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Wooster and Jeeves: Typically British Characters?

(bakalářská práce)

Studijní obor: Anglická filologie

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Olomouc 2013

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci na téma „Wooster and Jeeves: Typically British Characters?“ vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucí práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne 24. dubna 2013 _____

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D., for patience and readiness to help at any time. I would also like to thank her for assigning this topic which I found very interesting and rewarding.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Thesis Introduction

In my thesis I will discuss the characters of Wooster and Jeeves and their master-servant relationship featured in P. G. Wodehouse's novels and short stories. My aim is to determine whether these two characters and their relationship are typically British or not.

In order to find the answer I will examine the most prominent features of Wooster and Jeeves' characters: their responsibilities, behaviour and social position. I will acquaint readers with the master-servant relationship from the historical point of view. I will outline the master-servant characteristics as described in history and demonstrate the typical British master-servant pattern as viewed by the Victorians. Then I will compare it with the Wodehouse's version of master-servant relationship.

In my thesis I will also explore the concept of the two characters in literature. I will focus on the British and non-British master-servant stories created before Wodehouse.

I will try to find comparisons of Wodehouse's pattern of master-servant relationship with other similar ones in literature (both British and other than British). A selection of non-British authors using the similar pattern as Wodehouse (the servant cleverer and more competent than his master, the reversed master-servant relationship) will also be analysed in order to state the degree of Britishness in Wodehouse's literary portrays.

Finally, I will decide whether Wodehouse followed the British tradition of humorous reversed master-servant relationships (if there is one) or whether this pattern is more prominent in works of authors other than British ones and this new humorous view on British 'upstairs-downstairs' results from other sources.

1.2 The Author and His Work

Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse was born to the civil servant Henry Ernst Wodehouse and his wife Eleanor on October 15th, 1881. Mrs Wodehouse had an extraordinary taste in first names. She believed that children should be given ‘names to live up to’¹. Her first son was named after Walter Scott’s novel *Pevekil of the Peak*: Philip Pevekil Wodehouse. The second was named Ernest Armine Wodehouse and the third son received his godfather Colonel Pelham Grenville von Donop’s name. Mrs Wodehouse showed the same originality in the case of Pelham’s younger brother who was called Richard Lancelot Deane. No wonder P. G. Wodehouse was so fond of giving his protagonists somewhat strange names.

Pelham, or Little ‘Plum’ as he was called, did not have much chance to enjoy the ordinary family life as he and his brothers were left to be educated in England while their parents stayed in Hong Kong (their father worked as a judge). When not at a boarding school the boys ‘passed from aunt to aunt’², never experiencing the comfort of their own home. That is, probably, where Bertie Wooster’s ‘moneyed’³ aunts come from.

Wodehouse is not the only one to use the ‘aunt theme’ in his stories. Writers like Oscar Wilde and Saki are also typically British in this respect, as were many Victorian families: ‘Aunts in the leisured classes had plenty of time to give unwanted attention to nephews and nieces.’⁴ In A. P. Ryan’s opinion Wodehouse’s work is full of aunts and aunts in disguise, i.e. the elders, who always win.⁵ R. B. D. French argues this idea and explains:

that the elder always wins in the end is almost the exact opposite of what happens in the books. Jeeves frustrates many aunts, or uses them as pawns in the game he plays in his master’s interests, and in his

1. David Jasen, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* (London: Schirmer Trade Books, 2012), Kindle edition, chap. 1; hereafter abbreviated Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*.

2. R. B. D. French, *P. G. Wodehouse* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), 5; hereafter abbreviated French, *P. G. Wodehouse*.

3. P. G. Wodehouse, ‘The Aunt and the Sluggard,’ in *My Man Jeeves* (The Pennsylvania State University, 2009), PDF e-book, 106, accessed April 18, 2013, <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/pg-wodehouse/My-Man-Jeeves6x9.pdf>.

4. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 5.

5. A. P. Ryan, ‘Wooster’s Progress,’ *New Statesman and Nation* (June 20, 1953), quoted in R. B. D. French, *P. G. Wodehouse* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), 6.

own. The essence of the books is successful rebellion by the young against the elders.⁶

Due to a defect of sight Wodehouse did not go to the Navy as planned by his father. After the Navy preparatory school in Kearnsey, Pelham went to Dulwich College, where he received his education in Classics like any proper gentleman at that time. He desired to study at the Oxford University like his brother Armine and won the scholarship for one year, but his father could not afford to support financially both of them therefore Wodehouse would later start his career in ‘the world of commerce’⁷ working in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in London. Studying and preparing for the university were replaced by reading for pleasure, sports and writing parodies on Greek tragedies (where his friends and teachers became the citizens of Athens).⁸ In February 1900, he published his first short story. He noted the event into his diary where he recorded the earnings for his literary work:

Won 10/6 for a prize contribution to *Public School Magazine*, then under the editorship of P. G. Witson, afterwards Editor of *Fun*.

Subject: ‘Some Aspects of Game Captaincy.’ Paid April 9, 1900.⁹

In the evenings and week-ends, he continued to write and he published his stories even during the time he was employed at the bank. In September 1902 he made a decision to become a professional writer:

On September 9th, having to choose between the Globe and the Bank, I chucked the latter and started out on my wild lone as a freelance.

This month starts my journalistic career.¹⁰

The disappointing experience of losing the chance to study at Oxford offers itself as a very tempting theme for a writer to unburden his soul. *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* reads:

A brilliant scholar, disappointed in his hopes for university, he had an immense grasp of literature, philosophy and Classics. Well into his later years, his letters reveal that he spent time reading Balzac, Austen,

6. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 6.

7. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 2.

8. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 2.

9. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 2.

10. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 4.

Fielding, Smollett and Faulkner, and throughout his career his writing demonstrates this literary breadth. But this is not the dense allusive erudition that one finds in writers such as Ezra Pound or Gertrude Stein.¹¹

He might have used his erudition to flaunt it, to show Oxford that he deserved the education he wished for. Wodehouse, however, was not interested in unburdening his soul in this way. Instead he wrote about a world that anyone can escape to from mundane unpleasanties. His stories found inspiration in events happening in his own life, that is clear, but in his fictional world, all the problems get solved quickly and easily, everything is fun, nobody gets hurt and life goes on smoothly. Wodehouse promotes his 'don't-worry-be-happy-and-keep-busy' attitude no matter what occurs in his real life – good or bad. This is what he wrote to his friend William Townend:

a thing I can never understand is why all the critics seem to assume that his plays [Shakespeare's] are a reflection of his personal moods and dictated by the circumstances of his private life. You know the sort of thing I mean. They say "*Timon of Athens* is a gloomy bit of work. That means that Shakespeare was having a lousy time when he wrote it." I can't see it. Do you find that your private life affects your work? I don't.¹²

An exception to this rule not to allow 'real emotional pain to impinge on his fiction'¹³ is his fictional character Mike Jackson, whose father 'lost a very large sum of money'¹⁴ and Mike had to start making his own living instead of going to Cambridge and fulfilling his scholar dream.

In 1939 P. G. Wodehouse, to his great surprise, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Oxford. By then he became one of the most famous writers, comic writers, lyricists and writers for theatre in the world.

11. Sophie Ratcliffe, ed., introduction to *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 5, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/P-G-Wodehouse-Life-Letters/dp/0393088995/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1365684973&sr=1-1&keywords=wodehouse+a+life+in+letters; hereafter abbreviated Ratcliffe, *Letters*.

12. Ratcliffe, *Letters*, 3.

13. Terry Wogan, presenter, *Wogan on Wodehouse*, YouTube video, 58:59 min, documentary by BBC, 2011, posted by '324wilson,' accessed April 20, 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jtZMAFA2Zo>; hereafter abbreviated *Wogan on Wodehouse*.

14. P. G. Wodehouse, *Psmith in the City* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), 9, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/Psmith-City-P-G-Wodehouse/dp/1466284900/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1365675039&sr=8-1&keywords=psmith+in+the+city.

In 1940 Wodehouse lived in France (where he moved with his wife Ethel to ease his tax burden) and when the Germans invaded the country he was taken prisoner and transported into an internment camp. In 1941 he was sent to Berlin where he was paid to make a series of broadcasts mainly for American listeners and then he lived in Paris where he was interrogated by MI5 after the liberation. In 1945 Wodehouse moved to the USA and lived there until his death in 1975.¹⁵ He did not stop writing during the time spent in Germany and his books always keep their ‘almost naive English public school attitude’¹⁶ and ‘peculiar mental atmosphere – an atmosphere which has not, of course, remained completely unchanged, but shows little alteration since about 1925’¹⁷.

George Orwell’s essay ‘In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse’, written in 1945, divides Wodehouse’s work into 3 periods:

- The school-story period (from 1902): *The Gold Bat*, *The Pothunters*, *Mike* (1909), *Psmith in the City* (1910)
- The American period (from about 1913 to 1920): *The Little Nugget* (1913), *Psmith Journalist* (1915), *The Man with Two Left Feet* (1917); some of the stories from this volume show resemblances to American short-story writer O. Henry; Wodehouse’s works from this period feature differences between the American and the English culture
- The country-house period (from the early nineteen-twenties): *Summer Lightning* (1929); the characters of this period climb up on the social ladder and the setting changes to country mansions, luxurious bachelor flats and expensive golf clubs.

Many readers see Wodehouse as a writer ‘typifying the silliness of the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties’¹⁸. His most prominent characters and stories,

15. Richard Norton-Taylor, ‘I was not a Nazi collaborator, PG Wodehouse told MI5,’ *The Guardian* (August 26, 2011), accessed April 18, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/aug/26/pg-wodehouse-denied-collaborator>.

16. *Wogan on Wodehouse*.

17. George Orwell, ‘In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse’ (1945), reprinted in *Collected Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 268; hereafter abbreviated Orwell, ‘In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse’.

18. Orwell, ‘In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse,’ 268.

however, appeared already before 1925, including Bertie Wooster (earlier Reggie Pepper¹⁹ and Mike Jackson²⁰).

