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Foreword

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OTDK (The National Conference of Student Research Societies) has recently been recognised by a second place among the Highlights of Hungary and the special prize of Brain Bar. As the most wide-scale national competition of university students, both in terms of the number of contestants and the variety of academic fields covered, OTDK has indeed been at the very heart of motivating young talents and selecting the most promising projects for generations. The Conference has also served as an unofficial rite of passage on the way to PhD scholarships.

Flying in the face of the widespread talk about the decline of the humanities, the outpour of keen interest on the part of the scholarly youth has been a deeply positive sign. In the narrower field of English Studies, too, our problems are far too numerous to list. The conference, however, was a festive moment and the *EgerJES* section, collecting some of the finest work there presented, preserves that much-needed moment of hope, for teachers and students alike.

The papers showcase the rich variety of research fields and approaches. From an investigation based in Early Modern iconography of Marlowe's representation of death (Loretta Anna Jungbauer) to a reception-aesthetics oriented reading of William Blake (Mátyás György Lajos), from a feminist reading of Angela Carter's short stories (Anna Patricia Wynn) to an essay on *Frankenstein* using a psychological concept of "doubles" (Regina Andók), from a comparative analysis of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (Lilián Rácz) to an examination of David Mitchell's *The Cloud Atlas* as a response to consumerism (Daniella Krisztián), the selection bears witness to the vitality of English studies.

The entire English Studies community of Hungary owes a great debt of gratitude to *The Eger Journal of English Studies* and its editors-in-chief, Professors Éva Antal and Csaba Czeglédi for making it happen.

Representation of Death in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts One and Two*

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In 1587, Christopher Marlowe introduced a new approach to theatre in *Tamburlaine the Great* and reformed the reigning theatrical practices. The popularity of the plays' main motif, Death, can be traced back to ancient Greek and Roman texts, but Marlowe's portrayal of the Death-topos differs from the traditional depictions on many levels. My main aim in this essay is to point out the Marlovian innovations concerning the theatrical representation of death by relying on contemporary popular culture. I also intend to emphasise the complementary relationship of rhetoric and imagery in order to prove the shared importance of verballity and imagery.

Keywords: Marlowe, theatre, death, violence, conquest, transformation

1. Introduction

The social beliefs of the English Renaissance era heavily relied on the heritage of antique Latin and Greek attitudes as well as Anglo-Saxon culture combined with Christian dogma. This rich compound proved to be a basis suitable for Marlowe to raise unpleasant but topical questions in his provocative works. The theatrical environment was perfectly fitting for such pieces since, as Neill notes, theatre offered the possibility of staging anxieties which were supposed to be repressed by the individual (Neill 2008, 32). All the seven plays written by Christopher Marlowe revolve around troublesome events and present challenging ideas most of which are recurrent in the plays, usually in different proportions. Marlowe generally chooses provoking motives like treachery or religious discrepancy as the core problem of the given play. The employment of themes such as religious heterogeneity, use and abuse of power, the art of deception, as well as the physical and the metaphysical limitedness of mankind had followed a long literary tradition. These topoi were widely discussed and well-known from the everyday as well: people encountered them at school while studying historical and literary texts of the classical corpus, at the same time they were also confronted with the religious connotations of such ideas by the church services. This religious emotional and visual experience had a notable effect on theatre, as Hardin remarks (Hardin 2006, 31). Marlowe

made ample use of the permanent presence of these concepts, with which he was thoroughly familiar. The omnipresence of their visual or literary representation had transformed these themes into integral parts of public knowledge, thus, the audience's familiarity with their meaning could be taken for granted.

As MacKenzie claims, the printing revolution of the 15th century gave rise to the popularity of emblem books in the households since they were affordable. Emblem books provided entertainment for both literate and illiterate people for the mottos and epigrams were to be considered together with a simple picture which illustrated the meaning of the text (MacKenzie 2010, xxiv–xxv). Marlowe, however, did not only use the traditional interpretations of the well-known images, he was ready to experiment and explore new possibilities offered by the medium of the theatre. Marlowe, instead of building upon the traditional reading of the prominent emblems, introduced a new kind of perception, since as MacKenzie asserts, “Marlowe’s manipulation of visual resources often seeks to challenge or extend the thinking of the playgoer.” The purpose of visual representation was shifted from impression and the expression of meaning became more important (xvii–xviii). Marlowe counted simultaneously on the audience’s knowledge of the classical interpretations and on their bewilderment, when being confronted with nonconventional representations of familiar concepts; in order to be able to do so, he had to rely on topics present in the Elizabethan popular culture.

2. Death in Elizabethan Popular Culture

The main motif Marlowe chose for his *Tamburlaine* plays is one which was ubiquitous in Renaissance England. The presence of death was in many ways inescapable. Foister states that “skulls were frequently worn in the sixteenth century as badges or other macabre forms of jewellery” (Foister 1997, 46). The plague, these memento mori objects and their depictions on church windows transformed death into an organic part of daily life. The main concept behind the literary and pictorial representations of mortality was not only to remember the dead but also to show the inevitability and omnipotence of death itself. Early medieval representations of death appear in various shapes, though, as Spinrad claims, the fleshless skeleton and the heavily decomposed corpse are considered to have been the most popular images of this era (Spinrad 1987, 2). Spinrad’s concept is underpinned by the increased number of depicted corpses with each of them showing a different stage of decomposition. On the one hand, it confirms the vogue of portraying decaying bodies but on the other hand, these images also enable the spectators to contemplate their own mortality. The depictions were a reminder that every human has to go through the

same stages of existence: from a living body to a bare skeleton. The usage of bodies in different states of decomposition also implies that death was viewed from a different perspective. Contrary to the present-day attitude, it was seen as a much less detached section of human existence, the line between the world of the living and the afterlife was rather blurred. Llewellyn claims that in opposition to the modern binary concept of life and death, the period between birth and the moment of death was regarded as a phase of dying, a lengthy process rather than a state of being (Llewellyn 1998, 15–16). This idea, however, can be traced back to Plato's works. The dialogues about Socrates's death do not give a picture of death but rather emphasise the continuous nature of dying. Plato expresses the importance of the preparational phase concerning death, and dying is described as a process in which Socrates is allowed to participate actively (Gavin 1974, 238–240). Considering life as a process of slow death enabled people to make preparations in advance concerning their own fate, thus, the whole of human life became a long *Danse Macabre*.

Mortality and the death cult itself gained another set of meanings when considered in a religious context. The church recognised the advantages of using Dance of Death imagery featuring well-known figures, and used this for their own purposes. The emphasis was shifted to the spiritual preparation preceding death which was aided by the already existing, popular imagery and representative artefacts. The intent was to persuade people to lead a moral life and distance themselves from sin and temptation; furthermore, the appropriate way of dying also gained an important role. Marlowe does not only rely on these interpretations of the well-known imagery in the construction of his *Tamburlaine* plays, but his tragedies also draw on the long tradition of representing death on the stage. People were already familiar with the traditions of mystery and morality plays. Mystery plays presented well known biblical stories and the lives of saints, and many of these plays were much concerned with physical pain and suffering. The morality plays, on the other hand, offered allegorical representations of personified abstractions with moral features among them on the stage.

The themes on Christopher Marlowe's allegorical stage were not only familiar to the audience but also incredibly topical: conquests and mortality were topics immensely relevant to the state of England. The early modern age was the era of great explorations and, as Greenblatt states, Marlowe was "fascinated by the idea of the stranger in a strange land" (Greenblatt 1984, 194); the figure of "the Other" is a recurrent image in his tragedies, and in this respect the *Tamburlaine* plays are no exception. The other main theme of *Tamburlaine the Great*, the issue of mortality, was not only discussed in connection with the individual's life, death and after-life. The fact that the monarch was heirless evoked amongst citizens the question of the succession to Queen Elizabeth, which at the time of *Tamburlaine's* writing was still

in debate. The link between the theme of mortality and the figure of the sovereign can be established not only on the basis of the lack of an heir but also through the popularity of public executions in the Elizabethan era. According to Cunningham, the employment of violence and executions by the Tudors served as a means of power solidification. The success of these public events resided in their “quasi-dramatic” implementation: their structure relied on recognizable elements such as the fight of evil and good, the punishment of villains, and the triumph of righteousness. The accused person was put in the position of the antihero while the monarch was shown as the personification of justice; furthermore, the dead body became a prop of the “play” and was transformed into a symbol of justice and its omnipresence. That executions followed the same pattern draws a striking parallel between them and morality plays for “Jurists, defendants, even executioners responded with standardized forms and themes, as if in self-conscious accord with their roles in [...] a sort of ‘Everyman Goes to the Gallows’” (Cunningham 1990, 209–212). The proximity of scaffolds, bear-baiting places and theatre buildings enhanced the rivalry of the different spectacles for the attention of the audience; the theatre had to be able to offer entertainment of equal allure to animal-baiting or the punishment of criminals.

3. Violence on the Marlovian Stage

The contemporary popular culture incorporated these sets of meanings which could be used as a common ground of reference so as to establish a connection between Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* and the theatre goers. The *Tamburlaine* plays could present the well-known brutality of the era through staging the torture of the body and, thus, their performances were well-established means of providing entertainment for the crowd. Both *Part One* and *Two* are immensely physical plays; like in many contemporary visual illustrations, great emphasis is put on substantial details, and on what happens to the tortured, dying or dead body. The copperplate engraving *A flayed man holding his own skin* by Nicolas Beatrizet, for example, shows a skinned muscle-man with a dagger in his right hand and his skin in the other. The figure is observing his own skin thoroughly without any visible sign of pain. Similarly, the dying characters in the *Tamburlaine* plays often reflect on their own death. As Greenfield asserts, “many of Tamburlaine’s victims (...) perform a verbal dissection as they die” (Greenfield 2004, 233–236). Marlowe realised the sensation evoked by physical wounds on stage and he began to use pain as a spectacle. Edwards explains that the “living corpse” embodies the paradox of a transitional state between life and death, implying some sort of limbo where being alive in death is possible (Edwards 2010, 109). Indeed,

many characters in *Tamburlaine* deliver a lengthy speech about the physical effects death has on their body. Cosroe, for instance, gives a detailed description of how he slowly departs this life:

COSROE. My bloodless body waxeth chill and cold
 And with my blood my life slides through my wound.
 My soul begins to take her flight to hell
 And summons all my senses to depart.
 The heat and moisture, which did feed each other
 For want of nourishment to feed them both
 Is dry and cold, and now doth ghastly death
 With greedy talents gripe my bleeding heart
 And like a harpy tires on my life.
 (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One* II.VII.40–50)

Cosroe's speech about his wound and his own death illustrates the transforming power of the theatrical space and performance which, as Edwards explains, lies in their way of transgressing the boundaries of mundane life by which they seemingly are defined (Edwards 2010, 109). Unlike people off stage, Cosroe is able to stop time by reflecting on his own death while experiencing it. His need to describe the procedure is more important than giving in to the physical torment. Similar to the case of the Tudor executions, the theatrical power of suffering and wounds is made use of so as to evoke sensation on behalf of the audience. As Greenfield points out, a person who is in extreme pain is unable to describe his experience with the help of words since "pain destroys language" (Greenfield 2004, 237). This unusual response to a mortal injury in which language becomes superior to wounds grabs the attention of the audience and shifts the focus to the character delivering the death-speech; the aesthetic description of violence and death allows them to rule the stage in that particular extended moment of dying. Cunningham states that this way the characters transform everyone into audience (Cunningham 1990, 215). The role of the audience is not only assigned to the spectators in the auditorium but also to the other characters who are present on stage.

The lengthy elaborations on the dying process and the spectacular staged violence, such as the suicides of Bajazeth¹ and Zabina, present death as theatrical

¹ Brown notes that Marlowe's treatment of Bajazeth is surprisingly reminiscent of the one observed in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, also known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (Brown 1971, 40–45). Although Marlowe relied on one of the most significant writings of Protestant history and martyrology, his aims of depicting Bajazeth as a tyrant or as *Tamburlaine's* footstool differ greatly from Foxe's. Foxe's description becomes reused and animated on the Marlovian stage in order to show the artistic complexity of the scene's enactment. Unlike in *Actes and Monuments*, Marlowe's focus is rather on the imagery than the sacred or moral aspect of the scene.

means of entertainment. This attitude towards mortality can also be observed in contemporary visual arts. “The Knight” from *The dance of Death* (1538) by Hans Holbein the Younger, for instance, presents a knight fully dressed in armour, stabbed by a skeletal figure. The living embodiment of death smiles at the stabbed man, enjoying his reaction to being pierced; the skeleton does not only observe the knight on its own but also invites the spectator to be entertained by the view, similarly to the people on stage who deliver a death speech. The various eye-pleasing presentations of dying together with the extraordinary rhetoric nature of speeches compel the audience to observe the events in awe so much so that even “Jove viewing [Tamburlaine] in arms looks pale and wan” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.II.390). The emphasis is put on having an immediate effect on the spectators which is achieved by establishing a connection through mundane, worldly ideas and wealth. Tamburlaine is rarely concerned with the thought of spiritual riches after death or the afterlife itself. The significance of temporal prosperity is clearly expressed in the following excerpt:

TAMBURLAINE. The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
 That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops
 To thrust his doting father from his chair
 And place himself in the empyreal heaven
 Moved me to manage arms against thy state.
 What better precedent than mighty Jove?
 Nature that framed us of our elements
 Warring within our breasts for regiment,
 Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
 Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
 The wondrous architecture of the world
 And measure every wand’ring planet’s course,
 Still climbing after knowledge infinite
 And always moving as the restless spheres,
 Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest
 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
 That perfect bliss and sole felicity?
 The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.
 (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.12–29)

Tamburlaine delivers a speech which explains that even gods consider “the thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown” of main importance. Despite referring to superhuman beings, they are described as being involved in events similar to those in which Tamburlaine participates in the two plays, but no thought is devoted to divine deeds or events after conquering or death. This also implies that Tamburlaine considers himself closer to gods than to humans. Parker, however, notes

that the crown speech has significant religious overtones despite being primarily focused on material values. The lines about “[the] souls, whose faculties can comprehend / The wondrous architecture of the world” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.21–22) present an allusion to *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin, more specifically to the passage which defines the powers attributed to the soul. Parker also remarks that the “earthly crown” may be interpreted as Christ’s crown of thorns (Parker 2007, 221–222). The image of the crown made of thorns automatically implies the close relationship of physical suffering and sovereignty; this body-centric approach is observable regarding Tamburlaine’s reign. Levin argues that Tamburlaine focuses on great achievements in material terms (Levin 1965, 51). This statement is supported by Act two, Scene seven in Part one, where, immediately after Cosroe’s death, Tamburlaine reaches for the Persian ruler’s crown proclaiming that “Not all the curses which the Furies breathe / Shall make [him] leave so rich a prize as this.” (*Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.53–54). Such earthly riches are closely related to the motif of conquest for the physical “earthly crown” of Cosroe and those belonging to the other oppressed kings, which are earned through conquering their countries.

