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## INTERTEXTUALITY IN *LOVE AMONG THE RUINS*

Robert Clark has been publishing since the 1990s. Born in 1952 in St. Paul, Minnesota, he has become one of the most promising contemporary American writers. So far he has published eight books, four of them fiction: *In the Deep* (1997), *Mr. White's Confession* (1998), *Love among the Ruins* (2001) and *Lives of the Artists* (2005). In 1999 *Mr. White's Confession* won the Edgar Award for the best novel. Robert Clark's fiction is particularly interesting in its use of intertextuality. His novels are overflowing with intertextual devices, most of them playing a crucial part in the overall perception of the novels. The wide range of intertextual references in Clark's novels is striking. He does not use only literature of any kind (both fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry) but also films, music, political speeches, and philosophical and psychological concepts and theories. The aim of intertextuality in Clark's novels is basically twofold – either it provides historical setting or it portrays situations and characters.

This essay will deal with *Love among the Ruins*, which is a story of love between two teenagers, Emily Byrne and William Lowry, who run away from home to the wilderness near the Great Lakes to cultivate their romantic relationship in seclusion from society. Their adventure, however, ends in Emily's death. Robert Clark's novel is remarkable as far as the use of intertextuality is concerned. Again it contains an enormous number of references to various works of art. Some of them are used to provide historical setting. It is 1968 and that is why William Lowry plays Jimmy Hendrix's *Hey Joe*. Other works of art are only alluded to briefly. In this case the reader can still read the book and fully understand the meaning conveyed, though knowing the context provided by the works alluded to may illuminate the situation much more. The new issue in the novel is that Clark decides to cite some works of art he refers to and, moreover, he acknowledges them. This time the quotations provide necessary context and Clark makes sure the reader really "gets it". This essay will deal with quotations from these works: Robert Browning's poem "Love among the Ruins", a musical *Candide* composed by Leonard Bernstein, a song "Often I think they have only stepped out" from Gustav Mahler's cycle *Kindertotenlieder* (*Songs of the Death of Children*), Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, and Richard Nixon's first inaugural speech.

Let me first deal with the goal of intertextuality. Poststructuralist theory is rather preoccupied with this concept. It is a puzzle, a mystery of the text that is up to the reader to solve. However, as Michael Riffaterre claims, the mystery of the text is to be solved outside of it: “What is unintelligible at the level of an individual text is fully comprehensible in the inter-textual context indicates that notwithstanding the length or the direction of the path walked by the reader in search of significance, the destination is always located outside a given text” (Turski 2001: 313). Contrary to this is Robert Scholes’s theory. He argues that “the perception of the allusion is *not* absolutely essential” though it may yield pleasure to the reader who discovers it (Turski 2001: 319). If the utmost destination of a text was really located outside of it, in other texts, it would require a knowledgeable reader to comprehend it. Following this argument, it would require a reader with encyclopedic knowledge and literature would become a truly elitist field. This kind of elitist reader is implied in Umberto Eco’s concept of the model reader who is not “so much a living individual but a theoretical being endowed with an infinite encyclopedic competence which enables him/her to intercept all textual allusions and move freely over all semantic fields” (Turski 2001: 317). The question is: What is the use of such a “model reader” to a writer? There are several ways to answer this question. If the writer really counts on such a reader, then he writes only for an elite of intellectuals excluding a substantial part of his potential audience. If he does not want to exclude this audience, he has to make sure that either the text is meaningful without comprehending his intertextual devices or the references are very well-known so that anybody is familiar with them or the writer has to make them very explicit so that the reader, first, notices them and, second, knows them, which provides necessary ground for the interpretation of the text.

All these strategies are used by Robert Clark in *Love among the Ruins*. Let us take the example of Sartre’s *La Nausée*. The book is mentioned only once in the entire novel. Moreover, it is only another unnecessary thing to be found in Emily’s room among her dolls and stuffed rabbit toys. Providing this “location” of the book diminishes its significance in the first place. Although having read it the reader may draw certain conclusions, it is not absolutely necessary to be acquainted with it for further interpretation of the text. Next Clark uses references which are generally well-known. The reference to the fairy-tale “Peter and the Wolf” plays an important part in the novel but it does not have to be re-narrated as most readers have known it since their childhood years, just like William and Emily. The third strategy is employed when the writer places enormous emphasis on a particular reference, considers it crucial for understanding his piece of art. He wants to make his message known as precisely as possible, which means to make sure the reader is familiar with the reference. This use of intertextuality will be the focus of my essay. In his novel Robert Clark provides the title of the work, its author and also cites either the whole piece or a passage that is crucial.

