charge the language of this Chapter so

strongly that pure name calling (as for instance: "because her mother was *a fool* and her father *a blackguard*"; "Scarlett, *you've been a fool*" Mitchell 1973: 892) sound mild. The stronger name calling ("You've been *a damned poor manager*" Mitchell 1973: 891) retains its full force, though.

As this review of the analysis indicates, evaluative meaning in emotive prose has a rich expressive potential, especially when it is structured and ranges through a whole set of devices. We have seen that evaluative meaning has ranged from separate items of evaluative vocabulary in the function of name calling to metaphor in which evaluative and emotive meaning is mixed and the power of which exceeds the expression of simple evaluations. Irony stands next to metaphor and is even more frequent in the Chapter under analysis. Evaluative meaning is a very significant phenomenon. Its simplest forms as in appellatives and in qualifying words express meaning based on connotation. In rare cases appellatives of this kind may approximate name calling. In cultured usage, though, this does not occur, while in emotive prose, name calling is a possible issue. As evaluative meaning almost always combines with emotive meaning in emotive prose, plain name calling is a rare case. In routine English, name calling does not take place either, because evaluation is essentially positive in it and evaluative meaning is complimentary in cultured usage.

Something remains to be said of the literary function of evaluative meaning. Whether related to associative meaning in literary usage or combined more narrowly with affective meaning, evaluative meaning is emotively charged. Therefore it is most significant in characterization and in atmosphere building. Both these functions have been seen realised in Chapter LII under analysis from *Gone with the wind* by Margaret Mitchell. But evaluative meaning has cultural significance in fiction as it does in routine usage. In the Chapter under analysis, evaluative meaning contributed to creating the image of conventional society of the American South. It is the society which centres on gossip, intimacy and confidences, on trust among its members and on the exchange of opinions of the people deserving attention. This observation can literally be drawn from the passages quoted above. It depends on the sophistication of the reader how much identity he can trace in the image of the society depicted. But it has to be observed that society depicted considerably with the help of evaluative meaning in *Gone with the wind* presents an image of a historically identifiable society of the American South. Society which would identify with that depicted in the novel under analysis no longer exists even in Britain, if one were to take Dame Margaret Thatcher's assessment for granted.

Familiarity with the making and cultural significance of evaluative meaning in fiction provides an extra insight into the cognitive potential of fiction.

One more conclusion is required and that is the possibility to analyse meaning which defies logic. It is true, evaluative meaning defies logic but the expres-

sive potential of literary language gains precisely because of its logical inaccu-racy. The contextual and binary methods were sufficient in the analysis of evaluative meaning in fiction, the only difficulty being its micro components and elusive character.

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