

## SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

### THE SUM OF LOSSES: IMAGES OF MEN IN THE NOVELS OF GRAHAM SWIFT. A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

Graham Swift is not associated with psychoanalytical, and in particular with Lacanian criticism. The writer in fact openly renounces all “revolutions and counter-revolutions in critical theory.” Perhaps the most significant current in criticism on the author’s work refers to issues of historiography; a considerable number of texts were devoted to his work from the perspective of masculinity studies.

This is not by any means to say that there have been no attempts to apply psychoanalytical criticism to Swift’s prose, and although these are isolated instances, they prove beyond any doubt that there is potential in this approach. The present work aims to analyse a cross-section of Swift’s novels with the use of the Lacanian notion of obsessional neurosis. With certain fundamental reservations, a claim is made that the attitude of voices speaking in Swift’s novels more and more clearly departs from visions of complete discourse, in which the narrator is an absolute master, and thus from the neurotic project of a subject with no lack.

I open my dissertation with a brief introduction to the theory of the functioning of the speaking subject created by Jacques Lacan, and in particular to his conception of

obsessional neurosis. I also point to the features of Swift's prose which allow for a possibility of finding reflections of this structure in his texts.

The first chapter of my thesis discusses Swift's first two novels as exhibiting most clearly perceptible features of the obsessional structure. In the second chapter, I consider the gradual modification of the writer's approach to the narrators he creates, which may be read as a departure from the model presented in the previous chapter. Questions of certainty, control over language, or rivalry with an idealized paternal figure nevertheless remain the central focus of the writer's output. The third and final chapter deals with one of Swift's most recent novels, formally significantly different from the ones discussed before. The motifs recurring in his works are also handled in a novel manner here. The result of this evolution is, arguably, paradoxical: while Swift's narrators and his protagonists are less and less inclined to believe that they can function without loss, the increasing insistence and directness with which the author himself postulates an embrace of ambiguity in itself might bring up associations with obsessive structure.