The aim of intertextuality is clear. References point at texts which “provide contexts within which other texts may be created and interpreted” (Chandler 2002: 199). If we want to make ourselves clear, we simply use examples. On the

other hand, while interpreting intertextual references, we always run a risk of “intentional fallacy”. We assume that the reference was selected deliberately by the author and thus it must have interpretative value. This does not have to be true at all; references we find do not have to be conscious. The only exception is direct, explicit allusions and acknowledged citations. It is the author’s reflexivity, his self-consciousness about the use of intertextual devices which makes them truly valuable for literary interpretation. Self-conscious use of intertextuality is easily recognizable by readers and thus has an indisputable effect on them. It produces pleasure of recognition, of “breaking the code”. Chandler also suggests another effect: “It appeals to the pleasures of critical detachment rather than emotional involvement” (Chandler 2002: 200). Does self-conscious intertextuality really aim at the readers’ critical thinking, at their ability to compare, or should the references rather form a harmonious whole with the text in which they appear?

For the purpose of this essay both Michael Riffaterre’s and Robert Scholes’s ideas of intertextuality have to be rejected. Robert Clark’s use of intertextuality in *Love among the Ruins* makes it clear that the meaning of the novel does not lie either entirely outside of it nor is it restricted to the text of the novel itself. I will follow Daniel Chandler’s theory and treat references in Clark’s novel as context within which the novel itself will be interpreted. In this essay I will argue that although Robert Clark uses self-conscious intertextuality, and acknowledged quotations, it still requires a reader with a certain amount of knowledge of the whole works and their historical background to fully comprehend the message of the novel. Intertextual references in *Love among the Ruins* are not entirely self-sufficient. Further, I will argue that intertextuality stimulates the reader’s critical thinking and at the same time aims at creating unity within the text. In this novel the reader’s critical thinking is generated by drawing parallels as well as distinctions between the texts, yet all the parallels and distinctions fall in the scope of only two motifs: the motif of ruins/destruction and the motif of love. Following only two motifs harmonizes the intertextual devices with the text of the novel.

The first and the most important reference in the novel is that to Robert Browning’s poem “Love among the Ruins”. First, it introduces the motif of romantic love. It is Emily who reads the poem to William, who is quite ignorant about literature in general. Not only the poem but also the story of the Brownings is essential for the reader’s understanding. Within the context of the poem the reader may notice that Emily Byrne and Elizabeth Barrett have the same initials. Browning’s poem is not only important on its own; it also introduces historical facts about the courtship of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. The reader is required to be acquainted with these historical facts to be able to draw a distinction between the nature of relationships between the protagonists in each couple. Moreover, a distinction should be made between the real historical facts and the “myth” of the romantic love of the Brownings. Emily’s knowledge of the Brownings is limited to this myth. In her longing for romantic love Emily imagines herself as Elizabeth Barrett who, in her opinion, blindly followed her beloved and was rewarded for that. However, for Emily this simple scenario does not work.

