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**Per Aspera Ad Astra: Conflicts and Challenges of Spirit in *Sirius* by Olaf Stapledon**

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The present paper analyses the various conflicts and challenges faced by a spirit on the way to a higher plane of development and the role of music in *Sirius*, a narrative by the British writer and philosopher William Olaf Stapledon.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, more and more critics and scholars agree that Stapledon is one of the most important writers in science fiction since H. G. Wells. At present, five monographs on Stapledon exist, as well as about eighty articles in periodicals and books, three PhD theses, and a Master thesis.<sup>3</sup> This is the entire corpus of Stapledon criticism. Reviewing the themes which have been explored within the framework of the studies on Stapledon, one cannot help noticing that those of spirit and music in his works have not been given due attention, since they are central to his religious and philosophical outlook. The present paper fills in this lacuna in the Stapledon's studies and analyses in depth music and spirit in *Sirius* through the prism of the *theory of conceptual integration* (parable). Compared to the works dealing with spirit and music, which are briefly reviewed below, the paper analyses these issues employing the recent advances in the cognitive linguistics.

Roy Arthur Swanson, in 'The Spiritual factor in *Odd John* and *Sirius*', studies Stapledon's treatment of the phenomenon of the superhuman.<sup>6</sup> Swanson demonstrates how 'Sirius, a dog coming into human status, achieves and welcomes spirituality, and John, a

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<sup>1</sup> Olaf Stapledon, *Sirius. A Fantasy of Love and Discord*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Fredrick Shelton, *Forms of Things Unknown: The Alien and Utopian Visions of Wells, Stapledon and Clarke*. Ph. D. Dissertation. University of California, Berkeley, 1982; Peter Edmund Mills. *Man Out of Time: A Study of the Works and Thought of Olaf Stapledon*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 1988; Roger Brunet. *The Mystic Vision of Olaf Stapledon: The Spirit in Crisis*. M.A. unpublished thesis. Ottawa: Carleton University, 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Roy Swanson. 'The Spiritual Factor in *Odd John* and *Sirius*', in *Science Fiction Studies* 9 (1982), pp. 284-293.

human coming into superhuman status, reluctantly and even tearfully sloughs spirituality.’<sup>7</sup> Speaking of Sirius and John, Swanson sees ‘[t]heir progression toward higher states of existence . . . as prophetic of human progression’.<sup>8</sup> According to him, *Sirius* is a satirically prophetic work.

Cheryl Herr, in ‘Convention and Spirit in Olaf Stapledon’s Fiction’, argues that the writer centered his novels ‘not on the dichotomies of materialism and “spiritism” or of the individual and the community, but on that of the conventional and the spiritual, a dialectic which his fictions are not entirely aware of and in any event cannot resolve’.<sup>9</sup> The article by Richard D. Burbank, ‘Musical Fusion in the Works of Olaf Stapledon: A Matrix of Storms and Stars’, is dedicated to various musical metaphors and analogies in his works.<sup>10</sup> The article, however, gives more emphasis to pointing out the extensive presence of musical terms and metaphors rather than on their profound analysis.

I have written elsewhere on the subject of music and spirit in Stapledon; it is the first full-length survey of the concept of spirit and music in his works.<sup>11</sup> The present paper is based on the results obtained in the thesis and further develops the therein-postulated idea that in Stapledon’s works music and spirit are often metonymically related to each other. The novelty of this research is based on the combination of several approaches by Darko Suvin, George Lakoff, Mark Turner, Zoltán Kövecses and others.<sup>12</sup> This analysis permitted us to single out and emphasise with greater precision the aspects which music contributes to *Sirius* as a theme, in musical metaphors, and parables. The complex approach to music allows better

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<sup>7</sup> Swanson, p. 285.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 285.

<sup>9</sup> Cheryl Herr, ‘Convention and Spirit in Olaf Stapledon’s Fiction’, in *The Legacy of Olaf Stapledon: Critical Essays and an Unpublished Manuscript*, McCarthy, Patrick A., (ed. and introd.). New York and London: Greenwood, 1989, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Richard D. Burbank, ‘Musical Fusion in the Works by Olaf Stapledon: A Matrix of Storms and Stars’, in *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 4 (2006), pp. 350-68.