3.1. Death and Conquest on Stage

Tamburlaine aims to become the most powerful ruler of the world through victorious battles. In the second play he is seen as a potent and mighty ruler, superior to other kings, one who has already conquered most of the then known world. The Scythian seems to be omnipotent like the Tudor monarchs, especially in the first part but a significant difference is observable concerning his character in Parts One and Two. MacKenzie proposes that in the first part, Marlowe relies heavily on the English military tradition of heroic chivalry and the classical Roman image of Mars Ultor. The following excerpt illustrates how Tamburlaine fits into the tradition of “military chivalry”:

TAMBURLAINE. Though Mars himself, the angry god of arms,
And all the earthly potentates conspire
To dispossess me of this diadem,
Yet will I wear it in despite of them
As great commander of this eastern world,
If you but say that Tamburlaine shall reign.
(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.58–63)

Tamburlaine clearly puts Mars into the position of his opponent and shows himself as a person who accepts the crown only if the crowd's approval is granted. This quasi-democratic attitude, however, undergoes a sudden change, as MacKenzie points out. Tamburlaine begins to resemble the image of Mars Ultor and evolves into a fearsome warlord, so much so that "the god of war resigns his room to [Tamburlaine], / Meaning to make [him] general of the world" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.II.388–389). This presents how Marlowe's protagonist has abandoned the attitude of the English type of Mars (MacKenzie 2007, 13–14). The shift to a less human and more godlike identity results in Marlowe's protagonist being presented as a force mightier than everyone else and his conquest is strongly connected to death itself. The connection gains importance not only because Tamburlaine is the cause of many people's death on and off stage but also for being based on the complex relationship of Death and the Scythian.

Tamburlaine often refers to Death as his servant, but their relationship is much more layered than a simple master-servant partnership. The first play seems to identify Tamburlaine as the superior character and Death as an inferior entity. Tamburlaine decides over life and death, he is in command, and this power relation seems firm and consistent. The second play, however, alters the power structure. As Tamburlaine strives for a superhuman state of being, his portrayal alludes more and more to the various representations of death. The image of Tamburlaine being drawn in his chariot by kings is a recognisable reference to the Triumph of Death motif, which, according to Neill, presents King Death as an equalising entity (Neill 2008, 88) since "it is no longer the personal confrontation between man and death, but the collective power of death" (Ariès 1981, 119). The Triumph of Death, however, is not the only reference in terms of macabre art: the allusions to the tormenting skeletal death is apparent in connection with the tortured victims, such as Bajazeth or the Governor of Babylon, but also in terms of conquest since violence is at the core of his military actions.

Tamburlaine's conquest is not only present on the corporal level but also in connection with verblivity. His speech expresses sublimity in the sense of triggering fear and awe, as the prologue promises in advance. This sublimity, however, is considered "false sublimity" in Longinian terms, since Tamburlaine uses his grand speeches to describe worldly issues and the "grandeur of spirit is corrupted by worldly concerns and the ephemeral values to which it is subjected" (Doran 2017, 56).

From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threat'ning the world with high astounding terms
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
View but his picture in this tragic glass,
And then applaud his fortunes as you please.
(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, Prologue.1–8)

As Levin remarks, the audience is invited to observe the events on stage in awe (Levin 1965, 48). Immediately at the beginning, even before action takes place on stage, the audience is prepared for the importance of the ensuing auditive and visual stimuli through the employment of expressions such as “rhyming”, “scourging”, “conquering”, and most importantly: “picture” and “hear”. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays are extraordinarily language centric dramatic pieces. Tamburlaine is not only able to subdue his enemies physically, but he is also able to dominate his opponents by his words. His dominance on the verbal level is underpinned by the fact that he is able to decide over life and death of the other characters, furthermore, as Levin shows, Tamburlaine's superiority is also supported by the number of lines spoken by him; thirty-three percent of all lines are uttered by the protagonist in the first part and this number grows to thirty-eight percent in the second play (Levin 1965, 211). The central role of language is not only apparent when considering statistic evidence, it also becomes clearly recognisable through the examination of death's description: both early biblical and Renaissance methods of representation are observable. According to Neill, the description of death in Genesis is metaphorical. Language played a fundamental role in substantiating it: the first step in creating an allegorical persona was to address Death in speech, this development lead to the incarnation of the fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse. It is not until the thriving popularity of macabre art towards the late fourteenth century that a personality is bestowed upon Death (Neill 2008, 3–5). Spinrad asserts that in the early sixteenth century the representation of death went through a noteworthy change: the skeletal figure of death was moved to the background; this become a widespread motif amongst portrait painters (Spinrad 1987, 16–18). I argue that a similar method of portrait painting is applied in *Tamburlaine the Great*, but Marlowe uses a different medium for the portrayal of his protagonist. Marlowe produces the same image of Tamburlaine and death with the employment of language. Tamburlaine is in focus, but Death lurks permanently in his immediate ambience. This compositional strategy is observable not only in the events of the play but also concerning the construction of Tamburlaine's persona. The verbal de-

scriptions of Tamburlaine often allude to different well-known representations of death, but it is never explicitly stated that he is the human manifestation of Death. Through the relationship between Death and Tamburlaine, Death gains a special role in the play: it is both visible and invisible at the same time. Invisibility is to be understood in terms of traditional impersonation on stage. Death is not staged by the employment of an allegorical figure like in the case of *Revenge* in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. Addressing Death like a person and presenting violent and spectacular deaths, such as those of Bajazeth and Zabina, or the execution of Babylon's Governor, create the persistent presence of Death as an idea on the stage. The allegorical persona, however, is not completely missing from the play, but it is much less didactic than in Kyd's tragedy. Tamburlaine's figure is adorned with the pomp and levelling power of King Death, he is even presented as an allusion to the biblical Horseman of the Apocalypse before the gates of Damascus. The colours of Tamburlaine's tents, however, are not only a reference to the Apocalypse, but the colours white, red, and black were also closely associated with the tradition of mourning. Llewellyn explains that while black is usually regarded as the colour of grief, white was traditionally associated with mourning the loss of an exemplarily virtuous person, while red represented redemption and the blood of Christ. He also notes that the combination of black and red had been considered as imperial since classical Antiquity (Llewellyn 1997, 89). These associations and sets of meaning do not only emphasise the omnipresence of death and its inseparable bond with Tamburlaine, but they also strengthen the implications of the apocalyptic allusions and foreshadow the inevitable fate of the citizens of Damascus.

3.2. The Transforming Power of Death

The close relationship of Death and Tamburlaine undergoes a significant change in the second *Tamburlaine* play. The stable hierarchy of the first play is replaced by turbulence in terms of power relations. Tamburlaine is seen aiming to enlarge his empire and at the beginning of the second play he seems to have achieved the highest position imaginable: his kingdom is growing, he is superior to several kings, he has a happy marriage and heirs to follow in his footsteps. Death, however, is not shown as inferior to Tamburlaine anymore: in fact, he is presented as an equally powerful force as "the scourge of god". Tamburlaine's rapid growth of political weight seems to threaten the power of King Death. Death evolves from an ally into an opponent and calls forth the central key event by which the major changes in the play are evoked. Zenocrate's death strikes Tamburlaine at the peak of his private and political career, and it is the first time he is confronted with loss on a personal level. This loss trig-

gers a change in Tamburlaine's perception of Death: the collective power of death is replaced by the protagonist's personal confrontation with death itself. Kübler-Ross argues that the suffering of another person reminds the individual of its own limitedness and mortality (Kübler-Ross 2009, 8). Indeed, Tamburlaine realises the physical boundaries of human existence and immediately tries to deny his own limits by declaring war on heaven. He uses his wife's death as *casus belli* and instructs his men to "Raise cavaleros higher than the clouds / And with the cannon [to] break the frame of heaven, / [to] Batter the shining firmament" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, II.IV.102–106). Due to the loss and suffering, Tamburlaine is metamorphosed into a vengeful warlord who aims to achieve super-human status and extend his terrestrial conquest to transcendental realms.

Despite not being present in Marlowe's sources, Zenocrate's death gains a determining function and serves as a catalyst in many aspects. It triggers a change in terms of Tamburlaine's attitude and identity, furthermore, it also calls forth change concerning the allegorical figure of Death, but the transforming power of the event does not end here. The death of Zenocrate is presented as an example of the good way of dying. Spinrad highlights that the dying queen accepts the inevitability of death as a natural part of life, as the line "I fare, my lord as other empresses" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, II.IV.42) indicates. She also tries to comfort and prepare Tamburlaine and her sons for her death; this way of acceptance transformed her into an exemplary figure of patience and courage in the eyes of Marlowe's audience. The exemplary nature of her death is also emphasised by the application of music in her death scene, for music symbolised harmony in the Renaissance era (Spinrad 1987, 134). The commendable way of her death is intensified through Tamburlaine's wrong response to it: according to Spinrad, he acts contrary to the deathbed tradition and does the opposite of what should be done (131). The scene draws parallels between Tamburlaine's behaviour and Xanthippe's reaction to Socrates's death in Plato's *Phaedo*. Gavin asserts that while Xanthippe is present "on stage" she acts hysterically and is removed from Socrates's side since she cannot provide help in the dying process and is unable to learn from her husband's death (Gavin 1974, 239). Tamburlaine shows similar behaviour at Zenocrate's deathbed: he rages against death; it is not him that comforts the dying empress, but it is him who has to be calmed down². The improper attitude to the loss of his queen continues even after she has passed away.

² McCarthy remarks that Zenocrate's death scene proves Marlowe's knowledge of the *ars moriendi* traditions. The queen's behaviour corresponds to the suggested patient acceptance of death while Tamburlaine's raging is presented as "the sin of impatience" (McCarthy 2012, 64–65). Marlowe, however, manipulates the traditionally expected attitude in Tamburlaine's death scene. It is not due to his firm belief in the Christian God he becomes able to ascend to Heaven: Tamburlaine considers himself as a divine figure, thus, he has the power to ensure his own way to the celestial realms.

Marlowe's Tamburlaine distorts and twists several conventions throughout the play. He is unable to accept the mortality and the limits of his wife's human body and tries to immortalise her in his own way. After her death, Tamburlaine has her body embalmed. He follows the tradition of preserving the memory of the deceased. When observing the treatment of the dead queen, it becomes apparent that her body is dismantled, but unlike in the case of most of Tamburlaine's victims, not in the physical sense but according to the different levels of function. Llewellyn describes the human body as a conjoint construction established through the combination of a person's natural body, social body, and monumental body (Llewellyn 1997, 46–48). Tamburlaine, however, does not completely distinguish these approaches of Zenocrate's realisation. Instead of following the Renaissance tradition by immortalising her virtue through a solid monument or other forms of art, he opts for another way of perpetuation. According to Llewellyn, the preparations of the natural body preceding the burial were primarily meant to delay the process of putrefaction; the aim was to provide a lifelike representation of the deceased person's physique without signs of corruption rather than to preserve their human remains (Llewellyn 1997, 54). Zenocrate's natural body is transformed into a monumental body through the employment of precious material and embalming her in order to preserve her social body as virtuous empress and wife. Through this objectification, Zenocrate is transformed into a twisted form of memento mori object who is meant to be at Tamburlaine's side until his own death. Tamburlaine's means of immortalising his wife, however, involve decay and destruction to a large extent. Ironically, Tamburlaine chooses embalming as the technique of preserving Zenocrate, this, however, has only a temporary result and is unable to stop the process of corruption permanently (Llewellyn, 54). He also produces an apocalyptic landscape as a reminiscence of his wife making a threatening exclamation according to which "This cursèd town will [he] consume with fire / Because this place bereft [him] of [his] love: / The houses burnt will look as if they mourned" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, II.IV.137–139). This image of destruction again, calls forth the omnipotence of Death and hints at the similarities of the protagonist's character and the very same Death, whose existence he desperately tries to leave out of consideration. Cole claims, that Tamburlaine's most intense outbursts are rooted in the loss of his wife and the loss of his self-image as a super-human being (Cole 1962, 112). These two factors are hardly separable since it is precisely Zenocrate's death which triggers the change in Tamburlaine's perception. It is then that he realises the lack of his omnipotence and starts to fight against the limitations of his power. Cole proposes that Tamburlaine's extreme urge to reach super-humanity through martial victories results unavoidably in inhumanity (113).