More insight into the actual nature of the story of the Brownings reveals important facts. In various books on this subject Elizabeth Barrett is always portrayed as a weak, indecisive character, partly because of her spinal injury and subsequent health problems, who is, on the one hand, unable to resist her father's tyranny and, on the other hand, pressed by Robert Browning into leaving her family. This is definitely not Emily's situation. She is a sensible woman with an enormous capacity for rational judgment and loving parents who, though with doubts about William's character, never say a word about her seeing her boyfriend. But Emily wants her ideal of romantic love and she will get it under any circumstances. When William suggests that they might leave their homes and asks her if she is going with him, she simply says: "I suppose I am" (Clark 2001: 152). She never doubts her decision and though she idealizes William's character, as he decides to leave home primarily to avoid college or being drafted to the Vietnam War, she is true to herself. Elizabeth Barrett expected of her relationship with Robert Browning "a life of intimate communion" (Karlin 1985: 152). Emily wants the same thing and is willing to do anything for it: "There was nothing Emily did not want to know about William, and nothing she did not want William to know about her, because knowing and loving, apprehension and adoration, had become, at least for now, one thing" (Clark 2001: 140). This is a paraphrase of another of Browning's poems used in the novel, "The Guardian angel": "All is beauty: And knowing this, is love, and love is duty" (Clark 2001: 108). For Emily love is a duty of a religious character, it is a moral imperative. Emily's fatal error, however, is that she judges William according to herself, that she requires of him the same duty to love. Here again Emily relies on the Brownings. In one of his letters to Elizabeth Barrett, Robert Browning appeals to the moral imperative of love to leave her family and marry him: "All our life is a form of religion, and all our action some belief. In your case, I do think you are called upon to do your duty to yourself; that is to God in the end" (Clark 2001: 108). But William mistakes this spiritual duty for an excuse to ask Emily to leave with him. He only selfishly abuses her conviction. Emily gives herself fully to William; against all odds she insists on practicing sex without any contraception, which fulfills her idea of "intimate communion", both spiritual and physical. After their escape she reads Gerard Manly Hopkins' translation of "O Deus, ego amo te" – a prayer of St. Francis Xavier expressing love for God disregarding any advantages gained from it: "'But just the way that thou didst me/I do love thee.' That was the part she wanted to hear, the part that might have been about them" (Clark 2001: 295). Although William is struck by these lines, he only mentions that another good reason for staying in the woods is that Emily does not have to be at school now and translate the prayer back to Latin. Their reasons for leaving home are quite different – Emily leaves because of the spiritual incentive of love whereas William because of his perceived need for self-preservation which eventually leads to the disaster of Emily's death.

The idea of love as a duty takes us back to Browning's poem "Love among the Ruins" and the motif of destruction. The world Emily and William live in is

indeed in ruins, ruins of failed ideals. The novel takes place in 1968, which was a year of political disturbances all over the world, but it is the immediate political situation in the USA that worries these two young people most. They start their relationship by exchanging letters immediately after Robert Kennedy's assassination. This event, together with the Vietnam War, is naturally one of the topics in their letters and it may also be associated with the poem. The poem portrays ruins of an ancient culture that brought about its own destruction and is now a "single turret that remains/On the plains" (Browning 37–38). In contrast to the rest of the world the USA had been spared a view of destruction and chaos for a long time. It was only its first lost war, the Vietnam War, that brought about disillusion and confusion. The failure in war caused by the lust for glory is the main theme of the poem:

In one year they sent a million fighters forth  
                   South and north,  
 And they built their gods a brazen pillar high  
                   As the sky,  
 Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force –  
                   Gold, of course.  
 Oh, heart! oh, blood that freezes, blood that burns! (Browning 73–79)

President Johnson's administration was considered responsible for the Vietnam War. As William's mother is an active member of the Democratic Party, he has direct access to a certain interpretation of the political situation. After Kennedy's death, since he was seen as the only strong presidential nominee with an anti-war policy, many people slid into despair. As William paraphrases his mother in his letter to Emily, "Nixon and Humphrey are just Tweedledee and Tweedledum – that it will just be more of what's happened with LBJ" (Clark 2001: 189). The American ideal of bringing peace to the oppressed peoples of Vietnam failed. Moreover, the assassination of Robert Kennedy was viewed by many young people of the period as putting an end to the only peaceful solution to this unfortunate situation. He was a potential messiah, a young people's idol, as indicated in Emily's letter:

We are sad here about Bobby Kennedy. I was only in the sixth grade when JFK was killed, and I didn't really take it in like my sister and her friends. So I kind of thought RFK would be our JFK, but it didn't work out that way, did it? [...] P.S. I know what you mean about RFK and everything. He (or somebody) could have been "for us". And now it is so sad to think we are alone. (Clark 2001: 198)

Emily and William, representing the youth of the late 1960s, are indeed alone like the lovers in "Love among the Ruins". But does their love really spring from a hope to restore order? They do not consider their love to have an implied ca-

capacity of a new beginning. They run away from the scene of destruction into the seclusion of the wilderness, which turns out to be no solution but rather another folly.