<sup>11</sup> Iren Boyarkina, ‘Musical Metaphors and Parables in the Narratives by Olaf Stapledon’, unpublished Ph.D thesis, the University of Rome Tor Vergata, 2014

<sup>12</sup> Darko Suvin. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979; Lakoff, George, Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003;

comprehension of such fundamental concepts in Stapledon's philosophical and religious outlook as spirit, personality-in-community, the full realization of individual potential and many others.<sup>16</sup>

The theme of spirit, intended not in the strict ecclesiastic sense but in a much broader sense as love, creation and intelligence is the main theme in fiction and non-fiction writing by Stapledon. Indeed, the idea of spirit is explored by the writer in all of his books of fiction and it invariably penetrates his works as a *leitmotiv*. In many of his non-fiction works Stapledon gives a very precise definition of spirit: 'the spirit means the capacity for sensitive and intelligent awareness, love and creative action in relation to the objective world'.<sup>17</sup> The definition of spirit cited above is similar to the definition in *Sirius*, given by Sirius himself: 'love, intelligence, and creating – is precisely what the "spirit" is'.<sup>18</sup> Plaxy adds: 'The spirit must be the highest of all dialectical levels, the supreme synthesis'.<sup>19</sup>

Stapledon gives the most complete definition of spirit in *The Meaning of Spirit*.

By 'the spirit' we mean: (1) the fullest possible attainment of sensitive and intelligent and comprehensive awareness of the world, including physical nature and oneself and other selves, and whatever else comes within our vision; (2) the fullest possible precision of feeling about all this; and (3) the most appropriate, coherent and creative action in relation to all this wealth of objectivity that is presented to us. More briefly the spirit is the fullest possible attainment of awareness and

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<sup>16</sup> See Boyarkina, 'Musical Metaphors and Parables in the Narratives by Olaf Stapledon'.

<sup>17</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *Beyond Christian Morality?* N. d. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, B2.3.1, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*. p. 144.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

response on the part of the subject in relation to its objective field or total environment.<sup>20</sup>

It is easy to notice that here the majority of words characterizing spirit denote action in process, rather than a static substance; they characterize a way of existence. Indeed, Stapledon often uses the concept of the Way to describe the idea of spirit. In *What are Values?* Stapledon defines ‘spirit’, or ‘Spiritual Way’ or (in the Eastern Tao) ‘the Way’ as

[T]he way of sensitive and intelligent awareness, love and creative action in response to the world that confronts our subjectivity. In the last resort, that means: awareness of the universe in all its subtlety and beauty, love of all personal beings and of the spirit itself, and creating of further possibilities of spirit.<sup>21</sup>

In *Power Through Philosophy*, Stapledon defines spirit as ‘the way of sensitive and intelligent awareness of the world (including oneself and other selves) as the way of love and wisdom and creative action in this actual world. What the spirit’s ultimate status in the universe may be is a secondary matter’.<sup>22</sup> Stapledon often emphasises that ‘of the spirit as substance we know nothing’.<sup>23</sup> He continues: ‘Spirit as substance, if it exists at all, is good only in that it can be the ground or medium for the actualization of spirit as form of behavior’.<sup>24</sup> As demonstrated above, Stapledon admits the possibility of the existence of other intelligent races in the universe. According to him, representatives of these races might also be endowed with spirit. In his non-fiction works, Stapledon suggests that ‘[a]ny sufficiently

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<sup>20</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *The Meaning of Spirit*. N. d. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, OS/B2, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *What are Values?* N. d. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, OS/B2/24/4, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *Power Through Philosophy* . N. d. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, OS/B2/26/1, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *Scepticism and the Modern World*. N. d. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, OS/B2/31/2, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *Conflict of Wisdoms*. N. d. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, OS/B2/5/1, p. 3.

awake being in any period and in any world throughout the universe cannot but give his final allegiance to this spirit . . .<sup>25</sup>

Stapledon is sure that the Way does not only guide the human species but is a universal phenomenon:

I feel not only that the Way is ‘right’ but also that I am in line with, or contributing to, a process which goes far beyond myself, and is greater even than the process of the development of the human society. I feel that I am in some manner instrumental to a purpose, which is of a very great moment in the universe.<sup>26</sup>

The writer supposes that other intelligent races may desire to pursue the Way as well:

The Way is the way for the fulfilling of the essential potentiality of conscious beings; and any particular conscious being, at any age and any sphere of existence, if it is sufficiently developed to apprehend what the way is, and if it is not perverted by some irrelevant purpose, cannot but will that all conscious beings should pursue the Way, so far as in them lies.<sup>27</sup>