3.3. "*Tamburlaine the scourge of God must die*"

The importance of territory is also emphasised by not only earthly riches and prosperity (such as gaining crowns through conquest) but also by the death scene of Tamburlaine. The expansion of Tamburlaine's terrene empire stops when "sickness prove[s] [him] now to be a man" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.44). At this point, Tamburlaine still tries to deny his mortality and the limits of his physical being. As Tamburlaine's body becomes weaker, he shifts his focus from worldly battles to the empyreal realms as the following lines show:

TAMBURLAINE. Techelles and the rest, come and take your swords
 And threaten him whose hand afflicts my soul;
 Come let us march against the powers of heaven
 And set black streamers in the firmament
 To signify the slaughter of the gods.
 Ah friends, what shall I do? I cannot stand –
 Come, carry me to war against the gods
 That thus envy the health of Tamburlaine.
 (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.III.46–53)

Richards points out that Tamburlaine refuses to consider himself as dying, which, for him, is but proceeding with the expansion of his kingdom and reign (Richards 1965, 387). In this sense Death is put into the position of a loyal servant (one might even regard death as an ally) ensuring a peaceful death for Tamburlaine and helping him to proceed to the afterlife for further conquest. On his deathbed he asks for a map depicting the territory he has already under his control. Neill describes mapping as a means of depicting territory already known and conquered (Neill 2008, 2). Tamburlaine is proceeding to a land completely unknown to him, a new *terra incognita* which has to be discovered. By leaving his worldly heritage to his sons and preparing to ascend to heaven at the same time, Tamburlaine distinguishes his physical body from his soul, thus acquiring a spiritual body, which adds another layer to the threefold body-theory of Llewellyn. Marlowe's protagonist leaves behind both his social body and his natural body, dividing the monumental body into two abstract parts. The lines "My flesh divided in your precious shapes / Shall still retain my spirit, though I die, / And live in all your seeds immortally." (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.172–174) clearly show the division of "flesh" and "spirit". Tamburlaine immortalises himself both in the physical world through his offspring and the empire he has built and also in the metaphysical dimension: he finally steps over the boundaries of human existence and grows to be a superhuman entity. By evolving into a superior being similar to Death, he becomes capable of entering a domain perceived as uncanny by ordinary mortals. According

to the Platonic idea, certainty is unachievable in terms of death for it is myth and therefore incompatible with rational interpretation and worldview. This vagueness, however, leaves room for hope, since it is possible to grow in an elusive context. Death may be perceived as a passageway to another life which can be used as means of transmitting knowledge and growing (Gavin 1974, 241–242). Tamburlaine's death may be interpreted as a necessity which has to be endured in order to gain entrance to the unknown territory as it is suggested by the following exclamation:

TAMBURLAINE. In vain I strive and rail against those powers
 That mean t'invest me in a higher throne,
 As much too high for this disdainful earth.
 Give me a map, then let me see ow much
 Is left for me to conquer all the world,
 That these boys may finish all my wants.
 (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.120–125)

Tamburlaine clearly plans to conquer the heavenly realms, leaving the earthly terrain for his sons with the intention of providing the maintenance of his social body through their actions. This attitude shows serious preparation on behalf of Tamburlaine, which implies a different approach to his own death than to Zenocrate's dying.

The procession of Tamburlaine's death is contrasted to Zenocrate's way of dying on several levels. The first striking difference is the perception of Tamburlaine and his role in each case. While Zenocrate's death makes him automatically observe the events from the family member's point of view, his own death puts him into the position of the experienter. The image of Death changes accordingly to the shift in Tamburlaine's perception in Marlowe's play similarly to the alteration in terms of visual representation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Neill asserts that staged tragedy confronted the audience with their own mortality and compelled them to contemplate their individual fate. This encounter also served as a didactic practice to rehearse ways of responding to death (Neill 2008, 31–32). Tamburlaine makes use of the educational quality of Zenocrate's performed death-ritual and, correspondingly to Plato's implications, learns and grows through her death. By the time he is forced to face his own death, Tamburlaine is able to react properly. Although Tamburlaine's denial of his own mortality might be interpreted as a weakness of character or as the failure of a great warlord to die in a dignified manner, I argue that it is precisely this attitude of his which allows him to die a death more elevated than those of the other characters' in the play. Tamburlaine's death differs not only from the deaths of Marlowe's other protagonists, but it is also unique in the dimension of the two *Tamburlaine* plays. Llewellyn maintains that preparation

preceding death was regarded as an essential part of the procedure; furthermore, sudden deaths were thought to result in spiritual damnation and social stigmatisation (Llewellyn 1997, 28). When observing the deaths in both plays, it becomes apparent that most of them are sudden and violent; the characters who die in such a manner are deprived of the possibility of preparation; thus, they are not allowed to die a proper death in Protestant interpretation. Zenocrate's death is exceedingly different from the usual bloody executions and it is regarded as a "good death" in terms of preparational phase and the patient and virtuous acceptance of mortality and death, emphasised by the harmonious music during the process of dying. Her death, however, is not left spotless, since the procedure is not allowed to follow the deathbed conventions due to Tamburlaine's excessive outbursts. This extreme reaction and the neglect of funeral customs are needed to show the transforming power of Zenocrate's death. Tamburlaine's attitude towards Death as an allegorical being changes immediately: he recognises him as a potent opponent and the battle for terrestrial hegemony begins between them. Tamburlaine tries to weaken Death's power, as Zenocrate's preservation exemplifies, and he also aims to show that he is capable of similar cruelty as it is demonstrated by the execution of the Governor of Babylon. Tamburlaine's own death seems to be another turning point regarding their relationship. By the time of Tamburlaine's illness, he has developed a new attitude towards death: he accepts Death's power, but he does not see dying as a sign of being defeated. Amongst the several dying characters on stage, he is the only one who is allowed to perform an ideal death. Although the emergence of his disease is quite sudden, Tamburlaine still succeeds in making preparations before the moment of his death: he sees his successor being crowned, comforts the ones left behind, and prepares for his spiritual journey to the metaphysical realms. Contrary to Zenocrate, Tamburlaine does not accept his own mortality and, thus, his supposed weakness becomes the factor which can lead to a potential change of identity. Zenocrate dies willingly as a human in a physical world; unlike her, Tamburlaine does not regard death as an end but rather as a threshold leading to a new domain where, due to its vagueness, he might grow into the superhuman entity he aims to become.

3.4. Death as Means of Theatre

The transforming power of death, however, is not only observable concerning Tamburlaine's character development and regarding the various aspects of the human body, but also in the metatheatrical sense. Death is used as the most frequent spectacle on Marlowe's stage and due to its complex representation, many facets

of the phenomenon are displayed in the play. Scholars, such as Levin (Levin 1965, 64–65) and Cole (Cole 1962, 87), usually draw attention to the central role of language. Similarly, to the theme of violence, language is used as a theatrical device in order to evoke change. Language itself has an immense transforming power and it can, as it is exemplified in the biblical development of the death-image, substantiate elusive phenomena. Linguistic expression, however, is not always enough to describe certain things, since some things are indescribable (Levin 1965, 9). Cole declares that “the visual action undercuts the nature of the speech” for the contrast between the glorious language and the executions evokes irony (Cole 1962, 109). I argue that the striking difference between staged brutality and the magnificence of speech are used in a combination to create an interpretation of the staged matter more complex than any form of art would be able to do on its own. Homan states that “literal deeds are continually set against the poetry itself as words alone convert what is physical and horrid to something metaphorically grand. The play in this sense is [...] a testament to the theatre’s own alchemic power.” (Homan 1969, 395). Visual representation combined with overwhelming rhetorical speeches also alludes to the limitations of human beings as shown in the following lines:

TAMBURLAINE. Behold my sword, what see you at the point?

[FIRST] VIRGIN. Nothing but fear and fatal steel, my lord.

TAMBURLAINE. Your fearful minds are thick and misty then,

For there sits Death, there sits imperious Death,

Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge.

But I am pleased you shall not see him there.

He now is seated on my horsemen’s spears,

And on their points his fleshless body feeds.

Techelles, straight go charge a few of them

To charge these dames, and show my servant Death

Sitting in scarlet on their armed spears.

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.II.45–55)

Tamburlaine invites the virgins, and through them the audience, to observe the visual manifestation of death which they are unable to see for he is invisible to the ordinary human eye. Although the audience of the theatre shares humanity and its limits with the virgins, Parker claims that they do not have to be confronted with their “terminal limits”; instead they encounter the limits of Marlowe’s own medium: theatre itself (Parker 2007, 227).

Death as a motive is ritualised on the Marlovian stage. The two *Tamburlaine* plays feature several exclusively death-related events such as executions, sacrifices, and suicides which are all procedures following conventions. Another layer of the ritualistic realisation is language itself, since it is used accordingly to rhetorical

conventions as it is observable in Tamburlaine's lengthy speeches. Both facets are applied in the theatrical context, which itself is heavily rooted in ritualistic performance. The ritualistic approach to performative arts has a decidedly religious implication. The cyclical concept is evidently present in the repetition of performances: as the play is performed, the characters die but through the next performance, the same characters are reborn; repetition, however, also implies the obligatory reliving of suffering as well. The topos of rebirth is present manifold in the *Tamburlaine* plays. The motif is observable in the identity-shift of the actor since he has to "die" symbolically in order to gain a new identity through the impersonation of someone else. The third layer of rebirth is rooted in the relationship between character, play, and playwright: as the real-life character of Timur Lenk died and was reborn, reshaped, and reinterpreted in the newly contextualised world of Marlowe's plays.

4. Conclusion

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays are manifestations of the playwright's genius in terms of stagecraft displaying the artistic complexity of his medium. The two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* testify Marlowe's familiarity with the contemporary mind: he made use of the popular and topical themes in Elizabethan England and incorporated them as crowd-tickler features in his plays. He relied heavily on conventions and public knowledge to make his plays both relevant and easily digestible for his audience. At the same time, he showed the familiar themes from a different, provocative angle and often manipulated the familiar implications so as to puzzle the spectators' minds.

Although he chose an ancient theme as the central motif of his *Tamburlaine* plays, the traditional connotations are displayed in a different, renewed manner. Marlowe's depiction of Death on stage does not only draw on the medieval heritage of morality and mystery plays, but also on the contemporary pictorial representations. I claim that the appearance of Death on the Marlovian stage became revolutionary in the sense of combining different branches of art in order to express its manifold presence. Contrary to previous portrayals, the interpretation of Death was not limited by the boundaries of descriptive language or the means of fine arts. Although it is the central role of rhetoric which is usually highlighted, the visualisation of the same theme proves to be of equal importance. The combination of these two branches allows a more complex and less limited perception.

The fruitful match of complexity and ambiguity is of major importance in terms of dramatic development since, as the Platonic idea maintains, it provides the basis for the individual's growth. Character development and identity shift are not

only rooted in the altering quality of Death but also in the transforming power of theatre itself. Death and language become ritualised in the theatrical context. The ritualistic repetition of the performances does not only repeatedly present the play but also implies some form of re-displaying the same motives again and again. As a result, the audience is able to rediscover and redefine mortality, similarly to the Marlovian practice of reusing and reinterpreting death as the theme of the greatest conceptual and figurative complexity in his plays.

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The Reader's Struggle: Intellectual War in *The Four Zoas*

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After the Apocalypse at the end of *The Four Zoas*, the state of the redeemed world is surprisingly described as intellectual war. I argue that intellectual war is the struggle of an individual with his or her spectre, and specifically the post-apocalyptic intellectual war alluded to in the last lines of the epic is the creative struggle to form works of art that the reading of the poem will engender in an ideal reader.

Keywords: William Blake, *The Four Zoas*, Spectre, Creativity, Contraries

1. Introduction

From the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* to the *Illustrations to the Book of Job*, the struggle of contraries against one another is a key theme of Blake's art. As Lorraine Clark says, "[i]t is the tenacious pursuit of the *same* ideal of life [as the strife of contraries] which is responsible for our sense of Blake's consistency despite the confusions of his myth" (Clark 1999, 41).

This is closely related to Blake's absolute opposition to what he would come to call "corporeal war". As early as *The Poetic Sketches*, he writes the following: "Oh, for a voice like thunder, and a tongue // To drown the throat of war!" (Blake 2007, 39). Already here he wishes for a poetic voice that is louder in some way than the sounds of the war he wishes to oppose. This shows his belief that works of art can oppose war not only by revealing its horrors, but can also be stronger than it and defeat it. In a later poem he made this idea much more explicit, writing: "With works of Art their Armies meet // And War shall sink beneath thy feet" (Blake 2007, 633).

Thus, for Blake, there are two diametrically opposed forms of conflict: the first is the life-giving struggle of contraries described in the *Marriage*,¹ the second, the horrific historical wars of Blake's epoch. He named the latter "the war of swords", "corporeal war" or "the wars of Eternal Death" (Blake 2007, 475, 502, 312). For the former, he used an even greater variety of phrases, calling it "spiritual war", "mental war", "mental fight", "the wars of Eternity", "the wars of Life" and, finally "intellectual war" (Blake 1988, 247 and Blake 2007, 502, 503, 573, 729, 475). It is not entirely clear whether the phrases listed above refer to the same thing, and it is certain that Blake's ideas about this form of struggle changed significantly during his career. In this essay I will limit myself to an investigation

¹ "Without Contraries is no Progression" *MHH* pl. 3 (Blake 2007, 111).

of “intellectual war”, a phrase which appears only once in Blake’s entire oeuvre, but this appearance is at a critical point in the plot of *The Four Zoas*, which I will now examine.

*The Four Zoas*² ends with a vision of the Apocalypse, after which a state of perfect unity is restored. It is therefore very surprising that the epic ends with the following lines:

Urthona is arisen in his strength, no longer now
Divided from Enitharmon, no longer the spectre Los.
Where is the spectre of prophecy? Where the delusive phantom?
Departed; and Urthona rises from the ruinous walls
In all his ancient strength to form the golden armour of science
For intellectual war. The war of swords departed now,
The dark religions are departed, & sweet science reigns.
(Blake 2007, 475 FZ: ix.848–852)

The surprise is that instead of the peace and harmony we would expect, we are told that this state of perfect unity involves something called intellectual war. My goal in this essay is to understand what this is and why it appears in such a surprising context.