However, the marriage of the Brownings and “Love among the Ruins” are not the only allusions to the ideal of romantic love. There is also Richard Wagner’s opera *Tristan und Isolde*. After the children run away, Edward, Emily’s father, and Jane, William’s mother, develop a close relationship to each other which eventually culminates in a love affair. During Edward’s visits, while trying to understand why the children left, they listen to the opera, but they do not listen closely enough, as the lyrics of the opera might provide a possible answer:

[W]hat clearer explanation of what drove the children to what they had done than that very line of Tristan’s, which we might render “the ardent, indwelling love that had chased me from the blissful horror of death”? And as to where they had gone, is there a better answer than [...] “Where I had been for all the time and where forever I shall go: the vast realm of universal night, where our sole knowledge is but divine, eternal all-forgetting”? (Clark 2001: 194)

The story of Tristan and Isolde is yet another analogue of the myth of the Brownings. The two young people do not really leave for the wilderness because of their passionate love; they leave because of William’s pragmatic reasons. And though they hope they can live happily in each other’s arms in isolation, it does not come true. The reality of ordinary, everyday life catches up with them even in such romantic surroundings and erodes their fragile relationship. The Tristan and Isolde story also foretells Emily’s death. Yet she does not die for love but because of a failure of love, failure of spiritual insight into their relationship on William’s part. On the other hand, the opera also refers to the adulterous love of Edward and Jane. They indeed develop a passionate kind of love, but it is only an escape into illusion, into the isolation of Jane’s apartment where they can forget their unhappiness at least for a little while. It is Edward who finally realizes the true nature of their relationship: “It seemed to him that he had been in flight when he and Jane had come together and he had taken shelter there, and now he was in flight from that refuge; and what drove him on, now as then, was self-preservation, perhaps sheer terror” (Clark 2001: 258). Edward and Jane’s love is adulterous like that of Tristan and Isolde, it is also in a certain sense romantic, but whereas the love of Tristan and Isolde is meant to continue after death into eternity, Edward and Jane mistake the “eternal all-forgetting” for an escape from their misfortunes, for isolation, passivity and an inability to act.

This discussion takes us directly to yet another kind of love in *Love among the Ruins*: parental love. Edward and Jane do not only listen to Wagner, but also to Gustav Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder – Songs of the Death of Children*. Taking this reference into consideration together with another of Jane’s remarks, that “[Leonard] Bernstein said, ‘Mahler foretold it all’”, may lead a learned reader not only

to the song but also to Mahler's life (Clark 2001: 255). Could it be that Mahler's life fortells the fate of the characters in the novel? Virginia, Edward's wife, could be to a certain extent associated with Alma, Mahler's wife. The lives of both these women were restricted to the household. Alma, a talented pianist, was deprived of her music and social life by Mahler himself as "he had warned her from the first that there could be only one composer in the family" (Carr 1998: 144). Because of being pressed by Mahler to take care of household matters, she had a troubled relationship with their children, the younger one, Maria, in particular, because of her complicated birth. As Alma Wagner wrote in her diary, Maria was "'entirely' Mahler's child" (Carr 1998: 144). Virginia's life also takes place primarily in the household, except for occasional church charity activities, but unlike Alma, she does not complain; she is biblical "Martha rather than Mary" (Clark 2001: 214). This phrase also expresses Virginia's relationship to her daughter, for Emily is characterized as Mary. Though there are no extremes in their relationship, Virginia does not understand Emily and her stubborn decision-making. Moreover, there is one more important distinction between Alma Mahler and Virginia Byrne. It is Alma who eventually "sets herself free" and commits adultery. Again, in Mahler's life story as well as in the novel, we find both the motifs of destruction and love. Mahler's and Edward's failure to fulfill the role of a loving husband inevitably lead to the destruction of their marriages.