According to Stapledon, the concept of spirit is closely connected to the concept of the Way, which is in its turn connected with Stapledon’s idea of the awake and somnolent state of spirit; that is, with two different modes of personality: ‘the one more deeply conscious, the other less. Often I am in some respect “awake” and in others “asleep.” In this more lucid condition . . . just because I am more clearly aware of the world and self and others, I am in a better position to judge matters both of fact and of value’.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Stapledon, *Scepticism and the Modern World*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *Morality, Scepticism and Theism*. TS. Stapledon Archives at Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, OS/B2/20/2, n.d. pp. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Stapledon, *Morality, Scepticism and Theism*, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Hence, spirit, as seen by Stapledon, can exist in two states: awake and somnolent, or awake and less awake states. Stapledon argues that the difference between these two states is not merely a matter of subjective feeling; it is objective and can be described as follows:

It is the difference between awareness of (and appropriate response to) more of the world confronting us and less of the world confronting us. The 'more' of the world must be taken to include, not merely a greater multitude of things in the world, but also subtler and (I would add) more spiritual aspects of the world, not accessible to the less awake states. . . . On different levels of awakesness the moral aim is apprehended with different degrees of clarity and penetration. . . . Always the moral aim is to achieve the greatest possible 'fulfillment of personality' in actual individuals. Or rather, since we are all members one of another, and personality itself involves community, the aim is best described as 'personality-in-community', the greatest possible mutual enrichment by persons united in mutual cherishing.<sup>29</sup>

The concepts of the Way and the spirit are so closely connected with each other that they seem to be almost interchangeable; one can be defined through the other. That means that in Stapledon's narratives the way of life of protagonists can be viewed as a metaphorical manifestation of the spirit. Hence, the life of a protagonist might be interpreted as the metaphor and/or parable of the spirit as seen by Stapledon. All of these important aspects of spirit are explored in depth in *Sirius*. In the book, one can distinguish between the main plot (Sirius), the secondary plot (Trelone Family) and a pseudo-plot (England during the Second World War). These plots are very closely connected with each other since Sirius was created by the great physiologists Thomas Trelone during his experiments in eugenics and brought up

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<sup>29</sup> Stapledon, *What are Values?*, pp. 7-8.

in his family, while most of the events take place in England during the Second World War, which serves as a background for the two main plots. Music constitutes an inseparable part in each of them: it is the metaphorical language of Sirius who performs and composes his own music; it is the best amusement for the Trelones and it is frequently presented in the sub-plot in churches, street processions, and so on.

The paradigm in *Sirius* is the protagonist's search for identity and his study of the human species. These are the main themes of the book. Music constitutes a secondary theme, which is strongly connected to the main ones. Syntagmatically, *Sirius* may be divided into the following parts: the infancy of Sirius, his youth, his work on the farm with Pugh, his life in Cambridge, his religious activities with Reverend Adams, and his independent work on the farm during the Second World War. In different degrees, music is present in all these parts.

According to Suvin, 'SF is . . . a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment.'<sup>30</sup> The defining factor of SF is the *novum*, which Suvin sees as 'the minimal generic difference of SF is the presence of a narrative *novum* (the dramatic personae and/or their content) significantly different from what is the norm in "naturalistic" or empiristic fiction'.<sup>31</sup> In *Sirius*, Stapledon creates an alternative world by introducing as *novum* to the 'zero world' the experimentally produced super-intelligent Alsatian sheep-dog. The choice of the super-sheep-dog as the *novum* is not incidental and serves different cognitive purposes.

Stapledon creates a multifunctional model, which allows him to effectively explore many problems of the modern society: how to improve the human species and the human spirit, which is the best way to reach that goal, through evolution or eugenics? If the latter is better, how can normal human beings live together with those eugenically modified in the

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<sup>30</sup> Suvin, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Suvin, p. 8.



same society? In *Sirius*, the writer tries to imagine a possible interaction between terrestrials and aliens not in the far future but in contemporary society. Stapledon clearly demonstrates that the modern society is not able to coexist peacefully with creatures who are different.

In *Sirius*, the English scientist Thomas Trelone has been working on the stimulation of cortical growth in the brains of mammals by introducing a certain hormone into the bloodstream of the mother. The scientist's dearest dream was the stimulation of the human fetus to super-normal brain growth; he has been working in the field of eugenics. As usually happens in medicine and biology, all the preliminary experiments and trials are performed on animals. For several scientific reasons, Trelone has chosen sheepdogs as objects for his experiments. As the only successful result of these experiments, *Sirius* was born.