Before I pay closer attention to Wooster and Jeeves, I would like to describe Wodehouse's work in general and then point out the crucial part of the author's writing: the language, which, in Stephen Fry's words, 'rises above all [the characterisation and storytelling]'²¹.

As I mentioned above Wodehouse's writing shows signs of escapism. The author creates a kind of virtual reality or a fairy tale, where the happenings of the real world intervene only once in a long time (e.g. in form of a letter from an aunt or an unpleasant visitor). Heroes of these stories do not develop or grow up, they are defined by their prototypical features and stick to them. To the reader, this continuity and repetition of patterns are like meeting an old friend again and again. Each new book is like returning to the 'Wodehousean Eden'²². Like Agatha Christie, Wodehouse kept on 'writing in effect versions of the same book over and over again'²³, which was always heartily welcomed by his readers. One might think that the fairy-tale-like nature of his characters and their stories may seem artificial because they do not reflect 'the world of experience, its persons, its motives, its dilemmas, and its appetites.'²⁴ However, it is not so. It is true Wodehouse's characters do not age 'like the Three Musketeers or the Forsytes'²⁵ or take an interest in politics but they are still real enough to 'arouse laughter not because they are outside the human family but because they are so plainly within it.'²⁶ Anthony Trollope is of the similar opinion:

A novel should give a picture of common life enlivened by humour and sweetened by pathos. To make that picture worthy of attention, the canvas should be crowded with real portraits, not of individuals

19. 'P. G. Wodehouse interview,' in *Wogan on Wodehouse*.

20. Orwell, 'In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse,' 270.

21. 'Stephen Fry interview,' in *Wogan on Wodehouse*.

22. Ratcliffe, *Letters*, 1.

23. A. N. Wilson, 'P. G. Wodehouse, the writing-machine with a tragic twist,' *The Times Literary Supplement* (December 29, 2011), accessed April 18, 2013, <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article848326.ece>.

24. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 4.

25. Evelyn Waugh, 'An Angelic Doctor: The Work of Mr. P. G. Wodehouse,' *The Tablet* (June 17, 1939): 786, accessed April 18, 2013, <http://tablet.archive.netcopy.co.uk/article/17th-june-1939/18/an-angelic-doctor>; hereafter abbreviated Waugh, 'An Angelic Doctor'.

26. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 4.

known to the world or to the author, but of created personages impregnated with traits of character which are known.²⁷

The uniqueness of Wodehouse's fictional world lies in the medium by which it is communicated to the reader. Wodehouse is 'the master of language'²⁸. He constructs every word very carefully using all that the English language can offer to hold an emotion, to keep the reader in suspense, to slower or quicken the action or to deal an unexpected blow in one sentence, turning it into a story itself. The technique of his writing is compared to Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Arthur Conan Doyle and O. Henry.²⁹ The author also creates a 'secret language' through abbreviations (e.g. "Anybody been phoning or calling or anything during my abs.?"³⁰) which enable him to 'bond' with the reader. 'The unsaid-but-understood creates a clubby feeling of intimacy between writer and reader.'³¹ Wodehouse's style is also unique in the way he uses his metaphors and similes, which not only amuse but 'are so extraordinary that they approach the absurd'³² and his transferred epithets³³ ('I lit a rather pleased cigarette.'³⁴).

In conclusion I would like to return to the theme very much present in Wodehouse's stories, that is the ridiculing the Britishness, which may seem a paradox in his case when we think of his books as typically British. George Orwell in his 'In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse' quotes Harry W. Flannery: 'Wodehouse made fun of the English in all

27. Anthony Trollope, *Autobiography of Anthony Trollope* (Project Gutenberg, 2004), chap. 7, accessed April 18, 2013, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5978/pg5978.html>.

28. 'Stephen Fry interview,' in *Wogan on Wodehouse*.

29. Ratcliffe, *Letters*, 4.

30. P. G. Wodehouse, *Right Ho, Jeeves* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), 3, accessed April, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/Right-Ho-Jeeves-P-Wodehouse/dp/1456506889/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1364933388&sr=1-1&keywords=right+ho+jeeves.

31. Ratcliffe, *Letters*, 9.

32. Ratcliffe, *Letters*, 11.

33. Stephen Fry, 'What Ho! My Hero, PG Wodehouse,' *The Independent* (January 18, 2000), accessed April 18, 2013 via The Drones' Club, <http://www.drones.com/fry.html>.

34. P. G. Wodehouse, *The Mating Season* (Arrow, 2008), Kindle edition, chap. 1, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/The-Mating-Season-Jeeves-Wooster/dp/0099513773/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1365867025&sr=8-2&keywords=the+mating+season+wodehouse.

his stories and [. . .] he seldom wrote any other way [. . .].³⁵ This, the fact that Wodehouse also became ‘Americanized in idiom and outlook’³⁶ while living in the United States and his rather unpatriotic remarks during the World War II make him look like an outsider, a detached commentator on the English (British) society and beliefs. Thus the reader may have the feeling that Wodehouse is not an Englishman making fun of the English, but a cosmopolitan poking fun at English traditions.

35. Harry W. Flannery, *Assignment to Berlin* (Michael Joseph, 1942), quoted in George Orwell, ‘In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse’ (1945), reprinted in *Collected Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 267.

36. Orwell, ‘In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse,’ 269.

2. MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIP (WODEHOUSE)

2.1 Wooster and Jeeves, an Introduction

It is now some fourteen summers since, an eager lad in my early thirties, I started to write Jeeves stories: and many people think this nuisance should now cease. Carpers say that enough is enough. Cavillers say the same. They look down the vista of the years and see these chronicles multiplying like rabbits, and the prospect appals them. But against this must be set the fact that writing Jeeves stories gives me a great deal of pleasure and keeps me out of the public-houses.³⁷

Here Wodehouse himself dates the origins of Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves. In 1915 a short story named 'Extricating Young Gussie' appears (first published in *The Saturday Evening Post*³⁸, later published in the UK *Strand*³⁹ and then in *The Man with Two Left Feet*⁴⁰) introducing the narrator Bertie, not yet Wooster in this story, here he is named 'Mannering-Phipps'.

Bertie characterises himself as a 'chappie [. . .] fond of a quiet life', who's 'never at [his] best in the mornings' and who's idea of a day well spent is 'tottering out for a bite of lunch later on, and then possibly staggering round to the club [. . .]' and then to 'trickle off to Walton Heath for a round of golf'⁴¹. His idle way of life is suddenly disturbed by Aunt Agatha, 'one of the strong minded women' comparable with Queen Elizabeth [I]⁴², who 'bosses'⁴³ everyone around her. Bertie is given a difficult task. He must save the family honour by preventing his cousin Gussie from marrying a girl working as a singer on a vaudeville stage. With his valet Jeeves he sets

37. P. G. Wodehouse, preface to *Very Good, Jeeves* (Bernhard Tauchnitz/Leipzig, 1931), 5.

38. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Extricating Young Gussie,' United States: *Saturday Evening Post* (September 18, 1915).

39. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Extricating Young Gussie,' Great Britain: *Strand* (January, 1916).

40. P. G. Wodehouse, *The Man with Two Left Feet* (Great Britain: Methuen, 1917).

41. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Extricating Young Gussie,' in *The Man with Two Left Feet* (1917; Project Gutenberg, 2010), accessed April 18, 2013, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/7471/pg7471.html>; hereafter abbreviated Wodehouse, 'Extricating Young Gussie'.

42. Wodehouse, 'Extricating Young Gussie'.

43. Wodehouse, 'Extricating Young Gussie'.

off for New York to extricate ‘poor old Gussie’⁴⁴ from a disaster. But he fails and he makes things even worse by sending for Aunt Julia (a former vaudeville girl, the earlier disgrace of the Mannering-Phipps family) to help. To escape his Aunt Agatha, Bertie decides to return to England ‘with luck [. . .] in about ten years’⁴⁵ and meanwhile makes New York his residence.

Jeeves does not ‘take charge’ yet. He only makes an appearance. The only thing Jeeves is entrusted with in this story is waking up his master, announcing visitors, bringing the tea and getting the baggage.⁴⁶ The longest dialogue between Bertie Wooster and his valet in this story consists of two lines:

‘Jeeves,’ I said, ‘we start for America on Saturday.’

‘Very good, sir’ he said; ‘which suit will you wear?’⁴⁷

After the publication of *Piccadilly Jim* (1917)⁴⁸ Wodehouse wanted to develop ‘a continuing character around which a series could be constructed’⁴⁹. Before this time he used to ‘recycle’ his characters and transform them into others. Now he was looking for a prototype. He merged several of his earlier characters (Mike Jackson, Reggie Pepper) into one, thus creating Bertie Wooster. Wooster is of the Wooster’s who ‘came over with the Conqueror, and were extremely pally with him’⁵⁰. Bertie Wooster’s valet Jeeves enhances his potential and becomes the servant mastering the master. The first Wooster-and-Jeeves collection *My Man Jeeves*⁵¹ published in 1919 includes four Wooster and Jeeves stories (the remaining four feature Reggie Pepper). *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923)⁵², *Carry On, Jeeves* (1925)⁵³ and *Very Good, Jeeves* (1930)⁵⁴ collections follow and this time all of the stories are dedicated to Wooster and Jeeves (some of the Reggie’s being rewritten into Wooster’s to be included in *Carry On, Jeeves*⁵⁵).

The characters were outlined and brought to perfection. Wooster’s adventures moved from New York to England and became more traditional and composed:

44. Wodehouse, ‘Extricating Young Gussie’.

45. Wodehouse, ‘Extricating Young Gussie’.

46. Wodehouse, ‘Extricating Young Gussie’.

47. Wodehouse, ‘Extricating Young Gussie’.

48. P. G. Wodehouse, *Piccadilly Jim* (United States: Dodd, Mead, 1917).

49. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 5.

50. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 89.