My main thesis is that in *The Four Zoas*, intellectual war in general means the struggle of an individual with his or her Spectre, and that specifically the intellectual war referred to in the last lines of the *Zoas* is the creative struggle to produce art that an ‘ideal reader’ of *The Four Zoas* will engage in after having read and understood the epic.

2. The Character of the Spectre

An understanding of the concept of the spectre is fundamental to my thesis, but the spectre as such is very difficult to define. A rough approximation would be to say that it is like someone’s ‘evil twin’: a being at once similar to its original, but deformed in some way, and which therefore uses their power in a ravenous and destructive way. From a more everyday perspective, one’s spectre can be seen to be the embodiment of those of our inner voices that we would rather not hear, i.e. those that give voice to one’s fears, doubts, insecurities, and mistrust towards others.³

The Emanations of individuals also play a crucial part in *The Zoas*. In Blake’s cosmos, individuals in their unfallen state are androgynous: they unite the masculine and feminine aspects of their soul in one Being. Here the Emanation is the feminine aspect, but it is not separate from the whole. In the Fall, these two aspects are divided into separate beings.

² Blake’s first epic, which recounts the whole of human history from the Fall to the Apocalypse. Its main characters are the Zoas—who represent the four principal human aspects i.e. body, reason, emotion, imagination (Damon 1988, 458)—and their female counterparts (i.e. emanations). It is divided into nine Nights.

³ This is shown most explicitly in the dialogue between Los and his Spectre in *Jerusalem* pl. 5.66–8.40 (Blake 2007, 667–674).

From then on, their quest to be reunited into one being is the main driving force in the epic. The spectre is, in a way, the embodiment of this division, since it is born at the moment of separation (this is made explicit in the case of Tharmas-Enion⁴), and when Unity is restored it will depart.

A lot can be learned about spectres through simply observing their behaviour in the Zoas: we witness the birth of the spectre of Tharmas and of Urthona, who later become major characters, and we also see the spectres of the dead who are given living forms in Enitharmon's looms. We learn that a spectre is present in every individual and that one can become no more than a spectre. Los' example shows that one can even form an alliance of sorts with one's spectre, while Urizen's shows us what happens when an individual identifies himself with his spectre and thus lets the spectre take over control completely. We also see that at the very end of the epic (after the apocalypse), the spectre of Urthona departs. In my interpretation this does not mean that he is destroyed, but that he remains there only as a perpetual possibility, who would reemerge if Albion were to fall once again.⁵ Significantly, however, the spectre is not an entirely negative being: creative and redemptive labour is only possible if an individual and their spectre work together.

Problems arise, however, when we try to define in abstract terms what a spectre is. Based on quotes from *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, S. Foster Damon defines it in the following way: "The SPECTRE is the rational power of divided man". He goes on to say that "although the Spectre is the Rational Power, he is anything but reasonable: rather, he is a machine which has lost its controls and is running wild" and that "[h]is craving is for the lost Emanation" (Damon 1988, 380–381) This is true of both Tharmas's and Urthona's spectres (at least until the reconciliation of Los and the spectre), but is more of a description of their behaviour than a definition of their essence. Based on Damon's definition we can identify a spectre once it has been divided from its counterpart and has acquired a separate body, but this is somewhat like a post-mortem diagnosis, since once the "insane and most deformed" (Blake 2007, 304 FZ.i.93–94) being that is a man's spectre has broken loose, it is very difficult to regain control over it. It would be better if we one were able to identify a spectre while it still takes the form of an inner voice. This is very difficult, because at that point it is difficult to find the dividing line between one's true self and one's spectre. Urizen, for example, fails utterly in this task, identifying himself completely with his spectre to the detriment of his true self and his emanation.

Los' lengthy dialogue with his spectre in *Jerusalem* (Blake 2007, 667–674 *J*:5.66–8.40) and Milton's rejection of his Selfhood in *Milton*⁶ (Blake 2007, 532 *M*:14.30–32) both

⁴ After Tharmas leaves Enion, his spectre issues forth from his feet *FZ*: i.68–71 (Blake 2007, 303).

⁵ "[T]he basic plot [of *The Four Zoas*] is the fall and resurrection of Albion, who symbolizes all mankind" (Damon 1988, 142).

⁶ Milton is the titular character of Blake's second epic: he is a mythological figure based on the historical John Milton. After hearing a Bard's prophetic song about Satan, Milton proclaims:

"I in my Selfhood am that Satan; I am that Evil One,

He is my Spectre! In my obedience to loose him from my hells

To claim the Hells my Furnaces, I go to Eternal Death." (Blake 2007, *M* 14.30–32)

serve as examples to the reader of how one can identify and reject one's spectre. There is, however, no general criterion for this identification. This is because every spectre bears a close resemblance to the individual to which it belongs. Thus, just as there is an infinite variety of individuals, so too is there an infinite variety of spectres. It would therefore be impossible to find one general law for all these different entities.⁷ Instead, one must rely on instructive examples in order to understand it.⁸

3. Los and Urizen

I will begin my investigations by discussing an encounter—early on in the epic—between two of its main characters: Los and Urizen. Importantly for this paper, later on in the epic, these two come to represent in their actions the two diametrically opposed forms of war. Los eventually comprehends the necessity of *intellectual* war and takes part in an ever-improving form of it. Thanks to this, he is able to (partially) reunite with his emanation Enitharmon, and together they can take the first step in their redemptive labours by giving living forms to the spectres of the dead. Urizen, on the other hand, is constrained and defined by his absolute opposition to intellectual war. This leads him to become the main instigator of corporeal war. I believe that the genesis of this opposition can be located in the scene I will now examine. My argument that “intellectual war” is the struggle with one's spectre will also be based on this scene.

The following are among the first words Urizen speaks in the epic. The young demon he is addressing is Los:

Urizen startled stood, but not long: soon he cried:
 ‘Obey my voice, young demon! I am God from eternity to eternity!’
 Thus Urizen spoke, collected in himself in awful pride:
 ‘Art thou a visionary of Jesus, the soft delusion of Eternity?
 Lo, I am God the terrible destroyer, & not the saviour!
 Why should the Divine Vision compel the sons of Eden
 To forego each his own delight to war against his spectre?
 The spectre is the man. The rest is only delusion & fancy.’ (Blake 2007, 317 FZ:
 ii.78–82)

It would be a misunderstanding both of the work itself and of Blake's world-view to say that Urizen is the ‘villain’ of the *Four Zoas*.⁹ However, Urizen's explicit assumption

⁷ Blake was hostile towards general laws of any kind, as he writes in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: “One Law for the Lion and Ox is Oppression.” (Blake 2007, 127 MHH pl. 24)

⁸ The bard's prophetic song is itself another such example, and in context it does have the desired effect of causing Milton to cast off his spectre in order to redeem his emanation.

⁹ Everyone (i.e. all the Zoas) is implicated in the Fall, not only Urizen, and since Satan is a State and not a Character, Urizen himself is not Satanic, but only in a Satanic state.

of false godhead (“I am God the terrible destroyer, & not the saviour!”) shows that he is profoundly in Error, thus there is a good chance that his words should be read ironically, and that the absolute opposite of his statements is in fact the truth. His denouncement of the struggle with one’s spectre should therefore lead us to believe that there is much to gain from such a struggle.

As one of the “Proverbs of Hell” says: “Listen to the fool’s reproach: it is a kingly title.”¹⁰ (Blake 2007, 115 *MHH*: pl. 9) In other words, whatever the fool disapproves of may well be the best part of an individual, and the reproach itself may well also contain important information. Urizen definitely is foolish in the Blakean sense of the word.¹¹ Thus we should pay attention when he says that the Divine Vision (i.e. Jesus) compels the sons of Eden (i.e. everybody) to war against their spectre. I regard this as the valuable grain of truth hidden in his otherwise deluded world-view. It is an image of truth, but because of Urizen’s foolishness, it is only a partial image: he sees this struggle to be “forgoing one’s delight” whereas later events show the opposite to be true: Los must first struggle against his spectre before he can even begin to be reunited with his emanation Enitharmon. Since this reunion is the only real delight possible for him, Urizen is completely wrong in denouncing the preceding struggle.

It is also important to note that when Urizen says, “The spectre is the man, the rest is only delusion and fancy,” he reveals to the reader the depths of his Error: these lines show that he identifies himself completely with his spectre. I will later show that his casting out his emanation and his propagation of corporeal war are all consequences of this fatal Error.

I have so far attempted to show the central importance of the struggle with one’s spectre. I believe that it is the highest form of struggle that Blake presents in his works. I therefore argue that this struggle is in fact Intellectual War. My reason for this is that ‘Intellect’ is one of the most powerfully and clearly positive words in Blake’s vocabulary, thus it would make sense for him to have given this epithet to the highest form of struggle imaginable. Furthermore, this struggle is also ‘intellectual’ in a more everyday sense, in that it takes place within one’s own psyche, rather than in the physical universe.¹²

4. A Parallel

Before moving on I would like to further explore the complex irony of the previously quoted passage. The irony is that at this point in the narrative Los is nothing like the terrible danger Urizen supposes him to be, and that Urizen’s oration actually helps him

¹⁰ This definitely can be applied to one part of Urizen’s reproach: he calls Los a “visionary of Jesus”, which in Blake’s eyes would have been the ‘kingliest’ of titles.

¹¹ Blake wrote in his poem *To the Accuser, who is God of this World*: “Truly, my Satan, thou art but a dunce” (Blake 2007, 894). Urizen’s Satanic behaviour is a consequence of his being deluded.

¹² Though in Blake’s works the dividing line between these two is always hard to find and often non-existent.

toward becoming precisely what Urizen fears, i.e. Urizen's words to Los are a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thus—despite all his efforts to the contrary—the grain of truth hidden in Urizen's delusion eventually comes to fruition. This is a good example of how life can spring from the struggle of contraries: Los gains this invaluable piece of information from his struggle with Urizen.

To elucidate this, I will examine a similar scene from one of Blake's earlier works. The previously quoted scene in its entirety, and especially the phrase "young demon" is reminiscent of a passage in *America: A Prophecy*. The Guardian Prince of Albion's furious and/or terrified speech to Orc is like an early version of Urizen's reaction to Los:

'Art thou not Orc, who serpent-formed
Stands at the gate of Enitharmon to devour her children?
Blasphemous demon, Antichrist, hater of dignities,
Lover of wild rebellion and transgressor of God's Law,
Why dost thou come to Angels' eyes in this terrific form?'
(Blake 2007, 202 *America* 7.54–58)

As Blake wrote in *The Everlasting Gospel*: "The vision of Christ that thou dost see / Is my vision's greatest enemy" (Blake 2007, 899 e.1–2). Similarly, the Guardian Prince's Antichrist may well be Blake's Christ. Thus Urizen and the Guardian Prince are perhaps terrified by the same vision of Christ, only Urizen is more honest since he at least calls it by its true name when he accuses Los of being a "Visionary of Jesus".

Orc's first oration in *America*¹³ is a joyful vision of liberation and resurrection which carries no explicit threat to the establishment.¹⁴ It is only after the quoted passage that Orc identifies Urizen and his stony law and religion as his enemy and threatens to "burst the stony roof". This is underlined by the fact that in the first image of Orc (which accompanies his first oration), he is sitting in a relaxed position and is surrounded by springing vegetation,¹⁵ while in the second picture of him (Figure 1) he is surrounded by flames with outstretched arms, mirroring Urizen's pose in an earlier image (Figure 2). In copy A this is further accentuated by the colouring of the plates: in the first image of Orc the dominant colour of the whole plate is green, while in the second it is red (in the plate depicting Urizen which is between them the background is a frosty blue). The Prince's oration is also ironically undermined by the fact that the plate which contains it¹⁶ depicts a pastoral idyll with slumbering children and a sheep. Thus we can surmise that the "terror" of Orc first exists only in the fear-ridden imagination of the Guardian Prince and it is only after the Prince's attempted repression that Orc becomes truly terrifying.

¹³ "The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave their stations; The grave is burst, the spices shed, the linen wrapped up; [...]"(Blake 2007, 201 *America*, pl. 6)

¹⁴ Except perhaps the phrase: "Empire is no more".

¹⁵ The source of the image: <http://www.blakearchive.org/images/america.a.p8.300.jpg>

¹⁶ The source of the image: <http://www.blakearchive.org/images/america.a.p9.300.jpg>

Similarly, at this early point in the *Four Zoas*, Urizen has no reason to see in Los a “visionary of Jesus”. As yet Los is only a selfish child,¹⁷ nothing like the messianic artist that he will later become. The golden world¹⁸ that Urizen will build is brought down by his own rejection of his emanation Ahania and not by any effort on the part of Los. Similarly to the Guardian Prince with Orc, Urizen is projecting his own fears onto Los. Just as the Prince’s fear of liberation and resurrection was caused by fact that the rigid system he defends has no space for such things, so Urizen is fearful of Los because he perceives any independent spirit (however infantile) to be a threat to the system in which he is “God from eternity to eternity”. He is right to be afraid of a “visionary of Jesus”, but wrong to see Los as one. Later on, however, Los *does* make war on his spectre and this will prove to be a crucial step in bringing about the Apocalypse of Night IX. He is capable of this, perhaps, thanks to the knowledge he gains from this encounter, thus—just like the Guardian Prince of Albion in *America*—Urizen here is creating his own enemy.

5. Los, Enitharmon, and the Spectre

I will now examine in greater detail the evolution of Los’s relationship with his spectre, which can be seen as a paradigmatical example of the struggle between individual and spectre. Plate 6 of *Jerusalem* (Figure 3) shows a powerful visual representation of the later stages of this relationship. The fact that Los is looking directly at the spectre shows that he is in control of it, and the presence of metallurgical tools shows that thus—working together with his spectre—he is capable of creative work.