Stapledon was always interested in eugenics. In his diaries, there are many entries dedicated either to the attendance of lectures, discussions, talks on eugenics or to his own preparation for giving a talk on this subject: 'We went to the discussion after Eugenics lecture. After . . . more Eugenics talk'.<sup>32</sup> Stapledon's notes on eugenics are of great value as they allow a deeper insight into the writer's ideas about this science.<sup>33</sup> In the time of Stapledon, eugenics as a science was at the initial level of its development and could not allow any experiments on human beings. Using *Sirius* as a model, Stapledon was modeling and investigating ethical, psychological, physiological problems related to the creation of genetically modified human beings; the writer was trying to raise the sensibility of society to the problems related to the progress of eugenics.

The choice of *Sirius* as the *novum* is also conditioned by the cognitive purpose of the novel, which is to study humankind with the objective eyes of an outsider through an alienating point of view. *Sirius* tells his creator, Trelone: 'My point of view is so utterly

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<sup>32</sup> Olaf Stapledon. *Diary*. 5 August 1913. MS. Stapledon Archive, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool.

<sup>33</sup> Olaf Stapledon. 'Eugenics'. MS. Stapledon Archive, Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, F 48-59, n.d.

different from man's, and yet at bottom the same. In making me you made something that sees man from clean outside man, and can tell him what he looks like . . .'.<sup>34</sup> Also, the inner voice of Sirius tells him: 'And because you are different you can give them [people] a vision which they can never win for themselves'.<sup>35</sup>

As far as focalization in the novel is concerned, while the degree of generalization increases, one tends to understand that the singular case of Sirius must be considered within a context as wide as possible, taking into consideration all the human species of the planet and, probably, living beings in other galaxies as well. The final lines of the book confirm this opinion: '. . . Sirius, in spite of his uniqueness, epitomised in his whole life and in his death something universal, something that is common to all awakening spirits on earth, and in the farthest galaxies'.<sup>36</sup>

According to Suvin, '[a]ny significant SF text is thus to be read as an analogy, somewhere between a vague symbol and a precisely aimed parable'.<sup>37</sup> The increasing level of generalization in focalization, alongside with other devices, allows viewing the life story of Sirius not only as a singular case but also as a parable. The life story of Sirius can be interpreted in several ways. However, the fundamental concept of spirit lies at the core of all these interpretations. The life of Sirius can be viewed as the parable of the spirit whose strategic breakthrough in development and self-realization is hampered by the physical limitation of its species.

The idea that Sirius is a spirit is expressed in the book both literally and by means of parable. Sirius clearly perceives himself as a spirit. He declares it explicitly: 'I am not human, but also I am not canine. I am . . . "a spirit"'.<sup>38</sup> The definition of the spirit given in the book is as follows: 'But what the spirit demands always is love and intelligence and strong creative

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<sup>34</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*, p. 91.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>37</sup> Suvin, p. 76.

<sup>38</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*, p. 77.

action in its service . . . ’.<sup>39</sup> The main postulates of this definition are used as inputs and blended with many other human and canine characteristics employed as inputs to create the life story of Sirius. As I demonstrated elsewhere, the theory of conceptual integration (or a network model) by Fauconnier and Turner can be effectively applied to analyse SF narratives.<sup>40</sup> In this theory, a minimal network in the many-space model consists of four mental spaces: two inputs, the generic space, and the blend. Conceptual integration networks can have several input spaces and even multiple blended spaces. These researchers explain the principles and mechanisms of conceptual blending, its structural and dynamic principles as follows: ‘Building an integration network involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backward to inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself’.<sup>41</sup> The theory of conceptual integration presupposes a conceptual metaphor as its particular case.<sup>42</sup>

The allegory of Sirius can be also viewed as the modern interpretation of Plato’s allegory of Chariot. Like the Charioteer, Sirius is torn apart by the white horse, which pulls him to heaven, to the Way of spirit, and the dark one, which makes him behave as a bloodthirsty and primitive animal when he slips into one of his wolf moods. In Stapledon’s modern version, the soul of Sirius becomes a battlefield of the eternal war between the awake and somnolent states of spirit, between his highly spiritual cravings and wolf moods.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>40</sup> Boyarkina, ‘Musical Metaphors and Parables in the Narratives by Olaf Stapledon’.