51. P. G. Wodehouse, *My Man Jeeves* (Great Britain: George Newnes, 1919).

52. P. G. Wodehouse, *The Inimitable Jeeves* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1923).

53. P. G. Wodehouse, *Carry On, Jeeves* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1925).

54. P. G. Wodehouse, *Very Good, Jeeves* (United States: Doubleday Doran, 1930).

55. P. G. Wodehouse, *Carry On, Jeeves* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1925).

They [the characters] are all seen sensitively and consistently, everything is elegant and controlled, and in the sympathy reached between author and reader one story flows into another with an easy mastery [. . .].⁵⁶

Since then the author drew on the characteristics of Wooster and Jeeves as established in their first stories and he shifted from random short stories into a continuous saga. Wooster and Jeeves entered the realm of chronicles such as Anthony Trollope's *The Chronicles of Barsetshire* or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. In 1934 Wooster and Jeeves were ready to start the path of novel characters in *Thank You, Jeeves*⁵⁷. The sequel *Right Ho, Jeeves*⁵⁸ follows in the same year and seven more volumes later. *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* (1975)⁵⁹ is the last of the Wooster and Jeeves chronicle. From these I would like to mention *The Code of the Woosters* (1938)⁶⁰ which deals with politics that is not typical for Wodehouse's work. The author usually took 'a gentle swipe at the things that irritated him. Phony writers and dilettantes had been among his targets; and in 1937 he found a new provocation'⁶¹. In this novel Wodehouse introduces the unpleasant character Roderick Spode and his followers called Black Shorts directly satirising Oswald Mosley's fascist movement. Bertie Wooster approaches Spode thus:

[. . .] just because you have succeeded in inducing a handful of half-wits to disfigure the London scene by going about in black shorts, you think you're someone. You hear them shouting, Heil, Spode! and you imagine it is the Voice of the People. That is where you make your bloomer. What the Voice of the People is saying is: Look at that frightful ass Spode swanking about in footer bags! Did you ever in your puff see such a perfect perisher?⁶²

56. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 90–91.

57. P. G. Wodehouse, *Thank You, Jeeves* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1934).

58. P. G. Wodehouse, *Right Ho, Jeeves*, (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1934).

59. P. G. Wodehouse, *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1975).

60. P. G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1938).

61. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 8.

62. P. G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters* (W. W. Norton & Comany; Reprint edition, 2011), 124, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com,

http://www.amazon.com/kindle/dp/B00530FC6O/ref=rdr_kindle_ext_eos_detail.

All of the stories featuring Wooster and his valet Jeeves are narrated from Bertie Wooster's point of view.⁶³ The master describes his adventures and his own personality as well as his servant's ingenuity. As mentioned above, Wooster and Jeeves first appeared in the short story 'Extricating Young Gussie' in 1915. The two, however, meet for the first time a year later in 'Jeeves Takes Charge'⁶⁴. Wodehouse returns back to the time when Bertie, after having dismissed his valet Meadows, ventured to London to 'ask the registry office to dig up another specimen for my [his] approval'⁶⁵.

Having acquainted the reader with the Wooster's and Jeeves' stories, I will now focus on their characters and their relationship.

2.2 Wooster, a Proper Gentleman?

Bertram or 'Bertie' Wooster is exactly what a proper English gentleman, the ideal of British high society, should not be. His main and only aim in life is fun and pleasure, he does not take on his responsibilities, he is incompetent, foolish and crosses the boundaries between classes, letting his valet Jeeves take over every problem and solve it in his stead.

At first sight Bertie appears to be brainless, funny and dull, however, at the same time the reader can sense Bertie's remarks on the world are quite insightful. Wodehouse's 'likings and prejudices'⁶⁶ are projected into Bertie's comments and 'his experiences often become Bertie's experiences'⁶⁷. In matters of love, Bertie Wooster appears 'rather prudish than a libertine'⁶⁸ and his 'strait-laced'⁶⁹ attitude might be compared to the typical Victorian gentleman who does not look beneath the polished surface of things in case of finding a monster under it.

63. Except 'Bertie Changes His Mind' (Great Britain: *Strand* [August, 1922], United States: *Cosmopolitan* [August, 1922].), the only story narrated by Jeeves and *Ring for Jeeves* (Great Britain: Jenkins, 1953.), written in third person narration.

64. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Jeeves Takes Charge,' United States: *Saturday Evening Post* (November 18, 1916).

65. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Jeeves Takes Charge,' in *Carry On, Jeeves* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1999), 1, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/Carry-On-Jeeves-Bertie-Novel/dp/1585673927/ref=sr_1_cc_1?s=aps&ie=UTF8&qid=1364746561&sr=1-1-catcorr&keywords=carry+on+jeeves; hereafter abbreviated Wodehouse, 'Jeeves Takes Charge'.

66. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 92.

67. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 92.

68. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 94.

69. French, *P. G. Wodehouse*, 94.

On closer inspection, Wooster's character may seem wiser than it looks like at first sight. Nevertheless, in comparison with Jeeves, Wooster is still the one who needs to be guided. Jeeves is his nanny and though the master does not want to admit it even to himself he is being 'jeevesized'. His first reaction to the valet's meddling is brave:

Well, I wasn't going to have any of that sort of thing, by Jove! I'd seen so many cases of fellows who had become perfect slaves to their valets. [. . .] You have to keep these fellows in their place, don't you know. You have to work the good old iron-hand-in-the-velvet-glove wheeze. If you give them a what's-its-name, they take a thingummy.⁷⁰

When Bertie becomes closer acquainted with Jeeves, who is clever enough to let him always think the master is the one in charge, he is ready to admit that, though 'lots of people think I'm [he is] much too dependent on him [Jeeves]',⁷¹ he 'gave up trying to run my [his] own affairs within a week of his [Jeeves'] coming to me [him]',⁷².

2.3 Jeeves Takes Charge

Above I mentioned Wooster's predecessors in Wodehouse's writings. I will now briefly introduce Wodehouse's earlier 'Jeeveses'. Before mastering the Wooster and Jeeves duo, Wodehouse featured man-servants as distinct characters in his stories before. A short story 'The Good Angel'⁷³ from 1910 featured butler Keggs but his rather unpolished manner was far from the character of the intelligent and well behaved Jeeves. Voules was more comparable to him: he was the valet in 'Rallying Round Old George' (1912)⁷⁴ 'whose off-duty manner was rough, but who acted with grace and fluidity in the presence of his master: a curious mixture of Keggs and Jeeves'⁷⁵. Jeeves' direct predecessor in the collection of Wodehouse's man-servants is considered to be Jevons from 'Creatures of Impulse' (1914)⁷⁶ who 'was imperturbable, showed a great deal of tact and, with one exception, performed his duties to perfection'⁷⁷.

70. Wodehouse, 'Jeeves Takes Charge,' 4.

71. Wodehouse, 'Jeeves Takes Charge,' 1.

72. Wodehouse, 'Jeeves Takes Charge,' 1.

73. P. G. Wodehouse, 'The Good Angel,' Great Britain: *Strand* (February 1910).

74. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Rallying Round Old George,' Great Britain: *Strand* (December, 1912).

75. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 6.

76. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Creatures of Impulse,' Great Britain: *Strand* (1914).

77. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 6.

Jeeves is the intelligent and competent one in Wooster's household. He is an omniscient servant who is prepared for every challenge not only concerning his master alone but all the Wooster's friends and relatives who need help. Although his master was educated at prestigious institutions (Eton, Oxford) he seems to suffer from amnesia when education is concerned and the recollection of his knowledge (whether ever obtained or not) is almost nonexistent:

'It reminded me of one of those lines in the poem – "See how the little how-does-it-go-tum tumty tiddly push." Perhaps you remember the passage?'

'Alas, regardless of their fate, the little victims play,' sir.

'Quite. Sad, Jeeves.'

'Yes, sir.'⁷⁸

Jeeves never fails to employ his erudition and numerous talents. In 'Leave it to Jeeves' he becomes a writer to publish *The Children's Book of American Birds* so that Miss Singer could impress her fiancée's uncle and obtain consent to marry Bertie's friend Corky. Sometimes Jeeves' speech is so complicated (mostly to Bertie's friends or acquaintances) that a translator is needed. In this respect, Wooster proves to be educated enough to understand his servant's meaning:

'The scheme I would suggest cannot fail of success, but it has what may seem to you a drawback, sir, in that it requires a certain financial outlay.'

'He means,' I translated to Corky, 'that he has got a pippin of an idea, but it's going to cost a bit.'⁷⁹

78. P. G. Wodehouse, *Joy in the Morning* (W. W. Norton & Company; Reprint edition, 2011), 28, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/Joy-Morning-P-G-Wodehouse/dp/0393339440/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1364475347&sr=8-1&keywords=joy+in+the+morning.

79. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Leave it to Jeeves,' in *My Man Jeeves* (The Pennsylvania State University, 2009), PDF e-book, 11, accessed April 18, 2013, <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/pg-wodehouse/My-Man-Jeeves6x9.pdf>; hereafter abbreviated Wodehouse, 'Leave it to Jeeves'.

2.4 Wooster and Jeeves, an Extraordinary Relationship

The simple definition of master-servant relationship between Wooster and Jeeves is that formally Wooster is the master and Jeeves is his servant but factually the roles are reversed.

Jeeves – My Man, you know – is really a most extraordinary chap. So capable. Honestly, I shouldn't know what to do without him. On broader lines he's like those chappies who sit peering sadly over the marble battlements at the Pennsylvania Station in the place marked "Inquiries." You know the Jonnies I mean. You go up to them and say: "When's the next train for Melonsquashville, Tennessee?" and they reply, without stopping to think, "Two-forty-three, track ten, change at San Francisco." And they're right every time. Well, Jeeves gives you just the same impression of omniscience.⁸⁰

Wooster is constantly overwhelmed by his valet's ingenuity. He is ready to entrust him with every task and he only wonders how on earth Jeeves is capable to manage everything with extreme elegance and smoothness. Jeeves, on the other hand, knows his master through and through because 'Mr Wooster's is not one of those inscrutable faces which it is impossible to read'⁸¹.