I have argued that by articulating his greatest fear Urizen gives Los (and the reader) an upside-down image of what the “Divine Vision” really means. But this image is not only upside-down, it is also only partial. Los *does* make war on his spectre, but this is not the whole story. After fighting and subduing his spectre, in Night VII Los finally embraces him “first as a brother, then as another self” (Blake 2007, 408 *FZ*: vii.633–634). This possible aspect of the relationship between individual and spectre is completely beyond the scope of Urizen’s vision. He cannot see the final higher union it leads to.

The ‘moral’ of this story is not simply that one should embrace one’s spectre. The fate of Urizen shows that this in itself can be devastating if the spectre gains the upper hand. As the daughters of Beulah say (and the Spectre of Urthona later admits), “The Spectre is in every man insane and most Deformed” (Blake 2007, 304 and 393 *FZ*: i.93–94, vii.300–

¹⁷ Enitharmon says the following to Los, with which he seems to agree:

“To make us happy let [our parents] weary their immortal powers,
While we draw in their sweet delights, while we return them scorn
On scorn to feed our discontent; for if we grateful prove
They will withhold sweet love, whose food is thorns and roots.” (Blake 2007, 313–314 *FZ*: ii. 7–10)

¹⁸ A world of mathematical perfection that Urizen builds in Night II is named ‘golden’ ironically since it is in fact built on repression.

301). It is only if an individual and their spectre can embrace as equal partners that this embrace can be productive and life-giving. Urizen identifies himself completely with his spectre, thus they form a union in which the spectre has the upper hand. His casting out of Ahania, his emanation, at the end of Night III is a direct consequence of this union. In contrast, the division between Los and his spectre remains even after they form their alliance, and after the Apocalypse, it is Enitharmon rather than the spectre with whom he unites, the spectre then departs.

Besides being a lifelike character in the epic, Los is also a symbolic figure representing “the Eternal Prophet” or even the Poetic Genius itself. His original, unfallen form is named Urthona, which is why his spectre is called “the Spectre of Urthona”. Thus Los’s struggle with his spectre is also the struggle between true poetic vision and a false substitute of it. Lorraine Clark further illuminates this point:

The Spectre [of Urthona] represents, in other words, the abstract unity of death that stands opposed to the concrete unity of life which Blake wants Los to embody. He must be united with Los in the “Divine Human” —but this unity must for Blake be in a way more human than divine, a unity instigated by Los. What is most divine *is* what is most human, for Blake. The Spectre threatens to usurp Los by uniting with Enitharmon to create the true unity, the true poetic vision of life, and this is why the struggle of Los and the Spectre over Enitharmon is central to the confrontation in *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*. But the marriage of the Spectre separate from Los to Enitharmon would produce an abstract unity, a parody of the true poetic vision. The Spectre’s form of mediation would in fact ratify division, for although it would reintegrate the fallen Zoas, and reintegrate Los, Enitharmon, and himself, it would reintegrate them into an abstract unity removed from life. (Clark 1999, 40–41, emphasis in original)

According to Clark, one of Blake’s central poetic problems was to find some sort of bridge between contraries which was neither mediation (i.e. reconciliation, abstract unity), nor hierarchy (that is a division prioritising one over the other). Mediation would be a well-disguised negation of the contrary, while a hierarchical contrary would cease to be a true contrary. Thus the above quote claims the Spectre of Urthona represents the danger of writing bad poetry (i.e. poetry that negates by abstraction the contraries from which life springs), which to Blake would be not an aesthetic, but an eschatological failure: the gulf between the union of contraries that Los, and the one the Spectre would bring about, is the gulf between Truth and Error. Thus here Blake is fighting an enemy no less destructive and terrifying than when he was attacking Urizen in his prophetic books, but this new enemy is much closer to home than the old one.

This discussion of the struggle between Los and the Spectre, which, in Clark’s interpretation represents Blake’s struggle with the spirit of Negation (in all its disguises), leads us on to the question whether Los and the Spectre can be thought of as contraries. Since Blake axiomatically (though in mirror-writing) states that “A Negation is not a Contrary” (Blake 2007, 572 *M*: pl. 30), this seems to be a simple question at first: if a Negation is not a Contrary, then surely the ‘Spirit of Negation’ itself cannot be a Contrary

to anything. Yet Los and the Spectre are counterparts to each other,¹⁹ and this (eventually friendly) opposition is a positive and life-giving force, so in this they do resemble Contraries. In *Jerusalem* 8:39–40, Los and the Spectre labour together at the anvil which can also be seen as a representation of the “progression” which arises from “contraries”.²⁰ In the *Zoas*, an alliance of sorts is formed between them, but this is not a “reconciliation” of the type which, according to the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* “destroys existence” if it is created between “the prolific and the devouring”:²¹ Los and the Spectre remain counterparts and do not merge into one being the way zoas and their emanations can. Indeed, it is through this separateness that Urthona’s spectre can save Los from the poison of Urizen’s mysterious tree:

Then Los plucked the fruit & ate & sat down in despair,
And must have given himself to death Eternal, but
Urthona’s Spectre, in part mingling with him, comforted him,
Being a medium between him & Enitharmon. But this union
Was not to be effected without cares, & sorrows, & troubles
Of six thousand years of self-denial and of bitter contrition.

(Blake 2007, 410 *FZ*: vii.688–693)

Mediation between contraries is destructive, but between Zoas and Emanations it is quite the opposite. What is described here is not a union of Zoa and Spectre which excludes their Emanation (as Urizen’s was), but of Zoa and Emanation. While it is not a complete union and they are still separate, the Spectre is also there as a third separate individual, but when the union is perfected (after 6000 years, in the Apocalypse) the Spectre will ‘depart’ leaving only one individual whom both the zoa and the emanation are part of, and of whom they constitute the masculine and feminine aspect respectively.

As I have previously quoted, Clark writes that “[i]t is the tenacious pursuit of the *same* ideal of life [as the strife of contraries] which is responsible for our sense of Blake’s consistency despite the confusions of his myth”. I believe that in the formation of the Los-Enitharmon-Spectre triad Blake is not deviating from this ideal but rather developing it. Los and the Spectre, and Los and Enitharmon are both contraries, or rather counterparts to each other, but in different ways. Los and Enitharmon’s complex relationship, which is one of the main focuses of the epic, can be regarded, in part, as a struggle (especially *FZ* ii, 11–53). The Spectre and Los compete for Enitharmon’s love and Los wishes to dominate (feels “domineering lust”²² towards) the Spectre, but otherwise their struggle is not the

¹⁹ The spectre says to Los: “I have thee, my counterpart vegetating miraculous” (Blake 2007, 410 *FZ*: vii.700)

²⁰ “Without Contraries is no progression” (Blake 2007, 111 *MHH*: pl. 7).

²¹ “These two classes of men [the prolific and the devouring] are always upon earth, and they should be enemies; whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence” (Blake 2007, 121 *MHH* pl. 16–17).

²² Los’ previous feelings towards the spectre are described as such when he finally gives them up and embraces the spectre “first as a brother, // Then as another self” (Blake 2007, 408 *FZ* vii.633–635).

central element in *The Four Zoas* that it will become in *Jerusalem*. Thus, though neither of these opposed pairs can be regarded as Contraries in the sense of the word used in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, they too embody Blake's lifelong belief that life springs from (and is) the opposition of (if not contraries, then, for lack of a better word) opposites. As another of the "Proverb of Hell" says, "Opposition is True Friendship" (Blake 2007, 125 *MHH*: pl. 20).

6. Urthona as role-model

In Night VII, this newly-formed triad of Los, Enitharmon, and the spectre goes on to create counterparts to the wandering spectres of the dead.²³ This shows not only that they have become a source of life, but also that this life-giving work is done not through 'creatio ex nihilo' but by turning monadic beings into dualities. Thus we can see once again, that in Blake's world, "Without Contraries is no progression": a monadic being on its own is static and dreadful. The relationships between the members of the triad are all shown in detail and their evolution is an archetypal path that the reviving spectres of the dead may also take. This parallel is underlined by the Spectre's words to Los:

But I have thee, my counterpart vegetating miraculous
 These spectres have no counterparts, therefore they raven
 Without the food of life. Let us create them counterparts,
 For without a Created body the Spectre is Eternal Death.
 (Blake 2007, 410–411 *FZ*: vii.700–703)

Thus the Spectre of Urthona, though he may be considered a being of a higher order than the spectres of the dead, recognises the spectres as beings similar to himself and proposes to heal them in a way similar to that by which he was healed. After the spectre and Los formed their alliance, but before their reuniting with Enitharmon, they had already begun to build Golgonooza (the city of Art). Thus after they receive a counterpart, the spectres of the dead too can begin to work towards their own 'Resurrection to Unity'. The spectres who already have counterparts are still separated from their Emanations, just as Los and the spectre were when Enitharmon fled and hid beneath Urizen's tree, but it is possible that they have started down the same route that Los-Spectre-Enitharmon is following.

²³ This process is described in *FZ*: vii.749–791 (Blake 2007, 413–414).

In the invocation Blake calls on the daughter of Beulah to sing of the “fall into division & [...] resurrection to unity” not of Albion, but of Urthona (Blake 2007, 300 *FZ*: i.14-15). (This can be compared to the *Iliad*’s stated subject being the wrath of Achilles and not the Trojan war.) Thus the works of Los, first to ally himself with his spectre, and then to seek reunion with his Emanation, is the declared subject of the epic, and the fourfold being Urthona-Spectre-Los-Enitharmon is its principal character. In this interpretation, the parts of the narrative dealing with the other Zoas are there because they are necessary for understanding the fate of Los and Enitharmon. This would explain, among other things, why Tharmas is introduced as the “parent power” (Blake 2007, 300 *FZ*: i.16), when at this point he has no children yet and during the course of the narrative all the major characters will become parents: he is the “parent power” because he will become the father of Los and of Enitharmon. If Urthona really is the principal character of the poem, then from this we may deduce that Los-Spectre-Enitharmon’s struggle for ‘perfect Unity’ (i.e. to reunite as Urthona again) is an example not only to the spectres of the dead, but also to the readers of the poem, who also, presumably, seek ‘perfect unity’. This is because if Urthona is the principal character, then we may assume that he/she is set up as an ideal for emulation by the readers (or listeners), just as Odysseus is in the *Odyssey*. This will be important later because the relationship between the poem and the ‘ideal reader’ will be a fundamental element in my interpretation of the meaning of the post-apocalyptic intellectual war.

This perceived focus on one of the four Zoas may seem to be at odds with the declaration at the very beginning of the poem that “a perfect Unity / Cannot exist, but from the Universal Brotherhood of Eden” (Blake 2007, 299 *FZ*: i.5). It is as if Los and Enitharmon could unite themselves into the fourfold Urthona without reference to any of the other Zoas, but this is not the case: their redemptive work in giving new life to the spectres of the dead is effectual precisely because through it the other Zoas can be (and are) reborn in new bodies, and in them they have a chance to restore the unity of Albion. Tharmas understands this, when he hopes to see his Enion reborn as one of their children.²⁴

The following principle from *All Religions are One* can help us understand why Urthona’s “fall into division & [...] resurrection to unity” can embody that of any individual:

As all men are alike in
outward form, So (and
with the same infinite
variety) all are alike in
the Poetic Genius.

(Blake 2007, 56)

²⁴ “But Tharmas most rejoiced in hope of Enion’s return” (Blake 2007, 474 *FZ*: vii.779).

This paradoxical different-but-the-sameness that we readily recognise in the outer forms of human beings is ever-present in Blake's thoughts about spiritual realities. We should think of his characters not only as cosmic allegories but also as real people inhabiting a rather strange world.²⁵ Thus if any other individual were to do what Los has done, and ally themselves with their spectre in order to reunite with their Emanation, then they would become capable of the same life-giving work Los and Enitharmon become capable of. For a different individual this alliance and reunion would take a very different form, it would be different-but-the-same just as "the outward forms of men" are also different-but-the-same. Of course if Urizen were able to distinguish himself from his spectre, he would not be Urizen, but the presence of multitudinous spectres of the dead show that there are many other individuals in Blake's universe beside the Zoas, so this is not an empty hypothetical. Indeed, since "Four mighty ones are in every man", there is a different(-but-the-same) Los and a different Enitharmon present in the mind of every single reader of *The Four Zoas*, and these "Losses" may ally themselves with their spectre in a different way than the Los described in *The Four Zoas* and the Enitharmons will bring forth different children.²⁶

7. The Reader's Struggle

Thus Urthona is set up for emulation both by other characters and by readers but this does not mean a mechanical copying of his behaviour, but rather an imitation "with infinite variety". A reader who takes this seriously will, like Los, engage in a struggle with his or her spectre, and will also, like Los and Enitharmon, take part in creative, life-giving work.

²⁵ Csikós's following two arguments can be applied to this question as well: "1. Blake's Zoas, besides being mental faculties, are highly distinct personalities. They are often associated with Gods (the unfallen Urizen as Apollo, Tharmas as Zeus, for example) and as such, they represent certain *types* with general characteristic traits, but – to avoid ready categorisations and to ensure a concentrated response – they are also individuals, who are allowed their full voice. [...] 2. Blake's characters are not static, they cannot be described with any previous known name without seriously narrowing down their scope. [...] Therefore idiosyncratic names were created to which we bring no memories whatsoever to allow the reader to be open to the changes in the figures. But even the characters under these peculiar names are not to be thought of as monolithic; in the course of the poem Luvah-Orc (traditionally identified with the Saviour) dialectically transforms into a character, significantly similar to his opposite, Urizen. So also, Enitharmon, once a sadistic child, gradually becomes one of the chief agents of Albion's redemption" (Csikós 2003, 30).

²⁶ Regarding such problems of identity in *The Zoas*, Prather writes the following: "Invoking [...] synecdochic logic and deliberately confounding the distinction between "parts" and "wholes" is part of an attack Blake sustains throughout his career against the ideal of unity itself. [...] Blake represents zoa(s) as simultaneously singular and multiple, prompting us to think of any one of them—Urthona, say—as both a discrete zoa and as a collection of smaller protozoa. And the same goes for "Albion", whose proper name not insignificantly contains the symbolic name *all* and refers to an "Ancient Man", a quadrumvirate of "zoa(s)" and the British nation all at the same time" (Prather 2007, 517–518).