<sup>41</sup> Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books, 2002, p. 44.

<sup>42</sup> It should be kept in mind that the relation between metaphor and parable is very close and intricate; cognitive linguists are still working on further refinement and definition of these relations. Within the conceptual metaphor theory, Lakoff and Johnson originally defined metaphor as understanding and experiencing one concept in terms of another. (*Metaphors*, p. 5). This is the definition used in this paper. In cognitive linguistics, for example in Kövecses, parables and allegories are based on conceptual metaphors. (private correspondence, 2013). Indeed, in the theory of conceptual integration presented above, parable as a mental process of projecting a story presupposes conceptual metaphor as one of its variants when the input spaces are related to each other as the source and target input spaces. According to Turner, parable is the projection of a story. (*The Literary Mind*, p. 5) Metaphors referred to in this paper are intended as the smallest building blocks in the process of projection.

Love plays a very important role in the parable of Sirius as the spirit. Sirius admits the importance of mankind in teaching him love:

It was indeed mankind that had shown him what love was, with their gently ministering and caressing hands and their consoling voices. His ever-trusted love and caninely revered foster-mother had loved him always as her own child. . . . then Thomas, yes Thomas also had shown him what love was, but in a different aspect, in the aspect of ‘man-to-man’ intelligent companionship.<sup>43</sup>

In his youth, Sirius takes the habit of going to the moors to sing to himself for hours with his ‘sweet, accurate, but inarticulate and inhuman voice’.<sup>44</sup> By the means of music, Sirius expresses his various emotions, including love shown to him by humans. Sirius ‘would go over and over the songs that Elizabeth had so often sung about the house’.<sup>45</sup> The singing of Elizabeth’s songs is a metaphor of Sirius’ love and attachment to his foster-mother. Soon, however, this deep love for humanity becomes a source of a deep internal conflict, which tears Sirius apart since his attitude towards humanity changes as he grows to know people better: ‘Long ago he had idealized humanity. But now his practiced nose had found out the truth about the species. They were cunning brutes. But they were not nearly so consistently intelligent. Even the Trelones were often stupid and insensitive’.<sup>46</sup> Thus, deep love for humans is fighting with the profound disgust in his soul.

According to Stapledon, love is one of the three important aspects of spirit, that is why a big part of the narrative is dedicated to love: either of Sirius to his family or to Plaxy. Stapledon uses the musical metaphor to characterize the profound life-long love relation between Sirius and Plaxy:

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<sup>43</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*, p. 81.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>46</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*, p. 105.

The music of our two lives is a duet of variations upon three themes. There is the difference between our biological natures, yours human and mine canine, and all the differences that follow from that. Then there is the love that has grown up between us, alien as we are. It has gathered us together and made us one fundamentally, in spite of all our differences. It feeds on differences. And there is sex, which alternates between tearing us apart because of our biological remoteness and welding us together because of our love. There is a fourth theme in our music, or perhaps, it is the unity of the other three. There is our journey along the way of the spirit, together and yet poles apart. But always, yes, always, we are one in the spirit.<sup>47</sup>

Stapledon emphasises the paramount importance of the differences for the love relation more than once. This idea is used as the input in the blend under consideration. According to the writer, the differences and diversities between lovers enrich their union:

The true goal [of love] is the creation and development of an intimate community, a whole of persons-in-community. And the greater the diversity of the persons the richer the community; as long as there is sufficient imaginative insight in the partners to appreciate both the difference and the fundamental identity.<sup>48</sup>

The wish to explore and emphasise the interaction of differences between partners in love might be another motive for Stapledon to choose Sirius (with his many differences from the human species) as the *novum* in the text under consideration.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>48</sup> Stapledon, *Morality, Scepticism and Theism*, p. 15.

The only creature on Earth with whom Sirius feels less lonely is Plaxy, his best companion since his birth. Sirius tells Plaxy: ‘you are nearest of all creatures to lonely me’.<sup>49</sup> Though they have a life-long love relationship and have shared a lot of common experience since their childhood, very often they do not understand each other, they seem to be alien beings, and then Sirius asks himself: ‘Why was there this remoteness?’<sup>50</sup> The writer emphasises the idea about the fundamental differences between men and women that make them seem almost alien beings, remote and hostile. According to Stapledon, differences are very important for the love relation; they strengthen it, but if they are too striking, they may destroy a relationship. Because of many differences between Sirius and Plaxy, their love becomes a source of a deep internal conflict for Sirius; he is strongly attracted to her and in the meantime greatly upset by her drawbacks.