Jeeves is in many respects a mystery. Wooster confides to the reader and he confides to his servant as well (but the reader knows only what Bertie knows). Jeeves, on the contrary, does not have the need to tell his master anything that concerns his feelings or personal matters. The only time Jeeves does talk about his anxieties is in 'Bertie Changes His Mind' where he is the narrator. There he confesses to the reader that

his [Wooster's] words filled me with a certain apprehension. I had heard gentlemen in whose employment I have been speak in very much the same way before, and it had almost invariably meant that they were contemplating matrimony.⁸²

80. Wodehouse, 'Leave it to Jeeves,' 5.

81. P. G. Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind,' in *Carry On, Jeeves* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1999), 243, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/Carry-On-Jeeves-Bertie-Novel/dp/1585673927/ref=sr_1_cc_1?s=aps&ie=UTF8&qid=1364746561&sr=1-1-catcorr&keywords=carry+on+jeeves; hereafter abbreviated Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind'.

82. Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind,' 229.

The Wodehousean master-servant relationship is usually considered typically British. On closer inspection, however, this relationship is more complex than it looks at first. In many respects the Wodehousean master-servant relationship is very classical and in many respects it is not.⁸³ It is true that the theme of domestic service, which is clearly present in Wooster and Jeeves stories, has a very important place in the British tradition and the Victorian concept of master-servant relationship is usually taken as the criterion of domestic service in Britain.

83. The comparison between the classical idea of master-servant relationship and the Wodehousean one will be dealt with in following chapter (3. MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIP AS DEFINED BY THE VICTORIANS).

3. MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIP AS DEFINED BY THE VICTORIANS

3.1 The Ideal of the Victorians

The Victorian ideal of the relationship between the master and his servant has for a long time been one of the major defining aspects of Britishness. Furthermore, the upstairs-downstairs phenomenon and the whole concept of domestic service, and the contemporary studies exploring the world of upstairs and downstairs, are important to British identity.

The British society has long been defined by its class system where an individual's status was determined by birth.⁸⁴ Everyone had to keep their place including the servants and their masters. The servant's uniform was also an important invention of the Victorians, it denoted their class and to a certain degree suppressed individual identities. The master-servant relationship, the duties of individual servants and their hierarchy were clearly defined.

Every respectable household in Victorian England had to be equipped with at least one servant. Without a servant, there could be no master and no caste. Aristocracy developed a detailed household structure in their country estates that existed as self-reliant units employing at least eighteen house servants each of them performing specific task. According to the basic definition, the servants were 'a hidden army who could service their masters' needs with invisible hands'⁸⁵. The ideal servant's job was not only to perform his or her duties to perfection but the moral aspect was equally important. Being an ideal servant meant being selfless, religious, very decent,

84. Even in sports the Victorians used class system based on the then society structure and ideal. They 'underpinned the class structure, even exported it' by organising the sports according to the class basis. In horse racing (the official sport since 1840) the owners and arbiters were the gentlemen (their meeting place being the Jockey Club), the middle classes attained the profession of trainers and proles were the riders. Cricket acquired new class structure in 1846, strictly distinguishing between the nobility and the players that used separated dressing-rooms. Hunting was the favourite pastime of nobility, rugby belonged to the middle-class and Welshmen, football to workers and open golf was played by the middle-class and the Scotsmen. (Paul Johnson, *The Offshore Islanders: A History of the English People* [London: Orion Books, 1995], accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Offshore-Islanders-History-English/dp/0753805383>.)

85. Pamela Cox, presenter, 'Episode 1: Knowing Your Place,' in *Servants: The True Story of Life Below Stairs*, YouTube video, 58:58, documentary by BBC, 2012, posted by 'batuchkam,' accessed April 20, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl9M8Z0enaM&list=PLUi_lxCT70vD8GvdQIHIwds_Na0oM7hPB; hereafter abbreviated Cox, *Servants*.

indispensable, enjoying the work and accepting the appointed station in life⁸⁶. Masters supervised daily activities of their servants, working hours, duties, outer apparel and manners, etc., and they were also responsible for their morals.⁸⁷

3.2 Victorian Master-Servant Ideal versus Wooster and Jeeves

Wooster does not fulfil his duty of an ideal master for a simple reason: Jeeves does not require moral or any other guidance. He knows perfectly well what to do, he usually follows his own advice and does not consult his master. In this aspect he defies the concept of an ideal Victorian servant and he is the one to decide what and how things should be done. Bob Sharpe, the butler⁸⁸, writes in his memoirs:

The trick with being a butler was to be aloof without being haughty, distant and unflappable but never rude. Employers loved you to be haughty even if it meant that sometimes it almost began to look as if you were looking down your nose at your social superiors. That's no doubt where the whole Jeeves idea began.⁸⁹

The ideal Victorian master is not supposed to be mastered in any way, he does not allow it, he must be above his servants morally, in education and social position. Appearances must be maintained. Wooster and Jeeves do not fulfil these requirements. To give an illustrative example to better characterise the Wodehousean master-servant relationship,

86. Cox, *Servants*, Episode 1: Knowing Your Place.

87. Though the master servant relationships in reality very often differed from the ideal and the relationships were not always matching the expectations – Eric Horne in his memoirs remembers a talk with one of his colleagues: “[. . .] some of the gentry ought to be boiled.” I replied, “Excuse me from differing from you in a little detail; I think some of them ought to be baked.” (Eric Horne, *What the Butler Winked at: Being the Life and Adventures of Eric Horne* [United States: Westholme Publishing, 2011], Kindle edition, chap. 1.) –, the ideal Victorian servants and masters did exist.

Dr. Pamela Cox talks for example about Miss Harriet Rogers, who was the ‘most telling example of the ideal loyal and moral Victorian servant’ and who devoted her whole life and energy to serve the York family, sacrificing even her personal friendships and love life. (Cox, *Servants*, Episode 1: Knowing Your Place.)

88. At this point I am discussing the ideal of British servant in general (not only valet’s profession, but the whole concept of domestic servant).

89. Bob Sharpe and Tom Quinn, *They Also Serve* (Great Britain: Coronet, 2012), Kindle Edition, chap. 1, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com,

http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/reader/B008MNO4V6/ref=sib_dp_kd#reader-link.

Jeeves might be in a way compared to a wife who rules his husband by invisible hand. Neither of them defies their position but the roles are swapped beneath the surface.

Jeeves, however, fits into the ideal of a British man-servant in that part of being very decent, indispensable to his master, enjoying his work and accepting his station in life. He is perhaps too indispensable but he does enjoy his work and is proud of being a servant. On the other hand, he is more intelligent than his master and he is independent (that is, more independent than an ideal servant should be). Jeeves proves to be very well informed and knowing, he has the gift of anticipation, as Mrs Wilson puts it:

What gift do you think a good servant has that separates him from the others? It's the gift of anticipation. And I am a good servant, I'm better than good, I'm the best. I'm the perfect servant. I know when they'll be hungry and the food is ready. I know when they'll be tired and the bed is turned down. I know it before they know it themselves.⁹⁰

His sense of anticipation, however, is so perfect that sometimes it may seem he forces his master to do things he did not want to do. The ideal servant should never raise himself above his master in any way and at the same time the master should not give reason for it to happen.

Jeeves is perfectly acquainted with his master's personal affairs and he does not hesitate to advise him. Politely, of course, but he steps out of the 'invisibility cloak' of the ideal servants who were not supposed to interact with their employers on personal level.

Jeeves always has his way. From his master's clothing to the choosing of his bride, Jeeves is the arbiter elegantiae, it is his opinion that really matters in the master-servant relationship. He does what he thinks is best for his master (like an ideal Victorian servant) but at the same time he often does it against his master's wishes. And sometimes he serves his own purpose too (for example, preventing Bertie from marrying because from his own experience 'when the wife comes in at the front door the valet of bachelor days goes out at the back'⁹¹). The moment the master becomes more determined than usual and tries to have his own way, Jeeves muses:

90. Robert Altman, director, writer, producer, *Gosford Park* (UK, USA, Italy: USA Films, 2001), DVD.

91. Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind,' 229.

Employers are like horses. They require managing. Some gentlemen's personal gentlemen have the knack of managing them, some have not. I, I am happy to say, have no cause for complaint.⁹²

Here again the roles are swapped. In the concept of the ideal master-servant relationship it is the master who decides what is best for him and his servants and it is his job to put his servants (who are dependent on him not only materially but also in opinion) on the right path in terms of moral values. It is not the servant's place to agree or disagree with the opinions of his master. In the adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day*⁹³, the butler to Lord Darlington when asked what he thought about his master's opinions on war answers:

Richard Carlisle: But, did you share his opinions?

[. . .]

James Stevens [butler]: Well, I was his butler. I was there to serve him, not to agree or disagree.

Carlisle: You trusted him?

Stavens: Yes I did, completely.⁹⁴

3.3 Victorian Ideal Applied

To mention some of the literary master-servant characters who follow the Victorian concept of the relationship, I will turn to Tolkien's characters Frodo and Sam whose roles are strictly defined and never violated. The master is the authority no matter what. Sam sees his task as a matter of honour and chivalry. He takes care of his master and would die for him. Sam never stops addressing him as 'Mr Frodo'. Frodo is always the wiser of the two, despite the Ring's influence on him. Sam does not protest even though he believes that some of Frodo's decisions are wrong. Even in the most intimidating situations when Frodo despairs he still is the master and keeps his dignity in the eyes of

92. Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind,' 231.

93. Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989).

94. James Ivory, director, *The Remains of the Day*, (UK, USA: Columbia Pictures, Merchant Ivory Production, 1993; Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2001), DVD.

his servant who admires him and looks up to him. There is friendship between Frodo and Sam, but they are not equals in terms of class.

I will now look closer on the concept of master-servant relationship in literature written before Wodehouse.

4. MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIP IN LITERATURE BEFORE WODEHOUSE

4.1 Wodehouse's concept of Master-Servant Relationship in British Literature before Wodehouse

The concept of servant cleverer than his master has been present both in British and in world literature. It is a global theme well established in many not only comic genres, and yet, the Wodehousean concept is often considered typically British. I introduce a selection of those of master-servant relationships which appear in British literature before Wodehouse's stories and point out similarities and differences.

4.1.1 Shakespeare's Fools and Clowns

The concept of a servant who outwits his master can be traced in old literature in the character of a fool or a clown who first functioned only as a comic relief but gradually gained more significance.

With the arrival of the Renaissance, 'the rebirth of learning, knowledge and thought'⁹⁵, and its influence on drama, the character of a clown goes through an important change:

While the clown in the pre-modern drama functioned purely as a physical, comic tool to re-enforce the ideas of the church, the new clown would incorporate the physical appeal of his ancestors while growing into a cultural symbol---a repository for shared significance that would play on medieval humor for the benefit of everyone in the audience.⁹⁶

95. Lori M. Culwell, 'The Role of the Clown in Shakespeare's Theatre,' *Extra!* (Sheffield Hallam University, n.d.), accessed April 18, 2013, <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/iemls/shaksper/files/ROLE%20CLOWN.txt>; hereafter abbreviated Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

96. Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

Shakespeare's characters of fools indeed bear a great importance to his plays, they are the tools for commenting on contemporary issues and for social critique. In the pre-modern religious plays, the clown functioned as 'a comic model for making sense of the world that all agreed could be figured out by no man'⁹⁷ and these dramas served the church as explanatory additions to Catholic sermons which were 'intended solely to instruct the people in religious matters'⁹⁸. Shakespeare's fools and clowns are no longer merely puppets who make no 'attempt to interpret or to motivate the action by which [they were] defined'⁹⁹. They become characters with individuality and opinions of their own.

One of the most famous clowns are the Shakespeare's Gravediggers from *Hamlet*. There is one scene where Clown One and Clown Two are digging a grave for Ophelia. At the same time they employ the 'seriousness through buffoonery'¹⁰⁰, starting a philosophical discussion 'which ends in hilarity, even going so far as to mock the classical Latin and Aristotelian studies of the Italian-influenced Humanists'¹⁰¹. Thanks to the comic part to their characters, the fools and clowns can address serious topics of the then society quite openly. It is for the audience to decide whether their comments are meant seriously or in jest.

Similar thing happens between King Lear and his Fool: the Fool is the only one who can comment openly on the doings of the King – the one who answers only to God's voice, God is the only one whom the King has duty to obey – 'God uses him [the Fool] as a mouthpiece'¹⁰². The Fool can judge his master by his deeds because he is a fool. He cannot speak openly, he cannot tell the King when he means his comments seriously or in jest, that is for the King to decide¹⁰³ but still, the Fool is the servant who can show disapproval of his master and is, to a certain extent, allowed to step over the line and face his superior as equal and advise him. This is not an easy position because

97. Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

98. Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

99. Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

100. Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

101. Culwell, 'Role of the Clown'.

102. W. H. Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass,' *Encounter* (July, 1954): 44, accessed March 25, 2013 via UNZ.org, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Encounter-1954jul-00035>; hereafter abbreviated Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass'.

103. Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass,' 44.

the King is always the master, he is the one in charge and the truth spoken by his servant is not usually pleasant, therefore the Fool's position is 'a rough one'¹⁰⁴.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are. They'll have me whipp'd for speaking true; thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and sometimes I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool! And yet I would not be thee, nuncle. Thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left nothing i' th' middle.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, it is the servant who is right and is cleverer than his master. The Fool plays the role of the wiser in the relationship. Furthermore, the King cannot do without him. After the Fool 'mysteriously vanishes from the play, and when Lear appears without him, Lear is irremediably mad'¹⁰⁶.

Jeeves, however, is not only the wiser advisor. He is also the doer, his power is much bigger than the Fool's. King Lear's Fool only makes suggestions and comments and his master has the power to dismiss any of his remarks. Wooster may dismiss some of Jeeves' opinions but he admits that Jeeves's judgement is better than his and follows his lead.

4.1.2 The Greatest Plague of Life: or, The Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Servant

Master-servant relationship inspired a humorous narrative *The Greatest Plague of Life or, the Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Servant. By One Who Has Been "Almost Worried to Death"* (n.d., ca. 1847)¹⁰⁷. The book quickly became a bestseller, for the amusement of both the servants and their masters.

104. Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass,' 44.

105. William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (Simon & Brown, 2012), act 1 scene 4, page 63, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/King-Lear-William-Shakespeare/dp/161382338X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1366310956&sr=8-1&keywords=King+Lear+simon+and+brown.

106. Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass,' 44.

107. The Brothers Mayhew, eds., *The Greatest Plague of Life or, the Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Servant. By One Who Has Been "Almost Worried to Death"* (n.d., ca. 1847).

The story is introduced with the lady's narration of how she and her family were driven to 'seek an asylum in a respectable boarding-house'¹⁰⁸ because of the violent behaviour of their servants who had been driving their mistress absolutely mad with their

impudence and their quarrelling among themselves and their followers and their dirt and filth and their turning up their noses at the best of food and their wilful waste and goings on and their neglect and ill treatment of the dear children and their pilferings and their pride, their airs, and ill tempers [. . .].¹⁰⁹

The lady of the house admits that she 'was sick and tired of house-keeping and servants and only too glad to wash my [her] hands of them altogether'¹¹⁰ and rejoices at having 'a little peace, and quiet, and comfort, for the first time since my [her] marriage'¹¹¹. Shortly after entering the boarding house, an idea of 'a noble undertaking'¹¹² comes to her mind:

to publish to the world all my long experience with servants of all kinds, and countries, and colours, so that I might, as it were, become the pilot of young wives, to steer their fragile little barks through the rock and precipices of domestic life, and prevent their happiness being wrecked as mine has been.¹¹³

She then gives a detailed description of her life from birth and recounts the incidents between her and her servants which are accompanied with popular humorous illustrations by George Cruikshank. Each chapter ends with the *Moral reflection after writing the above* where the narrator communicates additional comments on the happenings in the then society, what is expected, accepted and what is not.

Both Wooster's and Mrs Edward Sk-n-st-n's stories are narrated from the master's/mistress' respective points of view and both of them are comical characters.

108. The Brothers Mayhew, eds., *The Greatest Plague of Life or, the Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Servant. By One Who Has Been "Almost Worried to Death"* (London: Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1864), PDF e-book, 5, accessed April 18, 2013 via Google Books,

http://books.google.cz/books?id=aLYNAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false; hereafter abbreviated Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*.

109. Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*, 4.

110. Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*, 5.

111. Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*, 5.

112. Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*, 6.

113. Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*, 6.

The manner in which the master-servant relationship is violated, however, is very different in each case.

In *Mayhew* the master-servant relationship is violated but overtly and even physically. The servants rebel against their mistress by neglecting their duties and playing nasty tricks on her. It is not clear whether there is a higher purpose behind their doings, whether they want to overthrow their mistress or if they just resent their boring and repetitive work. The reversal of the roles is not really the main theme of the book but the master-servant relationship as such.

The book satirises the contemporary problem of the 19th century Britain middle classes that are expected to keep a servant because ‘keeping a servant was a badge of respectability. It marked your status as a member of the middle class.’¹¹⁴ The demand for staff was enormous but at the same time the new middle class which emerged so quickly did not have enough experience in keeping servants. Therefore the middle class masters and mistresses turned for inspiration to the aristocracy and used ‘new money to buy into old values’¹¹⁵. The concept of service in a big aristocratic manor strictly separating the masters and their servants milieu was applied to narrow town houses where servants expected to be invisible even though masters and servants were bumping into each other all the time and the privacy between the parties concerned could not be easily maintained. Neither party had an easy life, living so close to each other and at the same time pretending they follow the old requirement of separation between masters and servants.

Jeeves fulfils the duties and shows attributes of an ideal servant and at the same time he masters his master without making it overt and obvious (to the master). In this way, they both keep their place. Jeeves stays and wants to stay the servant (he does not think of himself as the master) and Wooster is still the master though he does everything Jeeves wants him to do. Jeeves is proud of his profession as the gentleman’s gentleman and the way he fulfils it.

114. Cox, *Servants*, Episode 1: Knowing Your Place.

115. Cox, *Servants*, Episode 1: Knowing Your Place.

4.1.3 *The Admirable Crichton*

Barrie's play *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) tells the story of Lord Loam and his conservative butler Crichton. His lordship who is 'not sufficiently contemptuous of his inferiors'¹¹⁶ tries to put his radical opinions on equality between the classes into practice and forces his servants and also the members of his family to shake hands and act as equals. Although it is not for him 'to disapprove of his lordship's radical views'¹¹⁷, Crichton does not approve and when asked about his opinion he contradicts his master's view on division into classes being artificial, not natural:

CRICHTON. The divisions into classes, my lord, are not artificial. They are the natural outcome of a civilised society. (To LADY MARY.) There must always be a master and servants in all civilised communities, my lady, for it is natural, and whatever is natural is right.

LORD LOAM (wincing). It is very unnatural for me to stand here and allow you to talk such nonsense.

CRICHTON (eagerly). Yes, my lord, it is. That is what I have been striving to point out to your lordship.¹¹⁸

The two opinions (master's and servant's) are put to a test when the masters and mistresses and their butler are left on a deserted island and have to strive for survival. His lordship maintains the role of the leader at first but in comparison to his butler he eventually turns to be incompetent to live in nature. Crichton, as the most competent and innovative, takes charge and becomes the leader himself. During their stay on the island, the master-servant relationship swaps entirely but when the party is rescued by a passing ship and return to England they also return to the old values. Crichton having tasted new possibilities abandons the career of a butler which until now was 'a badge of honour'¹¹⁹ and 'the realisation of his proudest ambitions'¹²⁰ because he cannot return to the life in service.

116. J. M. Barrie, *The Admirable Crichton* (Digireads.com Publishing, 2010), act 1, page 6, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/The-Admirable-Crichton-J-Barrie/dp/1420938614/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1365694685&sr=8-5&keywords=the+admirable+crichton; hereafter abbreviated Barrie, *Crichton*.