These two things are inseparable: as we have seen, for Blake creative work cannot take place without some form of struggle. What one struggles against can be external (like Urizen to Orc in *America*), internal (the spectre) or a combination of the two (as in *Jerusalem*, where the spectre gives voice to Los' fears and mistrust towards other individuals).

The central statement of my essay is that the last lines of the epic allude to precisely this creative struggle which an ideal reader will take part in having read and understood the poem.²⁷ By 'reading' I mean something much less temporal and linear than our conventional 'start to finish' conception of reading a book and more like the way Blake may have read the Bible, Milton, and Shakespeare, more as a daily exercise than a one-off occasion, and with much more jumping from place to place in the text than is usual. I think Blake hopes that this, if done properly, will lead the reader to engage in creative, artistic work.

The Four Zoas is usually seen as a narrative focused on cosmic and world-historical events. In this reading Albion represents England, and, by extension, the whole human race, and the Apocalypse envisaged in Night IX is an enormous historical event, of which the French Revolution was only a minor (and perverted) shadow. But besides this, Albion is also an Everyman, and the whole action of the epic can be seen to take place within a single human individual. Los says the following to Enitharmon:

Though in the brain of Man we live, & in his circling nerves,
 Though this bright world of all our joy is in the Human brain,
 Where Urizen & all his hosts hang their immortal lamps,
 Thou ne'er shalt leave this cold expanse where watery Tharmas mourns.
 (Blake 2007, 315)

Though in context this is an usurpation of sorts, since the domain of Los and Enitharmon should rightly be the heart,²⁸ it does illustrate the point that the stage the action of the epic is played out upon is (also) the human body. Blake wrote in *A Vision of the Last Judgement*, that "whenever any Individual Rejects Error & Embraces Truth a Last Judgment passes upon that Individual" (Blake 1988, 532 *VLJ*: 84), thus one need not wait for 'the end of history' to experience the apocalypse described in Night IX, for it will take place inside oneself if one "Rejects Error & Embraces Truth".

Blake's goal in writing *The Four Zoas*, as with all his other works, is undeniably to lead his reader to "Reject Error & Embrace Truth". His poetry clearly has a "palpable design

²⁷ The following quote from David Punter shows how inseparable perception and creative work were for Blake:

"[I]f Blake had only believed that perception changes our *view* of things, he would have been merely orthodox; if he had believed that it changes our *conception* of the world, he would have been subscribing to a more general Romantic relativism; but he believed that imaginative activity must change the world itself, and this means that it must also be a practical activity" (Punter 1977, 553).

²⁸ See Stevenson's commentary, 315.

upon us”.²⁹ This is dramatised in the opening of *Milton*, where a “bard’s prophetic song” moves Milton to cast off his spectre and face Eternal Death to redeem his emanation (Blake 2007, 508 *M*: 2.21–22 and 532 *M*: 14.28–32). In this song, the bard repeatedly exclaims thus: “Mark well my words; they are of your eternal salvation” (Blake 2007, 509 *M*: 2.25). Though in the *Zoas* Blake spares his readers from such exhortations, it is reasonable to suppose that his intents are similar here as well.

In this context, the question “What will happen *after* the Last Judgement?” is less strange than it would be in a more orthodox context: an ideal reader of the *Zoas* may well “Reject Error & Embrace Truth” and thus experience an ‘internal Apocalypse’, but the ‘outside world’ will—at first—go on as usual regardless of this. Thus the question becomes “What will this reader do after his or her personal ‘Last Judgement’ has passed?”, which is a much more down-to-earth formulation of the question. For Blake, the answer is plainly that he or she must engage in creating Art, since for Blake “[a] Poet a Painter a Musician an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian” (Blake 1988, 274 *Laocoön*). As we have seen, all Art (and indeed, all creative and life-giving action) springs from the struggle between some form of contraries. Thus it is perhaps not far-fetched to state that the “Intellectual War” that will take place in an Individual after his or her personal “Last Judgement” will be the Artistic work that Blake repeatedly exhorts his readers to engage in. To be more precise: this “Intellectual War” will not be the artistic work in its entirety, but will rather be an integral and indivisible part of it.

8. A Corollary

This hypothesis would explain two otherwise enigmatic elements which appear at the very start of the manuscript. After the title page, the first thing that confronts the reader is a full-page illustration of a figure (perhaps) sleeping in a rather contorted pose, accompanied by only three words: “Rest before Labour”.³⁰ In my interpretation, this refers to the fact that the poem itself is the “Rest before Labour”, since after reading the poem, the ideal reader will arise to the ‘Intellectual War’ of his or her creative labour. The *Zoas* is, after all, a dream-vision poem,³¹ which the author shares with the readers so that they may partake in his vision and share in its benefits. One such benefit would be the “rest before labour” that even a night of troubled sleep represents.

²⁹ Though he can hardly be accused of “putting his hand in his breeches pocket” if we disagree. Following Keats’ remark: “We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us—and if we do not agree, seems to put its hand in its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one’s soul, and does not startle or amaze with itself, but with its subject.” (<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/k/keats/john/letters/letter34.html>)

³⁰ The source of the image: <http://www.blakearchive.org/images/bb209.1.2.ms.300.jpg>

³¹ The title page originally declared it to be “a DREAM of Nine Nights”, though this was later crossed out. (<http://www.blakearchive.org/images/bb209.1.1.ms.300.jpg>)

9. The Aged Mother

The second element my hypothesis would explain is the following quote which appears “as a subtitle of the lengthy eighteenth-century kind” (Stevenson’s commentary in Blake 2007, 299) at the very beginning of the epic:

The song of the aged mother which shook the heavens with wrath,
Hearing the march of long resounding strong heroic verse,
Marshalled in order for the day of intellectual battle.

(Blake 2007, 299 *FZ*: i.1–3)

When reading this passage it is easy to skim over the word “hearing”, and interpret the “song of the aged mother” to *be* the “march of long resounding strong heroic verse”, and to identify this with the actual text of the epic. But, because the word “hearing” is also there, this does not make sense grammatically. Instead, the passage can be explicated in the following way: “The song of the aged mother [...] [*which she sung*] hearing the march of [...] heroic verse [*which was*] marshalled in [*military*] order for the day of intellectual battle.” Thus there are actually two ‘songs’: one is the “song of the aged mother”, the other, the heroic epic written in “long resounding strong heroic verse”. The mother’s song is sung *in response to* the heroic epic. Going further, we may even say that the “intellectual battle” will be fought between these two songs: the mother hears the ‘strong heroic verse’ being marshalled *against her* and responds by singing her own song in response to it. The following passage makes plain that the idea of a song or speech being an array of words marshalled for battle was not alien to Blake’s thinking: “But first [those who disregard all Mortal things] said (& their words stood in chariots in array, / Curbing their tigers with golden bits & bridles of silver & ivory): [a speech, concluding with the words] Every one knows we are one Family: One Man blessed for ever!” (Blake 2007, 781 *J*: 55.34–46)

Before moving on to a closer examination of what ‘heroic verse’ represents here (and showing the second point my hypothesis about the nature of ‘Intellectual War’ illuminates), the character of the “aged mother” deserves closer scrutiny since it may shine light on the way Blake incorporates the horrors of the “corporeal wars” of his age into his poetry, and also on the way he hopes Art may be a remedy for it. In his article (originally a talk) entitled “William Blake and the Two Swords”, Michael Ferber ponders the difficulty and necessity for Blake’s generation of writing anti-war poetry:

[A]nti-war poetry is very difficult to write well, but [...], in an age when poetry was widely read and held in high esteem, it was very important to try to write it. [...] [H]ow do you write a fresh, effective poem about war, and especially against war? This problem might help us look at Wordsworth’s poems of 1793–1800. Take the stock character of anti-war poetry, the suffering widow, a descendant of Homer’s Andromache. There is no avoiding her in the pursuit of something new, for suffering widows were stock characters in real life; one of the main things war did was make widows. Pondering this fact, perhaps, Wordsworth wrote about one war widow after another, gradually learning to incorporate rounded details into their lives and circumstances and to find the poise between sentiment and detachment

until cliché evaporated and something new and (now we say) distinctively Wordsworthian emerged, as in *The Ruined Cottage*. (Ferber 1999, 155)

The other stock character—again both in poetry and in real life—was, of course, the bereaved mother or father.³² Only partly in jest, we may say that the *Four Zoas* is a titanic solution to the conundrum of the above quote, since it is a poem spoken by an “aged mother” describing the horrors of war³³ (among other things) and it is also definitely a fresh new take on the subject (if not necessarily an effective one in terms of raising anti-war sentiment).

Even if this cannot seriously be maintained about the whole of the poem, there *is* a “blind and age-bent” mother whose recurrent lamentations startle and dismay the other characters as the widows of Wordsworth’s poems are meant to dismay his readers: this character is Enion,³⁴ whose name, when pronounced, bears a very close resemblance to the word ‘anyone’. Indeed she is, in a way, the composite of many kinds of ‘stock characters’, since she laments the sufferings that multitudes of human beings (and animals) daily undergo in our own age as well as Blake’s. The second and third nights are closed by her lamentations (Blake 2007, 337–338 *FZ*: ii.597–628 and 347 *FZ*: iii.177–187),³⁵ and this pattern only ceases when she fades away completely, to be revived only in Night IX. Her lamentation at the end of Night II moves the plot of the epic along in an extremely significant way, since Ahania hears it “[a]nd never from that moment could she rest upon her pillow” (Blake 2007, 338 *FZ*: ii.634). We can see that this leads her to “embrace Truth” (at least partially), since she tries to convince Urizen not to “look upon futurity, darkening present joy” (Blake 2007, 340 *FZ*: iii.10) which, in the context of the poem, is sound advice. But Urizen, instead of listening to her, casts her down and thus inadvertently destroys his golden world.

At this point in the narrative it is not at all clear that the consequences of Enion’s lamentation are positive, but the structure of the poem as a whole shows that they are. The sufferings Enion laments cannot cease until “perfect Unity” is restored, and this can only happen if all Error is Rejected. Urizen is in Error, and since he did not listen to Ahania when she told him this, he has to ‘learn it the hard way’, by watching his (false) golden world crumble down.

³² See, for instance, Wordsworth’s “Old Man travelling”.

³³ Of the role of women’s lament in Blake’s works, Hopkins writes the following: “Blake’s lamenting women loudly question injustice of a fallen world; they are at once fierce, loving, tender, hateful, vengeful, and sad, despairing voices of dissent that confront the truth of loss, even if this means weeping songs of their own degradation. They are, to use Holst-Warhaft’s phrase, ‘dangerous voices’. They witness, over and over again, in their own bodies and actions, for the sake of others – their husbands, their male and female lovers – to the nadir of things, the ruins of experience, but also [...] they witness to the ‘apocalyptic reversal’” (Hopkins 2009, 76).

³⁴ Enion’s first lamentation is introduced with the following line: “Enion blind & age-bent wept upon the desolate wind” (Blake 2007, 321 *FZ* ii.186).

³⁵ Her first lamentation (Blake 2007, 321 *FZ*: i.187–202) would originally have been the end of the First Night (<http://www.blakearchive.org/images/bb209.1.18.ms.300.jpg>).

The following stanza from a poem that Blake worked on for a long time, rewriting it twice,³⁶ gives us valuable insight into what he imagines the weapons of “Intellectual War” to be:

For a tear is an Intellectual thing;
And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King,
And the bitter groan of a Martyr’s woe
Is an Arrow from the Almighty’s Bow!
(Blake 2007, 774 J: 52.88–91)

Stevenson dates its first appearance c.1804, at which time Blake was still working on the Zoas (Stevenson 494 and 293). If we consider the events discussed in the previous paragraph, we can perhaps gain a clearer understanding of the way in which the “Arrows from the Almighty’s Bow” operate: it was Enion’s lament that, through Ahania’s empathy for it, finally led to the destruction of Urizen’s false heaven. This appears to be cruel and unjust with regard to Ahania, since had she hardened her heart to Enion’s lament, she could have continued living in Urizen’s golden world, whereas her state after being thrown down is even worse than it was before. But for her (as for the other characters) the only true happiness would be complete reunion with her counterpart, and this is only made possible by the later events of the poem, which are, indirectly, the consequence of her empathy for Enion. It is also noteworthy that in Night VIII she laments in similar fashion to Enion’s lamentations in the second and third nights, and here it is Enion’s voice that consoles her (Blake 2007, 437–440 FZ: viii.480–519).³⁷

Having discussed in detail the various ‘aged mothers’ present in the *Four Zoas*, its second page (the page containing the quoted subtitle) deserves another look (Figure 4). It depicts a reclining young female nude figure. In my reading this figure is the same person as the one referred to by the text as “the aged mother”, just as the “Tyger” of *The Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is at once the terrifying beast described in the poem and the friendly, soft-toyish animal the accompanying image presents.³⁸ The contrast between the young woman of the image and the “blind and age-bent” mothers in the following text, is similar to the juxtaposition between the two Tygers. Here, as in the *Songs*, this juxtaposition represents the necessity of ‘double vision’: of being able to see the cruelties and sufferings of the world without forgetting its joys and beauties. This is why Blake presents his readers not only with a vision of horror, but also one of redemption. Michael Ferber writes that:

³⁶ This stanza also appears in “Notebook drafts” and the “Pickering manuscript” (Blake 2007, 497, 611).

³⁷ Unlike Enion’s lamentations, these are not the closing words of the Night, but they too are very close to its end.