Despite their differences, Sirius and Plaxy represent an example of the community in spirit: ‘The roots of these two alien beings were so closely intertwined that in spite of their divergences each needed the other. One unifying subject of common interest they always had, and they often talked about it’: the spirit.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, in Stapledon’s works of fiction (and non-fiction), the idea of the importance of community for the fullest possible expression of personality is emphasised many times.

A strong creative action is another important manifestation of the spirit. It is clearly emphasized in the text that ‘[h]e [Sirius] was an artist’.<sup>52</sup> For Sirius creativity is closely connected to music; it is manifested in numerous musical metaphors and blends. Talent is an important requisite for creativity, and Sirius definitely has the talent for music; due to his exceptional acoustic perception, Sirius’s sensibility for music is far superior to the human one:

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<sup>49</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*, p. 48.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[H]e had, at any rate, a far better ear for pitch than any of the family. When Elizabeth moved her finger so lightly on the string that none of the children could hear any difference, Sirius detected a change. Elizabeth was amazed to find that he could also sing accurately in tune. Once when she played a single tone and he could not restrain himself from giving tongue, the main element of his wail was obviously in tune with the violin. With a little encouragement, he produced the pure note without any trimmings. . . .With his usual doggedness, Sirius set about conquering this excruciating thing, music. He showed the surprising aptitude for singing. . . . sometimes he sang without words; sometimes he used his own canine equivalent of the English words of the song.<sup>53</sup>

Very soon, music becomes Sirius' great love and passion and also a real challenge. Due to his acute sensibility to sounds, Sirius finds human music not perfect enough, often out of tune; it is a torture for him, especially in the beginning:

An isolated vocal or instrumental theme was torture enough for him; but when several voices or instruments combined, he seemed to lose control of himself completely. His fine auditory discrimination made even well-executed solos seem to him badly out of tune. Harmony and the combination of several themes resulted for him in a hideous cacophony.<sup>54</sup>

Metaphorically, it might also mean that Sirius has a better sensibility for the spiritual religious matters because, according to Stapledon, music metonymically denotes religious feelings.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

Very soon, Sirius rises to a very high level of proficiency in music, which allows him to express freely his creative potential and introduce innovations; this demonstrates the highest level of creativity in any field of activity.

In his puppyhood, Sirius sang only human music. Throughout his life, he was deeply interested in the great classical achievements of man's musical genius, but as he had always found the fundamental structure of human music crude, and inadequate to his interest in sound-form and the emotions, which sought musical expression, he began to experiment with new scales, intervals, and rhythms, suited to his more sensitive hearing. He made use of the quarter-tone and even the eighth-of-a-tone . . . his melodies divided the octave in quite a different manner from any human musical mode. Thus, to the human listener, his most distinctive music became less recognizably musical and more like a baying of a dog.<sup>55</sup>

It should be kept in mind that the relation between metaphor and parable is very close and intricate; cognitive linguists are still working on further refinement and definition of these relations. Within the conceptual metaphor theory, Lakoff and Johnson originally defined metaphor as understanding and experiencing one concept in terms of another.<sup>56</sup> This is the definition used in this paper. In cognitive linguistics, for example in Kövecses, parables and allegories are based on conceptual metaphors.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, in the theory of conceptual integration presented above, parable as a mental process of projecting a story presupposes conceptual metaphor as one of its variants when the input spaces are related to each other as the source and target input spaces. According to Turner, parable is the projection of a story.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>56</sup> George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Zoltán Kövecses, private correspondence, e-mail 04.02.2013.

<sup>58</sup> Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind*, p. 5.



Metaphors referred to in this paper are intended as the smallest building blocks in the process of projection.