117. Barrie, *Crichton*, act 1, page 7.

118. Barrie, *Crichton*, act 1, page 19.

119. Barrie, *Crichton*, act 1, page 6.

120. Barrie, *Crichton*, act 1, page 6.

Crichton, the butler, proves to be more competent than his master in crises which is similar to Jeeves, the valet. Jeeves is able to serve his master in matters the master should be able to solve himself. Though Crichton and his master are left on a deserted island, in an environment completely different from their home, the old-value-master-servant relationship might be preserved (e.g. Phileas Fogg and Jean Passepartout). The conservative master-servant relationship as it had been promoted by Crichton fails under stressful circumstances and Crichton eventually leaves his master because he does not want to be a servant any more. This is not the case of Wooster and Jeeves as their relationship does not have to be put to test, it is reversed in their natural environment. On the other hand, if Jeeves were forced to become an ideal servant complying with Victorian requirements, he would, as Crichton in the end does, leave his master too.

The master-servant relationships in the British literature which I demonstrated above are similar to the Wodehousean concept in some aspects but the resemblance is not considerable. The roles may be exchanged in some ways or the pattern of the relationship may be violated but the concept of a servant more competent than his master, helping his master in matters, which normally should not be of the servant's concern, is not present. The Fool may be wiser than his lord but firstly, it is a part of his work to comment his master's decisions and secondly, he does not take on the responsibilities of his master and he is not allowed to solve the problems in his stead. The servants in Mayhew are not superior to their mistress in their intelligence or capability. Their power lies in the fact that good servants are scarce and she cannot replace them therefore they can dictate. Crichton appears to be the most similar to Jeeves at first but here the reversal of the master-servant relationship is absolute (also the outside appearance, unlike the case of Wooster and Jeeves). Crichton does not chose the middle way, as Jeeves does – being a servant in status but under the surface mastering the master. Lord Loam's butler distinguishes only between the full-time master and the full-time servant. When he realises that work in service is not for him after all, he leaves it completely.

In this subchapter I was looking for Wooster and Jeeves' predecessors in Britain. In the following one I will be searching for them in those stories which originated in or are typical for places beyond the British Isles.

4.2 Wodehouse's Concept of Master-Servant Relationship in Other than British Literature before Wodehouse

4.2.1 Don Quixote and Sancho Panza

One of the world best known master-servant stories is Cervantes' Don Quixote of La Mancha and his servant Sancho Panza¹²¹ parodying the concept of medieval knighthood and chivalry novels.

Both Don Quixote and Wooster have a naive idea about the world. They both set off on a mission again and again (although Quixote aims higher in his quests than Wooster who rescues his friends from trivial troubles) and this mission usually ends with a surprising and unexpected outcome. The hero repeatedly gets his fingers burnt but despite this the 'missions impossible' continue. Wooster's and his aunt's and friend's energy in inventing new aims and projects seems endless and he does not change, his character does not develop but remains the same as in the beginning. Although Wooster's idealism and naiveness cannot be compared to Don Quixote's, yet the two men are similar in many aspects. For example, Wooster's view on beautiful young women comes close to Quixote's noble lady who needs to be rescued by a mighty chivalry knight:

Muriel Singer was one of those very quiet, appealing girls who have a way of looking at you with their big eyes as if they thought you were the greatest thing on earth and wondered that you hadn't got on it yet yourself. She sat there in a sort of shrinking way, looking at me as if she were saying to herself, "Oh, I do hope this great strong man isn't going to hurt me." She gave a fellow a protective kind of feeling, [. . .]

121. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1605–15).

She made me feel that there was nothing I wouldn't do for her. [. . .]
What I mean is, she made me feel alert and dashing, like a jolly old
knight-errant or something of that kind. I felt I was with her in this
thing to the limit.¹²²

Don Quixote's sweet Dulcinea is in fact an ordinary peasant smelling of onions¹²³ and Miss Singer astonishes 'the knight-errant' Bertie when she quickly seizes the opportunity and marries Corky's uncle instead of Bertie's friend Corky.

Don Quixote's story turns sour in the end. The hero abandons his ideal and faces the harsh reality thus leaving the world of imagination. Wooster cannot do that because the author usually does not allow reality to enter his escapist fiction therefore it cannot overpower the Wodehousean Eden. Don Quixote lives in the real world all the time, only he is protected by his bubble of idealism.

W. H. Auden characterises Sancho Panza as a "“holy” realist' who still hopes that he will profit from his service in spite of the fact that 'he has realised that his master is mad' but at the same time 'whatever Sancho Panza may say, his motives for following his master are love for his master' and 'love of adventure for its own sake, a poetic love of fun'.¹²⁴ It is not certain that Jeeves follows his master for love and though the reader does not know Wooster's income and its source ('we do not concern ourselves with the economic implications of their [the Wodehouse's characters'] position'¹²⁵), it is clear that Jeeves receives good wages and does not want to 'sever a connexion so pleasant in every respect as his [Wooster's] and mine [Jeeves'] had been'¹²⁶. But like Sancho Panza, Jeeves seems to follow his master for the fun and adventure. Not only because of his amusement in watching his master being embarrassed:

By stationing myself behind a pillar on the porch or veranda which adjoined the room, I was enabled to see and hear all. It was an experience which I should be sorry to have missed.¹²⁷

122. Wodehouse, 'Leave it to Jeeves,' 10.

123. Václav Černý, introduction 'Cervantes a jeho Don Quijote' to *Důmyslný rytíř Don Quijote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (Praha: Melantrich, 1931), 15.

124. Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass,' 50.

125. Evelyn Waugh, 'An Angelic Doctor'.

126. Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind,' 229.

127. Wodehouse, 'Bertie Changes His Mind,' 239.

He also finds satisfaction in cases he has solved. Sancho Panza becomes the governor and has his several moments of fame. Jeeves becomes a famous omniscient servant admired not only by his master but also by his master's friends. Both Sancho Panza and Jeeves enjoy their masters' adventures, otherwise they would leave and find better ones. Both Wooster and Don Quixote are naive and idealistic masters blinded by their view on the world and Jeeves and Sancho Panza are down-to-earth cunning servants who, when their masters start to be too wilful, find a way to solve the problem to their own satisfaction and at the same time make their masters believe they – the masters – are in control.

4.2.2 Mr Fogg and Passepartout

Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (*Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-Vingts Jours*, 1873) is one of the most celebrated oeuvres of the author. It is told to have been initially inspired by a poster of a travel agency proposing the tour around the world in 80 days and the ending of Mr Fogg's and his valet's adventure seems to be inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's 'A Succession of Sundays'.¹²⁸

In the very first chapter the author describes Mr Fogg as a typical English gentleman. He is a gentleman of means whose profession and source of income are a mystery both to the author and to the reader because 'no ships ever came into London docks of which he was the owner; he had no public employment'¹²⁹. He is undoubtedly rich but 'those who knew him best could not imagine how he had made his fortune, and Mr Fogg was the last person to whom to apply for the information'¹³⁰. He may be wealthy but he is not 'avaritious; for, whenever he knew that money was needed for a noble, useful, or benevolent purpose, he supplied it quietly and sometimes anonymously'¹³¹. The reader notices a certain similarity to Wooster: as mentioned before, Bertie's income is not defined but it is clear that he has enough money to

128. Gilbert Sigaux, preface to *Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-Vingts Jours*, by Jules Verne (Lausanne: Éditions Rencontre Lausanne, 1970), 5, 8.

129. Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days* (United States: Tribeca Books, 2012), 1, accessed April 18, 2013 via Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/Around-World-Days-Jules-Verne/dp/1936594617/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1364888645&sr=1-1&keywords=around+the+world+in+80+days; hereafter abbreviated Verne, *Around the World*.

130. Verne, *Around the World*, 1.

131. Verne, *Around the World*, 2.

provide for himself and his valet. Furthermore, though he may be more reluctant to give money away, he is always ready to help his friends when need be.

Mr Fogg is obsessed with punctuality and order. In his world everything is planned, he is a perfect organiser and bright man of science but when it comes to personal matters or communication in general, Mr Fogg is not the best of companions. On the other hand, he has the quality which not every man possesses: “repose in action”, a quality of those who act rather than talk¹³². When Passepartout sees his master for the first time, he compares him with a wax sculpture: ‘I’ve seen people at Madame Tussaud’s as lively as my new master!’¹³³ Mr Fogg shows emotion only when he plays whist: ‘The game was in his eyes a contest, a struggle with a difficulty, yet a motionless, unwearied struggle, congenial to his tastes.’¹³⁴ This master is a perfect ‘type of [. . .] English composure’¹³⁵ and he is exactly the one Passepartout was looking for.

Passepartout is a ‘true Parisian of Paris’¹³⁶, a valet searching for ‘a master after his own heart’¹³⁷. Verne describes him as ‘an honest fellow, with a pleasant face, [. . .] soft-mannered and serviceable, with a good round head, such as one likes to see on the shoulders of a friend’¹³⁸. Although he had already been employed as a servant to several English gentlemen, his search for an employer whom he would respect has not been successful. When he meets Mr Fogg, he is full of hope because his new master’s life is ‘one of unbroken regularity’¹³⁹. His household is the one where Passepartout, the ‘vagrant’¹⁴⁰, might find his long desired repose.

Passepartout has many talents and skills, obtained from his previous jobs, which reach far outside the usual capacities of a gentleman’s gentleman. So does Jeeves though the history of his acquiring them is unknown to the reader and the master. Passepartout’s desire of a quiet domestic life where everything is under control and without disturbance could be compared to Jeeves’ idea of peaceful life of a servant in bachelor’s flat.