But Mahler himself was, indeed, a tragic prophet of his own fate. For lyrics of his *Kindertotenlieder* he chose poems by a German poet Friedrich Rückert, who composed the poems after his own children died. At that time Alma "warned him [Mahler] he was 'tempting providence'" (Carr 1998: 127). The *Kindertotenlieder* is really meant to be a warning to wake up Edward and Jane and chase them out of the desperate asylum of their love affair into action, but instead they opt for false hope that their children will come back on their own. They realize that their children may see them as stone-cold, unshakable authorities who will not be moved by anything, not even losing their children. Jane and Edward compare themselves to LBJ facing antiwar student protests, but one "just can't picture a man in such a position feeling anything" (Clark 2001: 253). Instead of showing their children the human face of authority, they stay cold on the outside, though not inside where they are prone to easy harm. The horrible realization after Edward translates the lyrics of the song should change them, but it does not. Edward makes an attempt to stop the pretension of their relationship but he ends up only moralizing. As Jane puts it: "As though you had the right to say that. As though you knew. You make one pathetic day trip up there to look for them and you think you can moralize at me. As though you were the martyr at this" (Clark 2001: 256). And though Edward claims that he cannot pretend anymore (he returns to his wife and leaves Jane for good), he maintains his illusory belief that Emily will return. It is the failure of Edward's and Jane's parental love which leads them into illusory self-preservation which eventually ends in Emily's death.

Pursuing the motif of destruction brings us to *Candide*. An interesting fact is that for this reference Robert Clark does not choose the actual book by Voltaire



but a musical comedy by Leonard Bernstein. Is it because he thinks modern audience may be more acquainted with the musical than with the book? Or does it simply fit the plot better, as listening to music when Edward and Jane have a date seems more natural than reading a book? Whatever the reason, it is still necessary for the reader to know at least the basic plot and some elements of the philosophy behind it. In his novel Clark uses only the last song in Bernstein's musical; however, the historical and philosophical background is so essential that it requires working with Voltaire's book rather than with the lyrics of the musical.

Voltaire's *Candide* is a critique of a number of philosophies in the era of Enlightenment, that of Wilhelm von Leibniz in particular. Thinkers of that era tried to solve the problem of the existence of evil in society. According to common sense, the existence of evil has two implications concerning God: either God is not entirely good or he is not omnipotent. As the idea of an imperfect God was nonsensical, the solution was that people perceived imperfections in the world because they did not understand God's grand plan and that was why all they perceived as evil did, nevertheless, aim at ultimate good designed by God. The era of Enlightenment also generated an idea of curing social ills with science, which still survives in modern politics. Leibniz provides a good excuse for all excesses which may be considered harmful or even destructive – though the medicine is bitter, it will result in perfect health. In politics individuals do not matter; the public good is the ultimate aim and as such it requires individual sacrifices. Politics then might be thought of as an attempt to imitate God's grand plan – individuals must suffer the side effects of the general healing process of society. In this sense the character of Jane in *Love among the Ruins* imitates the character of Pangloss in *Candide*. They are both loyal to this ideology: Pangloss as a philosopher and Jane as a politician. After all their misfortunes neither of them complains – though her son is gone and her lover has left her, Jane still sings along to the tune of "Make Our Garden Grow", and though he is nearly on his death bed with syphilis, Pangloss insists that "private misfortunes make the public good, so that the more private misfortunes there are, the more everything is well" (Voltaire 2002: 19).

Another parallel is the theme of the garden in *Candide*. It may be interpreted as an illusion of taking shelter in isolation from all that frightens us and erodes the order we have constructed for ourselves – in isolation the causal chain is easy to determine. The world Edward and Jane live in is definitely not the best of all possible worlds and, though they know it, they still hope that behind every misfortune they encounter there is a good reason, that there still exists the unquestionable rule of cause and effect. After losing her son, Jane takes no action at all; she shuts herself in her apartment and waits for William to return. Edward is no exception. Although he goes up the country to the lakes to look for the children, he eventually gives up even though he is told that some children were seen in the area. Whatever happens, Edward and Jane keep their false optimism but do nothing to make it come true. It is Jane who eventually articulates this idea in saying that the last song of *Candide*, "Make Our Garden Grow", was their song, hers and

Edward's. As Pangloss says at the end of *Candide*, "when man was placed in the Garden of Eden, he was placed there [...] to dress it and keep it; which proves that man was not born for idleness" (Voltaire 2002: 111). Both Edward and Jane want to escape idleness while waiting for the children to come back but they tend their own garden not in the sense of developing their talents and actively searching for their children but in the sense of isolating themselves in their love affair. The passive selfish need for their own self-preservation against hostile reality wins out over the active incentive of parental love. The same idea may be applied to William and Emily. Instead of embracing their love and facing the reality they dread, they escape it, which proves to be no solution at all. They keep the passive approach of Pangloss in *Candide*, who "had always suffered horribly; but, having once maintained that everything was for the best, he had continued to maintain it without believing it" (Voltaire 2002: 108). It is the opposite active approach that is ironically implied in *Candide* and that both the characters in Voltaire's and Clark's works mistake for "minding their own business".