As is true of any creative personality, Sirius suffers from creative conflicts and crises:

A supple and mellow voice was Sirius's only medium of expression. He often longed to play some instrument, so as to be able to introduce harmony into his experiments, but his tragic lack of hands prevented him. . . . The mingled sense of helplessness and talent tormented him. . . if instrumental music must remain forever impossible to him, he would do new and marvelous things with his voice.<sup>59</sup>

Sirius feels that he has a talent for music, a great creative potential that he desires to realize but cannot do it due to his lack of hands. The hands, necessary for the fuller realization of Sirius's creative potential, do not constitute an inherent part of his species and can be added to it only artificially, by genetic or surgical interventions. This blend seems to contain as the input Stapledon's ideas about eugenics, namely, the possibility to apply eugenics to ensure the fuller realization of the species' potential. Hence, this segment of the story of Sirius, projected on the story of humankind, might hypothetically imply a necessity of eugenic intervention to better realize the human potential. In general, it can be viewed as the metaphor of any awakening spirit trying to overcome the imperfections and limitations of his physical body on the way to a higher plane of development and fully awake state. In a narrower sense, Sirius might represent the metaphor of the human species, which needs the intervention to be able to fully realize its potential. This metaphor is based on analogy and can be presented as follows:

Sirius: canine species = super-human species: human species.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

Inner conflicts related to the creative process of a creative personality are used many times as inputs in the parable of spirit:

Music was ever for Sirius a more satisfying art than poetry. But it tortured him, because the texture of his own musical sensibility remained alien to the human. He felt that he had to choose between two evils. Either he must express himself with full sincerity but in utter loneliness, unappreciated by dogs and men; or for the sake of his underlying brotherhood with man, he must violate his finer canine sensibility, and discipline himself to the coarser human modes, in the hope that somehow he might express himself adequately to man in man's own musical language. For this end, he was anxious to absorb as much human music as possible.<sup>60</sup>

The choice which Sirius is facing is the dilemma which any creative personality – a composer, a poet, a serious writer, including Stapledon himself – might face: either to write in full sincerity without betraying his own style, creativity and talent and remain a lonely intellectual, misunderstood and unrecognized by the wider public, or to adjust his own tastes and ideas to the demands of the majority and gain popularity and success.

Sometimes Sirius dreams of the possibility to make a great contribution to the world of music, to introduce innovations to it:

Sirius, the unique canine composer, not only changed the whole character of the human music, importing into it something of the dog's finer auditory sensibility; he also, in his own incomparable creations,

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

expressed the fundamental identity-in-diversity of all spirits, of whatever species, canine, human or super-human.<sup>61</sup>

The idea of the identity-in-diversity of all spirits, which Sirius dreams to express in his music, is the important input in this blend; it is the fundamental message of many fictional (and non-fictional) works by Olaf Stapledon: *Last and First Men*, *Star Maker*, *Nebula Maker*, *Odd John*, and so on. The frequent use of this idea demonstrates its paramount importance for Stapledon's philosophical outlook. The fact that it often should be transmitted via music demonstrates that Stapledon considers the metaphorical language of music to be the universal means of expressing feelings and a syncretic perception of the world, not only between humans but also between other living species endowed with spirit.

Sirius reaches the peak of his creative musical activity when Reverend Geoffrey Adams allows him to sing wordless anthems in the church during the service. The first time Sirius is interpreting Bach ' . . . his strong pure voice, unaccompanied, then filled the church. Geoffrey listened with delight at its power and delicacy of expression.'<sup>62</sup> In singing Sirius tries to express all the internal conflicts and contradictions that torment his spirit:

The strange music that Sirius put forth in Geoffrey's church spoke of bodily delight and pain, and of the intercourse of spirits. It expressed through the medium of sound, and transformed into universal symbols, the particular spirit of Thomas, Elizabeth, Plaxy and Geoffrey himself. It spoke of love and death, of the hunger for the spirit, and of Sirius's own wolf-mood. It spoke of the East End and the West End, of the docker's [*sic*] strike and the starry heaven.<sup>63</sup>

The second time Sirius 'would sing them something of his own composition. This was to be the beginning of his message to the human species. It must be something that would

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.123.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

help them to feel again the essential truth in their own religion.’<sup>64</sup> Sirius performs his own composition; it is the apogee of his creativity, of his spiritual and religious life. It is a crucial point, which clearly demonstrates the paramount importance of music in *Sirius*: music contains the message to humans, the essential truth in their own religion. In his music, Sirius embodies his ideas about the human species:

The song gave . . . a view of humanity from outside humanity, from the point of view of another of God’s creatures. By means of echoes of the great human composers mingled with themes reminiscent of the wolf’s baying and the dog’s barking and howling, the singer conjured up his vision of humanity. With God and Satan, love and hate together in its heart.<sup>65</sup>