132. Verne, *Around the World*, 4.

133. Verne, *Around the World*, 4.

134. Verne, *Around the World*, 2.

135. Verne, *Around the World*, 4.

136. Verne, *Around the World*, 5.

137. Verne, *Around the World*, 5.

138. Verne, *Around the World*, 5.

139. Verne, *Around the World*, 5.

140. Verne, *Around the World*, 5.

Passepartout and Jeeves are both valets to Englishmen and both stories make fun of English gentlemen and the traditional concept of domestic service. The story of Mr Fogg and Passepartout comes to the point when the master chooses to abandon his ‘stoic apathy’¹⁴¹ in rescuing an Indian princess instead of continuing on the journey as planned (he steps out of his own traditions and values) and Passepartout stops ‘serving a machine’¹⁴². He ‘breaks the rules’ of the classical master-servant relationship and uses the ‘capacities which his normal duties as a servant would never have revealed’¹⁴³: acting, athletics, ability to construe a clever plan etc. He is capable to do what his master is not and Mr Fogg realises and admits that there are things which he cannot deal with on his own. For a moment Passepartout’s heroic actions contradict his role of all knowing and all anticipating master. The same happens constantly in the case of Wooster and Jeeves. As mentioned in chapter 2, Jeeves employs his many talents which Wooster does not even dream of possessing. The master has to admit that his servant is more capable and barriers between classes are breached in this way.

4.2.3 Commedia dell’Arte

The master-servant concept as one of the central themes is also exploited in theatre. Commedia dell’arte (also commedia alla maschera – masked comedy, commedia improvviso – improvised comedy or commedia dell’arte all’improvviso¹⁴⁴) grew in popularity during the 16th and 17th centuries especially in Italy, hence obtaining also the name Italian Comedy.¹⁴⁵ This popular comedy was originally reserved only for

141. Auden, ‘Balaam and the Ass,’ 52.

142. Verne, *Around the World*, 6.

143. Auden, ‘Balaam and the Ass,’ 52.

144. John Rudlin, *Commedia dell’Arte: An Actor’s Handbook* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994; Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003), 13, accessed April 19, 2013 via Amazon.com,

http://www.amazon.com/Commedia-DellArte-Handbook-John-Rudlin/dp/0415047706/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1365002195&sr=1-1&keywords=0415047706; hereafter abbreviated Rudlin, *Commedia dell’Arte*. Citations refer to the

Taylor & Francis edition.

145. The classical commedia dell’arte gained its popularity also in the mid 17th century England, but in the 18th century it developed into a pantomime genre, in Nicoll’s words it ‘became dumb’ (Allardyce Nicoll, *The Development of the Theatre* [London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1937], 114; hereafter abbreviated Nicoll, *Development of the Theatre*).

The ‘harlequinade’ (as it was called) focused on Harlequin and other original commedia dell’arte characters (except Pulcinella who with ‘his hump, his hooked nose, and his coxcomb’ [Nicoll, *Development of the Theatre*, 109.] turned into English Punch and Judy shows). Harlequin acquired a new dimension, turning into mischievous magician, and the play was rich in chase scenes, acrobatics and

theatre, its main technique being improvisation and creativity of the actor himself, before acquiring the written form. It was Carlo Goldoni who started calling its written form ‘commedia dell’arte’ in order to distinguish it from the masked and improvised drama.¹⁴⁶

The main characteristics of commedia dell’arte followed a ‘scenario’ proposed by ‘concertatore’ (the manager), which ‘outlined the main elements in the plot and noted pieces of comic business technically known as *lazzi*’¹⁴⁷, and stock characters, each given specific characteristics, necessary base for improvising. Usually one actor performed one character for the whole of his career (‘once a Pantalone, always a Pantalone’¹⁴⁸). The main persons are a pair of lovers (‘comico innamorato’ and his ‘comica innamorata’); the maid-servants (the most famous being Colombina); the man-servant Harlequin (also Arlecchino or Arlequin), Brighella, Scapino and Mezzetino; Pulcinella and Capitano; the old men: Pantalone and his companion Dottore. The plot, or ‘scenario’ was mostly concerned with the clever servants helping the leading pair to overcome their opponent (a greedy father or an old philanderer) and satire on contemporary society.

Not only Wooster and Jeeves, but many Wodehouse’s characters bear resemblances to the stock characters and in fact were intended so. Jasen’s *P. G. Wodehouse: Portrait of a Master* reads:

This was not the first time that Plum had created a character in one book and reintroduced that character at a later date in another book. But what he was really seeking at this time was a continuing character around which a series could be constructed. He had first attempted creating a series with his cricket stories in the *Strand*. Now he wanted to do the same sort of thing with the humorous love stories which he

tomfoolery (‘Early Pantomime,’ Victoria and Albert Museum, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/e/early-pantomime/>).

Later on, the harlequinades and Punch and Judy shows became an entertainment for children. Commedia dell’arte returned to England in the first half of the 20th century. (James Fisher, ‘Harlequinade: Commedia dell’Arte on the Early Twentieth-Century British Stage,’ *Theatre Journal* 41, no. 1 [1989]: 31, accessed April 3, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207922>.)

146. Rudlin, *Commedia dell’Arte*, 14.

147. Nicoll, *Development of the Theatre*, 105.

148. Nicoll, *Development of the Theatre*, 105.

recognised to be his forte, and the need was for a character who would narrate each story and thus provide the link between each book.¹⁴⁹

As was also said before, Wodehouse's characters do not change, they are 'prescribed' protagonists – stock characters – featuring in series of stories and situations, their characters do not change, they are not developing or aging.

As an example of commedia dell'arte I analyse the comedy by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais *The Barber of Seville, or the Useless Precaution (Le Barbier De Séville: Ou La Précaution Inutile, 1775)*.

The story is set in Spain mainly because of the censorship so that the criticism would not be aimed directly on the then French society. Count Almaviva falls in love with Rosina, rich ward of physician Bartholo. Almaviva wants to be loved for himself, not for his money so he courts her in disguise as impecunious Lindor. At the beginning of the story, the Count meets his old servant, barber Figaro, who knows every gossip in the town and who from now on is helping him to achieve happiness with his beloved Rosina. Together they plot against Bartholo and his minion Bazilio. The latter is eventually bribed to join their side. Bartholo is a strong opponent and not a stupid one. Nevertheless, Figaro's wit and the love of the leading pair win over the greedy guardian.

Both Figaro and Jeeves are cleverer than their superiors, however, Count Almaviva is far from being useless when it comes to crises as Wooster usually is. Almaviva *is* capable of playing the part in his servant Figaro's brilliantly construed plan but he is unable to make the plan himself. Thus the master is put into a position where the servant tells him what to do. It is the servant who takes charge. So does Jeeves, he knows the problem, makes a plan but usually has to do the tasks himself while Wooster is following a separate plan of his own making that always fails.

Beaumarchais' story features a servant with exceptional skills and talents which Figaro could easily use in other profession than service. He is a former and now found-again petty servant of the rich 'Grandee of Spain'¹⁵⁰ but he is well established in his new profession as a barber. It might be argued that he is helping the Count for a big reward but Figaro is not a sly and calculating opportunist. From the first moment of the

149. Jasen, *A Portrait of a Master*, chap. 5.

150. Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Barber of Seville, or the Useless Precaution; A Comedy in four Acts. With Songs*, (London: J. Chouquet, 1776; The Online Library of Liberty, 2011), PDF e-book, 7, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1562>.

Beaumarchais' story it is clear Figaro is helping the Count because he too is a romantic soul and seeks every chance to ensure happy ending. Surely he is counting on his reward to be able to pay off his debts but the romantic adventure plays even more important part in his schemes.

Jeeves' motives in assisting his master are for the enjoyment as well but also for ensuring his position. The reader can easily imagine that if Wooster broke the silent agreement between them and became the master in every respect, the valet would easily move on to find another master, someone more worthy of his delicate governance. There is no question of Jeeves' pursuing other career than that in domestic service, however, the reader is not entirely sure whether he does it more for fun than for necessity.

In conclusion, not only do these works (*The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha, Around the World in Eighty Days, The Barber of Seville, or the Useless Precaution*) feature both the master and his servant as main protagonists and equally important dramatic characters but also the servant often proves to be more capable than his master who needs his help in the classical concept of professional relationship and also in other forms where the servant employs skills which reach beyond the tasks required of an ordinary servant.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of my thesis was to establish whether the Wodehouse's characters Wooster and Jeeves are typically British or not, with the focus on their professional relationship as master and servant, which I underpinned as the most important feature in these protagonists.

Firstly I introduced the author and his work in general, I explored the author's life and Wodehouse's fiction which in many respects deals with themes typical for the British society and way of life. Nevertheless, when I looked closer on the master-servant relationship presented by Wodehouse in Wooster and Jeeves, the pattern of reversed master-servant relationship proved to be more complex and not easily to be concluded as typically British.

I first defined the Wodehousean concept of master-servant relationship. Then I used the Victorian ideal of master and servant as the typically British concept and put it to comparison with the Wodehousean one. In some respects they proved to be similar (keeping up the appearances, the servant enjoying his work and accepting his status). The core of the Victorian relationship, the most important value, however, was violated in case of Wooster and Jeeves. Jeeves does not raise himself above his master overtly, he keeps his place and stays the gentleman's gentleman. His doings and intellectual capacities, however, stand high above his master which would be utterly unthinkable in the traditional concept of master-servant relationship.

To find out whether the Victorian concept of master-servant relationship was violated in British literature before Wodehouse (Wooster and Jeeves being the result of a long tradition of literary oeuvres featuring this kind of reversal), or whether the Wodehousean concept is a novelty, I provided several examples from British literature before Wodehouse and compared them with Wooster and Jeeves. I concluded that though these relationships bear resemblance to the Wodehousean concept, similarities are not considerable and the pattern of relationship where the servant is more competent than his master, interfering in and dealing with affairs which normally should not be in his competence as a servant, is not present. *The Admirable Crichton* appeared to be an exception but the master-servant reversal in Barrie's play is different from the

Wodehousean in that it is brought to extreme. The roles are swapped entirely which does not happen in the case of Wooster and Jeeves who keep appearances.