³⁸ See <http://www.blakearchive.org/images/songsie.aa.p42.300.jpg>

Blake's ultimate spiritual weapon, I think, and the most difficult to wield effectively, is to hold up to our imaginations the vision of a transformed world. Pity for the world as it is must lacerate our heart, but a yearning for the world as it might be must fire our souls. Whether the astonishing pages at the conclusions of *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem* [which describe the Apocalypse] succeed in awakening our desire is doubtful, though I think one could make a defence of them. What is certain is that Blake believed we must acquire some picture of it and some feeling for it or we will remain submissive to the tyranny of the actual. (Ferber 1999, 168)

I think, it is precisely because he perceives this difficulty that Blake presents³⁹ not only as a textual image of regeneration at the end of the poem, but also a visual one at the beginning. We are shown the singer of the poem not only as a suffering aged mother, but also as a joyful young woman. In *America: A Prophecy* a vision of the “nerves of youth” renewing in “female spirits of the dead” represents the (unfulfilled) regenerative and apocalyptic potentials of the American Revolution (Blake 2007, 210 *America* pl. 15), and I think that the juxtaposition of the “aged mother” with the image of the young woman would have been a reworking of this.

10. Blake's War against War

Returning finally to the actual words of the subtitle, I will now try to illuminate why the “long resounding strong heroic verse” is the nemesis of the singer of the *Zoas*—the “aged mother” whose song it is. In the *Preface to Milton* (Blake 2007, 501–502), Blake identifies the “general malady & infection from the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the Sword”, i.e. the classical tradition and its glorification of corporeal war as the cause of the horror of the Napoleonic wars and the suppression of art in England. The following quote from Jacob Bronowski shows why heroic verse was an apt symbol not only of the classical glorification of war, but also of the ‘high culture’ of the recent past of Blake's England.

Homer in the Augustan manner was to be the monument of eighteenth-century England, as deliberately as the *Encyclopédie*, forty years later, was planned to be the monument of eighteenth-century France. What the eighteenth century called the Town took up the plan solemnly. The lords and the bishops, [...] the bigwigs and the philosophers, [...] friends and enemies, [...] dons and doctors, [...] the arts and sciences, [...] the wits, the belles, the politicians—all were subscribers. They were doing a serious social duty, for which Pope was the instrument; [...] A whole society spoke for its culture in Pope's *Iliad*. (Bronowski 1965, 8–9)⁴⁰

³⁹ Or he rather wanted to present, since he finally did not engrave and illuminate the poem.

⁴⁰ Pope's translation of *Iliad* was, of course, written in heroic verse.

It is this society against which, in the *Preface to Milton*, Blake tells “Painters, Sculptors and Architects” to “set their forehead”. For it is these “Hirelings in the Camp, the Court & the University, who would, if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War.” According to my reading of the subtitle of *The Four Zoas*, the “aged mother”, i.e. the authorial persona, “sets her head” against the “long resounding strong heroic verse” that represents the classical tradition and its present-day English heirs. If we accept the hypothesis that the *Four Zoas* calls upon the reader to engage in “Intellectual War”, then it follows that the authorial persona does this in the hope that those who hear her song (i.e. read the poem) will join her in her struggle. Thus, as I see it, these opening lines carry a message similar to that of the *Preface to Milton*, only that which is only hinted at in the first is made glaringly explicit in the second.

The danger of the aggressive rhetoric of the *Preface* (calling people “hirelings” “whose only joy is destruction”) is that it may “rouse up” the “Young Men” to “Corporeal”, rather than “Mental” war. The desire to avoid such rhetoric may explain complexities of the *Four Zoas*’ ‘call to arms’. In this respect the *Zoas* can be seen as more pacifist than *Milton*.

As this too shows, opposing ‘corporeal war’ by ‘mental’ means is no mean feat. In one of his poems, (dated between 1807 and 1809), Blake wrote the following lines:

So spoke an Angel at my birth
Then said Descend thou upon Earth
Renew the Arts on Britain’s Shore
And France shall fall down & adore
With works of Art their Armies meet
And War shall sink beneath thy feet
(Blake 2007, 633)

What Blake would have regarded as faith others may call wishful thinking, but it was this faith in the ability of Art to “sink War” that, as Michael Ferber puts it, “kept him at his station through twenty-three years of dismal corporeal war” (Ferber 1999, 168). Moreover, it was the only option, the only way out of the horrors of his age: the failure of the French Revolution and its descent into the wars of Napoleon proved that corporeal war could never put a stop to corporeal war. Rather, the “energy” that is “enslaved” in “[Corporeal] war” (Blake 2007, 448 *FZ*: ix.150) is the only thing with the power to “sink” it. For this to happen, this energy must be given form by the artist’s intellectual struggle. I think that it was this struggle that Blake wished to prepare his readers for.

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Abbreviations

M: *Milton*

J: *Jerusalem*

FZ: *The Four Zoas*

MHH: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

VLJ: *A Vision of the Last Judgement*

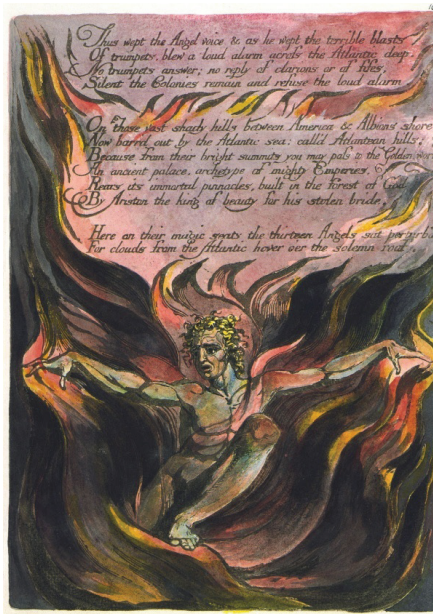


Figure 1. Orc in *America* (<http://www.blakearchive.org/images/america.a.p12.300.jpg>)



Figure 2. Urizen in *America* (<http://www.blakearchive.org/images/america.a.p10.300.jpg>)



Figure 3. Los and the spectre (<http://www.blakearchive.org/images/jerusalem.e.p6.300.jpg>)

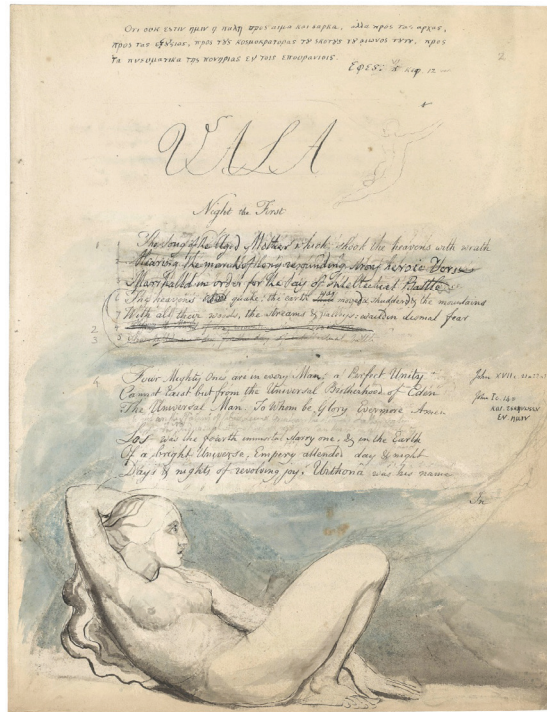


Figure 4. Zoas, the opening page (<http://www.blakearchive.org/images/america.a.p10.300.jpg>)

“My Own Vampire”: The Fate of Those Let Loose from the Grave

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This essay discusses the fates of the literary doubles in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* treating doubling as a process and exploring its mechanisms. In doing so it discovers that doubling is an inherently destructive process that will result in the death of the original self of everyone who cannot exit it before it runs its course.

Keywords: Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, doubles, doubling

The Concept of the Double

In literary criticism the term double is almost as vague as it is common as, as Hallam (1981) puts it, “almost any dual, and in some cases even multiple, structure in the text” can be interpreted as a case of the double, a phenomenon which he traces back to the folkloric origins of the concept (5). Taking even a cursory glance at those origins can make the confusion quite understandable. “Werewolves, wraiths, vampires [...] can be understood as dark personae of the Double” (8), but even something as ordinary and natural as a shadow is viewed as a double in some cultures (Rank 1971, 49). Furthermore, superstition holds in some places that a living person can be a double as well. One form of that belief documented by Frazer (1913) being that the soul of the still living father can be reborn in a child of striking similarity (quoted in Rank 1971, 53), which naturally foreshadows the looming death of the father, “since the child has adopted his image” (Rank 1971, 53). The deadly nature of having and encountering one's double signals “imminent death” in European culture as well, a myth that largely influenced the nineteenth century gothic writers (Slethaug 1994, 101).

Rank (1971) analysed the works of many such authors, mainly German, and he established two primary categories of the double in literature. One of them is the “independent and visible cleavage of the ego” usually portrayed as a separated shadow or reflection that came to life, while the other one is a “real and physical [person] of unusual external similarity” (12). However, given the fluid nature of the concept of the double, this definition alone is not sufficient to cover all cases, which is why it does well to employ another one, the idea of the composite self

introduced by Rogers (1970). The concept identifies the double not through similarities, but through function. It proposes that there are some characters that are written to be incomplete personalities and that if two, or in some cases multiple, of these characters moulded together would make a unified personality then they can be considered to be doubles (quoted in Hallam 1981, 5).

The double has functionality outside of the composite self as well. Rank (1971) identified several tendencies in the cases he examined, such as the double working against the “prototype” and the negative effect of this conflict being located “in the relationship with a woman” (33). Another common theme is the “impulse to rid oneself” of the double “in a violent manner” (16) and that acting upon such impulses result in “suicide by way of the death intended for the irksome persecutor” (33).

These patterns and themes also appear in *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* written by Mary Shelley ([1831] 2003)¹. It is practically a truism in *Frankenstein* criticism that Victor Frankenstein and his Creature are doubles (Levine [1973] 1996, 209) but all other major and minor characters seem to double each other as well in acting out similar narratives to each other (211). In Mary Shelley’s novel, too, the double appears in its dark aspect, but the way she utilises the concept has marked differences compared to what Rank observed in the works of the German writers. While the Creature certainly fits the archetype of the unkillable double, at many other times Shelley breaks away from the convention and kills off other, perhaps lesser, doubles, often by the hands of the one they double. Furthermore, in the case of those who die, them being doubles seems to play a major, if not primary role in their deaths. Indeed, it can be argued that every character who dies is a double in some way and only those who are not seen as a double can survive. This oddity can be read as a statement about the inherently destructive nature of doubles and how their very existence demands the life of their originals.

The deaths of the doubles of *Frankenstein* is peculiar and is perhaps best understood when the focus is not on the mere existence of the doubles, but on the process of their becoming and what it means within the context of the novel. When looking at doubles in this light one has to always remember the structure of the novel: three first person narratives are folded into each other like a Russian doll and presented as letters written for a fourth person outside the bounds of the novel. Of all the characters only three get the privilege to speak for themselves: Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein and the Creature. All others are described only as defined by the interpretation of one of the narrators. This means, that when one

¹ From here on all quotations and page numbers refer to this work and edition unless otherwise indicated.

notices the markings of the double on a character it is because one of the narrators instinctively recognised that person as their double in some regard.

One of the ways to understand the nature of the doubles in *Frankenstein* is to define them along the lines of what Mellor ([1988] 1996) describes as the “rigid division of sex roles” (274). She details how public and intellectual activities are all coded as masculine and domestic affairs and emotional activities as feminine to the point where one can even speak of the masculine and feminine as separate spheres of life and even as separate states of being. Keeping this gender division in mind when interpreting the doubles in the narrative is crucial because they are mainly regarded through the eyes of Victor Frankenstein, in whom this separation is so great that he “cannot love and work at the same time” (275), leaving him eternally lacking. Because of this lack, it is the most efficient to establish the two types of doubles along the gender lines. Those characters who are doubles because they represent an aspect of one of the narrators can be considered to be more traditional, Rankian doubles and be referred to as masculine doubles. Those who represent aspects that the narrators lack and function as composite characters, are to be referred to as feminine doubles.

However, since merely dividing the characters into these types would only focus on the double as a state and not as a process, it could not appropriately account for and describe the fates of the characters. Therefore additional categories need to be established and the already existing ones slightly reinterpreted to represent the process and its stages.

The first step of the process is the act of creating a double. There are several characters who form their own doubles or shape themselves into doubles and die as a result of that. These characters therefore can be categorised as *self-doublers*. There are many more who are merely perceived as a double by one of the narrators, yet are still condemned to death for it. Those are the *masculine and feminine doubles* who will be discussed as two separate categories as, although their fates are ultimately the same, the process and reasoning that leads to it are different. There are some characters who survive the novel, some of them despite the fact that they were perceived as doubles at some point. How they managed to avoid entering into the process of doubling or how they managed to exit it before its completion will be examined in a separate category simply called *survivors*. This categorization will leave only two characters unaccounted for, who leave the novel under uncertain terms, and that do not clearly dictate their fates. Their options will be discussed under the label of *those whose fate is yet undecided*.

Since the interest of this essay is in doubling as a process, each character's path will be closely examined in terms of the process: how they enter it, how they become and become recognised as a double, and how that leads to their deaths. To

illustrate the analysis and the doubling process itself, the first character to be examined will be Justine Moritz, whose transformations are the most fluid of all: she enters the process as a self-doubler, becomes recognised as a feminine double and completes the process via death as a masculine double.

Justine Moritz

The case of Justine Moritz is a unique one and therefore it is best to discuss it separately rather than split it into the three categories it shifts through during the novel. Taking a look at her situation in its whole also yields the added benefit of showcasing the fluidity of personal identity and highlighting the advantages of treating doubling as a process.