However, the best piece of music composed by Sirius is the requiem, which he creates for Plaxy in his most individual style. This requiem is the complex metaphor of the whole life of Sirius and of his spiritual strivings and challenges. At the end of the narrative, Plaxy sings the requiem over the dead body of Sirius. It is the culmination point both in the parable of spirit and in the narration. It contains the quintessence of the message in *Sirius*:

The wordless phrases symbolized for her [Plaxy] the canine and the human that had vied in him all his life long. There was a warm and brilliant theme, which he said was Plaxy, and a perplexed one, which was himself. It began in playfulness and zest but developed in a tragic vein against which she had always protested.

Now, looking down on him she realized that his tragedy was inevitable. And under the power of his music she realized that Sirius, in spite of his uniqueness, epitomized in his whole life and in his death something

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.127.

universal, something that is common to all awakening spirits on earth, and in the farthest galaxies. For the music darkness was lit up by a brilliance which Sirius had called ‘colour’, the glory that he himself, he said, had never seen. But this, surely, was the glory that no spirits, canine or human, had ever clearly seen.<sup>66</sup>

As a musical genre, the requiem introduces to the blend a very strong religious charge, remembrance of death and mourning. According to Donald Grout, requiem is a particular type of a Mass (often polyphonically arranged, especially after the second half of the XV<sup>th</sup> century), a funeral Mass, or Requiem Mass, named after its first words: ‘Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine.’<sup>6768</sup> It seems very natural that Plaxy performs a requiem over the shot Sirius: at the moment of his death, this musical composition suits the circumstances. Sirius, however, has composed this requiem long before his death. What is the meaning of this in the parable? According to Stapledon, the Universe will come to its end in some way. Consequently, life will cease to exist, putting an end to all the victories and gains of the spirit as well. Therefore, all the sufferings, strivings, sacrifices that the spirit makes to rise to a higher plane of development and awaken conscience are vain in the wake of the inevitable destruction. These ideas are employed as the input and produce the following blend, the inner vision of Sirius:

[A]ll living things, led by man, crusading gallantly against indifferent or hostile fate, doomed in the end to absolute defeat, but learning to exult in the battle, and snatching much delight before the end. And he saw himself as a rather lonely outpost in this great war, in which

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>67</sup> O Lord, give us eternal rest (*lat*).

<sup>68</sup> Donald Jay Grout. *A History of Western Music*. New York: Norton & Co, 1980, p. 53.

victory was impossible, and the only recompense was the sheer joy of the struggle.<sup>69</sup>

This realization of inevitable defeat could not but make Stapledon very sad. It is this sadness, caused by the inevitable destruction of spirit, that is used in the blend several times. The requiem mourns the death of spirit in the final universal catastrophe as well as the death of Sirius himself, which he could foresee in advance: he is too lonely to survive in this hostile world.

Growing older, Sirius perceives his loneliness and uniqueness in the human world more and more clearly: 'Men were many and he was one.'<sup>70</sup> This revelation causes him lots of pain and suffering, he admits in despair: 'There is no place for me in man's world, and there is no other world for me. There is no place for me anywhere in the universe'.<sup>71</sup> Even '... the texture of his own musical sensibility remained alien to the human'.<sup>72</sup> With the passage of time, the abyss of misunderstanding between Sirius and the human species grows deeper and deeper. Tormented by the war, people start to look for scapegoats and Sirius is the best target. The confrontation escalates inevitably and reaches its maximum; Sirius slips into one of his wolf moods, becomes an outlaw, until one night some outraged people shoot him dead in the moors.

In the present paper I analysed the concepts of spirit and music in *Sirius* through the prism of the recent advances in cognitive linguistics, that is to say, the *conceptual metaphor theory* and the *theory of conceptual integration*. Various conflicts and challenges faced by a spirit on the way to a higher plane of development and fully awake state were studied. The analysis further reinforced the idea that in Stapledon's works music and spirit are often metonymically related to each other. Such important aspects of spirit as love, creative action,

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<sup>69</sup> Stapledon, *Sirius*, p. 72.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

wisdom, were dealt with. The paper considered the idea of the identity-in-diversity of all spirits, of the dual nature of spirit (i. e. awake and somnolent states), the concepts of personality-in-community and of the full realization of individual potential. The paper paved the avenues for further research on spirit and music in the narratives of Olaf Stapledon.

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