Other than British literature proved to be more abundant in the Wodehousean concept. Not only the master-servant relationships were closer to Wooster and Jeeves' but there was also the fact that the protagonists (Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Phileas Fogg and Jean Passepartout, the servants and their masters from *commedia dell'arte*) were iconic figures as is the case of Wooster and Jeeves.

From the analyses I concluded that Wodehouse's pattern of master-servant relationship cannot be classified as typically British. The literary concept of servants outwitting their masters was and always have been present in world literature and the features of Wodehouse's master and servant are more similar to the non-British than the British before Wodehouse. Also regarding the historical concept of the master-servant relationship as defined by the Victorians, Wooster and Jeeves are not typically British.

6. ZÁVĚR

Tématem mé bakalářské práce byla otázka, zda Wodehousovy postavy Wooster a Jeeves jsou typicky britské, přičemž důraz je položen na jejich profesionální vztah pána a sluhy, který jsem pojala jako nejcharakterističtější pro dané postavy.

Nejdříve jsem uvedla popis autorova života a díla, charakterizaci světa jeho postav a příběhů, které se v mnoha směrech zabývají tématy typickými pro britskou společnost a její způsob života. Když jsem se však začala věnovat Wodehousově vztahu pán-sluha ztvárněného v postavách Woostera a Jeevese podrobněji, aspekty typicky britské ustoupily do pozadí a vztah pán-sluha se zdál být mnohem složitější, než aby bylo možné ho jednoduše označit za typicky britský.

Jako první jsem definovala pojem Wodehousova vztahu pán-sluha. Poté jsem použila viktoriánský ideál pána a sluhy jako typicky britský koncept a srovnala jej s Wodehousovým. V některých aspektech se ukázaly být podobné (postavy udržují dekorum, sluha nachází uspokojení ve svém povolání a akceptuje místo ve společnosti, které mu bylo přiděleno). Avšak podstata viktoriánského vztahu byla v případě Woostera a Jeevese porušena. Jeeves se nepovyšuje nad svého pána otevřeně, drží se v pozadí a je stále komorníkem gentlemana, jeho intelektuální schopnosti však pánovy vysoce přesahují a výrazně do života svého pána zasahuje, což by v tradičním vztahu pán-sluha bylo naprosto nepřijatelné.

Abych zjistila, jestli v britské literatuře před Wodehousem existují další případy, kdy byl tento konzervativní koncept vztahu pán-sluha porušen (a zda jsou tedy tyto postavy výsledkem dlouhé tradice děl, na kterou Wodehouse navazuje) anebo jestli Wodehousov koncept je ve skutečnosti novinkou, uvedla jsem několik příkladů z britské literatury předcházející Wodehousovo dílo. Došla jsem k závěru, že přestože lze mezi Wodehousem a jeho britskými předchůdci nalézt jisté společné rysy, chybí prvek, že sluha je schopnější než pán a řeší úkoly, které by normálně neměly být v jeho kompetenci. *Chlapík Crichton (The Admirable Crichton)* na první pohled vypadá jako výjimka, avšak prohození v Barrieho vztahu pán-sluha je jiné v tom, že je dovedeno do extrému. Role jsou vyměněny úplně, což není případ Woostera a Jeevese, kteří navenek každý zachovávají své místo.

Když jsem se zaměřila na světovou literaturu (jinou než britskou), zjistila jsem, že je mnohem bohatší na příklady wodehousovského konceptu. Nejenže vztahy byly bližší Woosterovi a Jeevesovi, ale hlavní protagonisté (Don Quijote a Sancho Panza, Phileas Fogg a Jean Passepartout, sluhové a páni z commedia dell'arte) jsou ztvárněni jako ikonické postavy a hrají hlavní roli stejně jako Wooster a Jeeves.

Z analýz, které jsem provedla, tedy vyplývá, že Wodehousův koncept pán-sluha nemůže být považován za typicky britský. Téma sluhy, který přelstí svého pána, má dlouhou tradici ve světové literatuře, a atributy Wodehousova vztahu pán-sluha jsou mnohem podobnější světovým literárním dílům než britským před Wodehousem. Ani z historického hlediska nesplňují Wooster a Jeeves požadavky, které na vztah pán-sluha kladli viktoriánci.

7. ANNOTATION

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Title: Wooster and Jeeves: Typically British Characters?

Supervisor: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D.

Number of characters: 100917

Number of appendices: 1 CD

Keywords: P. G. Wodehouse, Wooster and Jeeves, typically British, master-servant relationship

Description: The aim of this thesis was to establish whether the Wodehouse's characters Wooster and Jeeves are typically British or not, with the focus on their professional relationship as master and servant. The introductory part of the thesis provides description of the author's life and work, characterisation of his fictional world and characters in general. The main part of the thesis is concerned with establishing the concept of the Wodehousean master-servant relationship and the Victorian ideal of the master-servant relationship which are then being compared with selected iconic master-servant relationships from British and non-British literature before Wodehouse.

8. ANOTACE

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Počet znaků: 100917

Počet příloh: 1 CD

Klíčová slova: P. G. Wodehouse, Wooster a Jeeves, typicky britské, vztah pán-sluha

Popis: Tématem této bakalářské práce byla otázka, zda Wodehouseovy postavy Wooster a Jeeves jsou typicky britské, přičemž důraz je položen na jejich profesionální vztah pána a sluhy. Úvodní část se zabývá popisem autorova života a díla, charakterizací světa jeho příběhů a postav obecně. V hlavní části práce je definován pojem Wodehouseovského vztahu pán-sluha a viktoriánského ideálu tohoto vztahu, které jsou dále srovnávány s vybranými ikonickými vztahy pána a sluhy z britské a jiné než britské literatury před Wodehousem.

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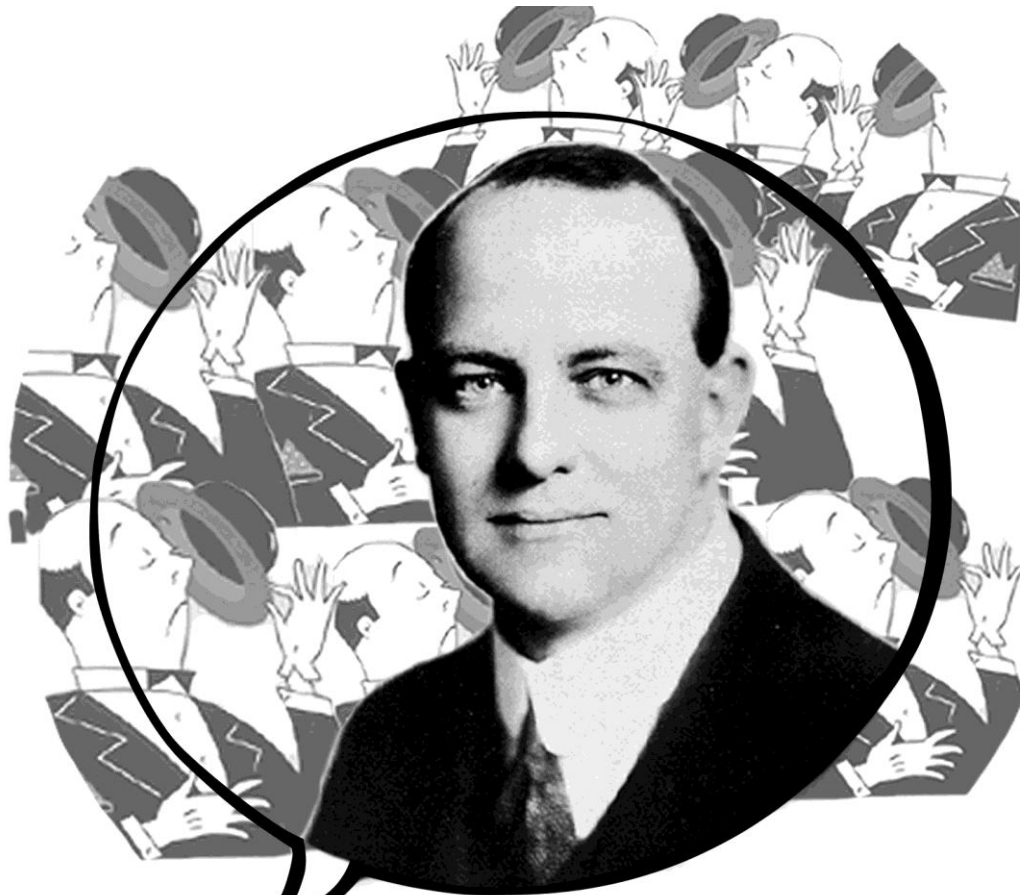
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Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse

(October 15, 1881 – February 14, 1975)



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Carry On, Jeeves. Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1999.
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Jeeves and Wooster is a British comedy-drama television series adapted by Clive Exton from P. G. Wodehouse's "Jeeves" stories. The series was a collaboration between Brian Eastman of Picture Partnership Productions and Granada Television. It aired on the ITV network from 22 April 1990 to 20 June 1993, with the last series nominated for a British Academy Television Award for Best Drama Series. Set in the United Kingdom and the United States in an unspecified period between the late 1920s and the 1930s Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves are fictional characters, created by British author PG Wodehouse. They have appeared in many comedic short stories and novels published between 1915 and 1974. Wodehouse's most famous Upperclass Twit, Bertram Wilberforce "Bertie" Wooster, is also the character who probably best embodies Wodehouse's gift for language. Bertie may be "mentally negligible", but as narrator of his own adventures he expresses himself with a loopy eloquence virtually unmatched in literature. Luckily for us, Bertie Wooster manages to retain Jeeve's services through all the vicissitudes of purple socks and policeman's helmets, and here, gathered together for the first time, is an omnibus of Jeeves novels and stories comprising three of the funniest books ever written: Thank You, Jeeves, The code of the Woosters and The Inimirable Jeeves.Â Comic writer P. G. Wodehouse is best known for his enduring characters, including Jeeves, Psmith, and Mr. Mulliner. A prolific short-story writer, many of the stories in The Man with Two Left Feet were previously published in periodicals such as The Saturday Evening Post, Red Book Magazine (Redbook), and McClure's™s.