The motif of society in ruins has already been discussed earlier in this essay in the allusion to Browning's "Love among the Ruins". However, it is much more relevant as far as *Candide* is concerned for political oppression is one of its most important themes. The year 1968 was definitely a challenge to the philosophy of the best of all possible worlds, yet many stayed unaffected. After demonstrations in Chicago during the Democratic convention and their violent police suppression coupled with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and a subsequent association of these two events in calling Chicago "Czechago", Eugene McCarthy, a senator and a failed presidential candidate, still "insisted that Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was no big thing" (Kurlansky 2004: 277). This statement is even more important for the novel if we consider the fact that McCarthy is Jane's favorite politician. Refusing to ascribe significance to such grievous matters is to follow the example of the characters in *Candide*. They ignore the political oppression and injustice that surrounds them and that they experienced themselves and use their talents and abilities to "cultivate their own garden".

However, the reference to *Candide* is not only meant to criticize the Enlightenment philosophy of the best of all possible worlds, but also Voltaire. Voltaire is able to reject this optimism because he did not necessarily accept a perfect God – or any God at all. His minimalist faith ended in deism. There is no omnipotent God any more, his task was finished with the completion of creation. The development of the world has been independent of God ever since, and that is the reason why this world can be seen as imperfect. The view of a world without a governing element, and what we may as well call God, opens up possibilities for shaping reality according to people's behavioristic impulses. This Voltaire-like approach is articulated in the character of Doctor Fields; yet again it follows the motif of love. For Doctor Fields, the end for which people are made is procreation. Even though there may be doubts or even protests against the moral side of sexual behavior, the sexual instinct is inescapable. He expresses this idea when advising Edward on his daughter's relationship to William:

[I]t's the end for which we are made. Not that I'm all that Darwinian. I think, I'm more Pavlovian [...] I don't think it's all constant sex and survival, screwing and fighting. I really do believe we can address ourselves to other things. Finding food. Study. Even truth and beauty. We can really quite totally concentrate on them. But then a bell rings, and we are called to this other business. (Clark 2001: 119)

Like Voltaire in *Candide*, Doctor Fields is a critic of the hypocrisy of the Church; though, instead of suggesting reform, he is in favor of complete liberation. According to him sex is only a species of love, and when the church frowns upon sex, it is hypocrisy “[o]f the gravest sort. Hypocrisy against love” (Clark 2001: 231). Doctor Fields adopts a rather limited point of view which erodes traditional moral values. Even though he may be justified in criticizing the institution of the Church for its prudent approach to sexual behavior, it is only to a certain extent. His view is extreme. For him even sex with a prostitute is a species of love which should be cherished. It is again the character of Emily who proposes a solution. In her view there is an inevitable connection between spiritual and physical love. This view makes it possible for Emily to reconcile her Catholic religion with her sexual relationship with William. It is expressed in her idea of inseparability of body and soul which directly affects her notion of Christianity: “For what was the whole drama of Christianity if not the fact of God taking on a body? What was the point of the mass if not the body of Christ? What made Our Lady’s bodily assumption glorious if not Her body being assumed?” (Clark 2001: 100). Physical love is nonsensical without its spiritual counterpart.

The last allusion I will focus on is the first inaugural speech of President Richard Nixon. It emphasizes the same issue as Robert Browning’s poem: the world is in ruins and a new beginning must be constructed. In the inaugural address Nixon regards the political chaos of the era as the “crisis of the spirit” (Nixon 1993). This is very much the point at the beginning of Robert Clark’s novel which he connects to the denial of God’s love. The Age of Doubt and Anxiety is over and it will be “[s]uperseded. At least some time soon. By the Age of Black Bile. Of Acedia” (Clark 2001: 22). It is Edward who expresses the idea that spiritual despair is the cause of the denial of God’s love. What is now the response to “spiritual sloth”? The interesting fact is that in Nixon’s speech we can find two solutions to this problem, but Clark treats the text in such a way that he omits one solution and emphasizes the other. The omitted solution can be identified as the behavioristic approach criticized in connection with *Candide*. It is action taken to shape the future according to human needs without any higher governing principle taken into account. Human needs are regarded as stimuli which require appropriate reaction which can change the surrounding environment to fulfill those needs: “[W]hat kind of world we will live in, whether we shape the future in the image of our hopes, is ours to determine by our action and our choices” (Nixon 1993). The solution that is emphasized in *Love among the Ruins* is not only the answer through action but also “the answer of the spirit. To find the answer we need to

look within ourselves” (Nixon 1993). In this sense the novel is tragic, as the only character who is able to look within herself and act with a higher principle in her mind, Emily, dies. Nixon says that the hope lies in “America’s youth [...] they are better educated, more committed, more passionately driven by conscience” (Nixon 1993). The only young person left in the novel is William. After a long miserable life after Emily’s death, he indeed attempts to come to terms with what happened. But what is the motivation of his letter to dead Emily and a phone call to her father? He is not driven by the spiritual need to come to terms with the past and take appropriate action but only by bad conscience and a pressing need for affirmation that he is not responsible for Emily’s death. This could be again identified as the behavioristic need for self-preservation.

What is the reason for using the motifs of destruction and love in *Love among the Ruins*? We need to start with the present state of the world as it is portrayed in the novel. The world is a scene of despair and destruction – political, social and personal. The novel identifies two possible reactions to this state. The first one may be found in the pressing need for self-preservation which generates either an impulse to isolate the self in a comfortable illusion or an attempt to shape outer reality according to the needs of the self. The novel implies that neither of these reactions can be a solution to the problem, as they are restricted to basic instincts. What these reactions lack is spiritual insight identified in the novel as various forms of love: romantic, parental or divine. This conclusion emphasizes the significance of Robert Browning’s poem “Love among the Ruins”. Taking an active spiritual approach to changing the miserable reality in which we find ourselves is the solution which is well expressed by Emily’s understanding of love as a moral imperative under which actions need to be taken. Emily is indeed the character with the greatest potential; she adopts this approach yet she fails. What may be implied in Emily’s death is that an individual alone cannot succeed; the approach identified above must be adopted by a larger community.

In all the above-mentioned intertextual references I have found both parallels with and distinctions from Robert Clark’s novel. This fact confirms the idea that intertextuality stimulates reader’s critical judgment. It is the reader’s ability to compare that is stimulated by drawing parallels and distinctions between the novel and the works referred to. But what about the question of the reader’s background knowledge? Though a certain amount of information is provided by the use of quotations in the novel, knowledge of the actual sources and their historical background proved more than useful. Without such knowledge the parallels and distinctions would not be fully understandable. Without such knowledge the reader would be just like Clark’s characters, who keep their illusions and are not able to perceive reality, who see only pros and no cons. This only confirms the general concept of intertextuality which says that “a text cannot exist and be interpreted as a self-sufficient whole” (Bernardelli 1997: 3). On the other hand, the meaning of a text does not lie completely outside of it, in the works referred to either. The novel itself cannot be ignored as it is a device that ties all references together to create a cohesive whole. If the reader is not equipped with sufficient

knowledge, Robert Clark makes sure that he can easily find sources of reference and refer back to the actual passage. Moreover, self-conscious use of intertextuality gives the reader an opportunity to go beyond the actual quotation or even beyond the whole text. The reader does not spend so much time on “breaking the code” and that is why he can move on to explore the historical background of the work or other information. This is the reason why Clark supplies titles and acknowledges the most important works he alludes to. The strategy of self-conscious intertextuality also presupposes the largest possible audience so that the implied reader is not only found in the elite already equipped with the necessary knowledge. On the other hand, both the parallels and distinctions in all the discussed references can be limited to two major motifs – the motif of destruction and the motif of love. By incorporating references to other works in such a way that they correspond to these two motifs pursued in *Love among the Ruins*, Robert Clark manages to harmonize the intertextual references and the novel, and makes them an inseparable whole.

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