Justine enters into the doubling process with the noble intentions of self-betterment. She, who at the tender age of twelve was rescued from an abusive home by Caroline Beaufort and taken in as a servant of the Frankensteins saw her saviour as “the model of all excellence” and out of her admiration for her “endeavoured to imitate her phraseology and manners” (52). She succeeded to the degree that even years after Caroline’s death she often reminds Elizabeth of her. Justine effectively turned herself into Caroline’s double who mimics the actions of the original whenever the possibility arises: When Caroline fell ill attending to Elizabeth’s sickbed, Justine nursed her much the same way Caroline nursed Elizabeth and as a result she, too, fell ill, though unlike Caroline, she recovered. After her recovery, the declining health of her mother, the reason for the sufferings of her youth, forced her to return home where Justine nursed her mother till her death, just like Caroline nursed her father, the man who pushed them into deep poverty, until his death. Upon her return to the Frankenstein household Justine slipped more explicitly into Caroline’s vacated place by acting towards William, Caroline’s youngest child, “like a most affectionate mother” (71).

Reshaping herself into a second Caroline, however, did not bring lasting happiness to Justine. Her excellent character and noble deeds that were modelled on Caroline were all brought up to her defense at her trial, but rather than saving her they only turned the public more against her, “charging her with the blackest of ingratitude” (71). Ultimately she was condemned to death but even while awaiting her execution she held onto the image of her idol by assuming “an air of cheerfulness” (75) and trying to “comfort others and herself” (74) just like Caroline, who in her final days decided to “endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death” (29).

Her resemblance to Caroline does not only seal her fate in the courtroom, but it is partially what leads her there in the first place. Justine gets framed for the

murder of William by the Creature who accidentally stumbles upon her sleeping form shortly after he takes a miniature portrait of Caroline's from William. Gazing at the miniature of this "most lovely woman" the Creature discovers for the first time the effects the feminine aspect can have on him, "it softened and attracted me" (132). Softening the masculine impulses towards pursuing selfish ambitions and glory and softening the masculine counterpart's temper is a primary function of the feminine as best portrayed by Elizabeth's childhood relationship with Victor and Henry: She "was there to subdue [Victor] to a semblance of her own gentleness" and to unfold to Henry "the real loveliness of beneficence and made the doing good the end and aim of his soaring ambition" (24). In that moment the Creature, the manifestation of masculine ambition, becomes aware of the need for a feminine double for becoming complete at the same time as he realises that he is "forever deprived of the delights such beautiful creature could bestow" (132).

This is what is at the forefront of his mind when he comes across Justine, which prompts the Creature to transfer his newly awakened desire for the feminine onto her, recreating in his mind the sleeping Justine as the living double of Caroline's portrait. Him addressing her as the "fairest" despite privately noting how Justine is "not indeed so beautiful as her whose portrait I held" (132) also helps to create continuity between the two women. However, when Justine stirs and the harmless fantasy of interacting with the feminine becomes a real possibility, the fear and anger at the anticipated rejection reawakens and the Creature decides to punish Justine for it by framing her.

His reasoning is odd: "the murder I have committed because I am forever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime has its source in her; be hers the punishment" (132). Since the Creature found Caroline's miniature only after he murdered William, locating the source of it in the feminine can be understood as an instinctive recognition of his own lacking nature that locks him out of human affection. Another oddity is how he intuitively senses the connection between Caroline and Justine. The true source of the Creature's crimes is Victor's absence as a parent, an absence which can be argued to be the result of Caroline's inadequate mothering, her failure to soften her son's temper. If viewed this way, Caroline is the source of Victor's crimes and thus the Creature's, which is a sin that by becoming Caroline's double Justine unwittingly took upon herself.

This part of the Creature's narrative also exemplifies how he is rarely moved by his own will alone. As Victor's "spirit let loose" (64) it is no coincidence that the first female that attracts him is Victor's mother who must have been on Victor's mind during the creation of the Creature as evidenced by the nightmare. The echoes of Victor also shine through in the Creature's play acting. According to Elizabeth, Justine used to be a "great favourite" of Victor's and if he was "in an ill

humour, one glance from Justine could dissipate it” (52). Similarly, the Creature identifies himself to Justine as “thy lover [...] who would give his life but to obtain one look of affection from thine eyes” (132). Unfortunately for Justine, this identifies her as a potential feminine double of Victor’s as well, which alone could be enough to decide her fate.

The Creature and Victor oftentimes find themselves doubled in the same people, but not always for the same reason. Justine during her trial is one of the rare occasions when a double embodies the same aspect of both. In the courtroom she is no longer a feminine double representing their lack, but a masculine one who carries their shared crime like a sacrificial scapegoat. The Creature through his scheming and Victor through his inaction transfer the identity of the murderer to Justine, a transference that is so complete that in the eyes of the people it negates all of Justine’s positive actions and qualities, making them appear abhorrent. Thus during the course of the trial Justine’s own identity is stripped away leaving nothing but the identity of the murder behind.

While she is forced to act as their shared double she adopts the language of the Creature. She repeatedly calls herself a “wretch” (73, 74), the name most commonly associated with the Creature, and her words at many times anticipate the Creature’s worldview. Her “I had none to support me; all looked on me as a wretch” (73) is the same sentiment expressed in the Creature’s question of “am I not shunned and hated by all mankind” (134). His famous claim that he is “alone and miserable” (133) and “malicious because I am miserable” is also foreshadowed by Justine’s explanation of how “the affection of others” is so sweet to “such a wretch as I am” that it “removes more than half my misfortune”. Justine assures Elizabeth that she can make peace with her fate if Elizabeth will “remember me and think of me as of one unjustly condemned” (74) and similarly the Creature exclaims that even if only one person could show him affection “for that one creature’s sake I would make peace with the whole kind” (135).

While other characters tend not to change the route they take, in the end this diversion means nothing. Justine’s unique journey through the doubling process still concludes the same as all of those who cannot exit it: with her death.

Self-doublers

When it comes to the doubling process, self-doublers are in a uniquely privileged position as they are the only ones who have true control over the process. Because of that there are only two characters in the novel who can be categorised as self-doublers and self-doublers only.

The first of them is Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein. During one of their travels Victor's mother finds herself in the odd situation of encountering a young child named Elizabeth Lavenza who is of unusual similarity to herself. They have a similar history. Caroline Beaufort was the daughter of a wealthy merchant who lost all his fortune before dying in poverty leaving his daughter "an orphan and a beggar" forced to do "plain work" (18). Elizabeth Lavenza was the daughter of a Milanese nobleman whose wealth was confiscated after he was either killed or imprisoned leaving Elizabeth "an orphan and a beggar" (21) to be raised by a peasant family. They are described similarly. Caroline is of an "uncommon mould" (18) and Elizabeth is of a "different stock" (20). They are both described in a language that associates them with religion and the divine. Caroline is described as acting like "the guardian angel of the afflicted" (20) and Elizabeth is described as having the appearance of a "cherub" (21) who bears a "celestial stamp" that marks her as "heaven sent" (20). They both encounter a Frankenstein who decides to rescue them.

Elizabeth clearly has the markings of a Rankian double but Caroline does not heed the implicit warning, perhaps because she already dabbles in self-doubling. She was rescued from her state of poverty and despair by Alphonse Frankenstein who appeared to her as a "protecting spirit" (18) and now she visits people in similar states to act as their guardian angel. This to her is "more than a duty; it was a necessity, a passion", almost like a compulsion born from "remembering what she had suffered, and how she had been relieved" (20). From this it becomes evident that Caroline acting under the guise of Alphonse cannot leave behind someone so similar to herself. Similarly to how Alphonse took her under his protection and later married her, Caroline wants to ensure Elizabeth's future by adopting her as her "much desired" (19) daughter who one day will marry her son, Victor and become a proper member of the Frankenstein family, just like Caroline herself. This is a plan on which Caroline's "firmest hopes for future happiness were placed on" (28).

With her adoption Elizabeth may have become an "inmate" (21) of her new family destined to become a perfect double for Caroline, but Caroline's hopes are all jeopardised when Elizabeth contracts the scarlet fever. Hearing that "the life of her favourite was menaced" so distresses Caroline that despite evidence that there were "medical attendants" available she insists on nursing Elizabeth herself. Her attentions save Elizabeth's life but cost her her own. However, Caroline achieves her goal. On her deathbed she trades fates and roles with Elizabeth, which Caroline verbally acknowledges by saying "you must supply my place to my younger children" (28). The force of the parting words of her dying saviour lock Elizabeth into her role as the new Caroline and complete Caroline's self-doubling process.

As for why doubling herself in Elizabeth was so important to Caroline only assumptions can be made, but a clue to it might be found in a painting. What

Caroline went through between the loss of her father's wealth and the arrival of Alphonse was so immensely traumatic that it had shaken "her health, and even the tranquility of her hitherto constant spirit" (19). The greatest blow had to be the death of her father and in those moments of grief is when Alphonse finds her, kneeling at the side of her father's coffin and weeping. This moment of great suffering is commemorated in a painting Victor claims was "painted at my father's desire" that portrays Caroline "in an agony of despair, kneeling at the coffin of her dead father" (64) that is hanging in their library. It seems like even in her happy home Caroline could not escape that moment and the only way to leave it behind appeared to be recreating herself in a new form, as a new person—as a double.

Victor Frankenstein, on the other hand, does not encounter his double within his narrative, he literally creates it. As Victor's creation, the Creature "can be taken as an expression of an aspect of Frankenstein's self [...] leading an apparently independent organic life of its own and yet [...] reenacting in mildly disguised ways, his creator's feelings and experiences" (Levine [1973] 1996, 209–10). Poovey ([1984] 2012) identifies this aspect of Victor's self as his "ambition and desire" and she argues that by giving these an independent form Victor has effectively separated them off of himself, which left him in "permanent incompleteness" (348). That the Creature is a part of Victor who, as Poovey puts it, "simply acts out the implicit content of Frankenstein's desires" (349) when committing his crimes, leaves the two of them in a precarious position. If the Creature is moved by Victor's will then the Creature's crimes are Victor's crimes as well. If the Creature is Victor's double then Victor is, or can become, the Creature's double.

The complicated nature of their relationship is instinctively recognised by Victor. When he first sees him again after William's murder he calls the Creature "my own vampire, my spirit let loose from the grave forced to destroy all that was dear to me" (64). The Creature is his spirit, they are the same. Victor's conscious mind, however, rejects this notion and he starts rationalising it away. By describing the Creature as "filthy demon" with a form "more hideous than belongs to humanity" (63) Victor classifies him as something non-human (Hindle 1994, 50) and places him a safe distance away from himself. Thus reassuring himself of the insignificance of his connection to the Creature, Victor can comfortably come to the conclusion that "*he* was the murderer" because "nothing in human shape could have destroyed that fair child" even though he has only "the mere presence of the idea" as "irresistible proof" (63). At this stage of identifying and identifying with the Creature, the distinction between the two of them is so stark and important in Victor's mind that the word "*he*" is italicised as early as the 1818 edition (50), one of the few occasions something is italicised for emphasis in the novel.

Before Justine's trial, Victor firmly believes that "Justine, and indeed every human being was guiltless of his [William's] murder" and that his fault at most is being the creator of "the living monument of presumption and rash ignorance which I had let loose upon the world" (66). This weak assertion of his innocence, however, cannot survive Justine's trial which Victor already sees as a test to see "whether the result of my curiosity and lawless devices would cause the death of two of my fellow beings" (68). Calling his devices lawless is already a soft form of admitting not only that he has transgressed the laws of nature but also of the still subconscious realization that there are no human laws to regulate what he has done and thus his Creature has to be "immune to human justice" (Poovey [1984] 2012, 352). Because of this he instinctively understands that the trial is just a "wretched mockery of justice" that can only end with Justine being "obliterated in an ignominious grave, and I the cause" (68).

However, this initial admission of guilt is severely undercut by Victor's inability to voice it. At first he tries to reassure himself that since Justine is not the real murderer no evidence brought against her could condemn her. Then he justifies his silence by claiming that "my tale [...] would be looked upon as madness" (66) and a "declaration would have been considered as the ravings of a madman and would not have exculpated her who suffered through me" (68). He is, of course, wrong. The presence of the miniature is something that Justine cannot explain. "How could she imagine", Veeder ([1982] 1996) asks, "that an eight-foot-tall, man-made monster had sneaked up and slipped the miniature into her pocket" (272). The only person who has any hope of proving that is Victor, who could use his work as proof of his words or he could have even merely lied about an enemy of his committing the crime in retaliation against him. After all, he already claimed to know the identity of the murderer in front of his younger brother, Earnest, before the revelation of Justine's arrest, exclaiming that "I saw him too; he was free last night" (65).

These thoughts do not enter Victor's mind at all as he refuses to take any responsibility for his creature. Victor claims that he cannot take the blame for the murder because "I was absent when it was committed" (68). Victor does realise that his greatest crime is being absent. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines the word absent as "not present at a usual or expected place", "not attentive", "missing" and ties it to the word "lacking", which means "to be deficient". As a son, a brother, a fiancé, a father, Victor is not where he is expected to be. He is not only absent from the life of the Creature whom he created and abandoned two years ago, an action that leads to William's murder, but he is also absent from the life of his family. He is not attentive. He did not bother to find out what became of his creature and he kept postponing returning home despite his family's desire to see him again after years

of absence. Victor is missing from his home, which is the root of the problem. Mellor ([1988] 1996) explains that because of the novel's separation of the spheres of the masculine intellectual and feminine emotional activities Victor "cannot work and love at the same time" as the former happens only outside of the home while the latter is confined within it (275).

Victor's "unsurmountable aversion to the idea of engaging myself in my loathsome task [...] while in habits of familiar intercourse with those I loved" (141) that forces him to leave the sphere of the influence of feminine understanding and affection in order to be able to work is born from the nature of his work. Victor wants to create life not only by excluding the feminine but by denying it (Sélei [1999] 2015, 76). This desire can be seen as a result of the separation of intellect and affection, which supposes that by being unable to feel affection by himself Victor is deficient and can be whole only by uniting with Elizabeth whom Sélei identifies as a feminine double of Victor's (100). It is only because a part of himself is already missing that Victor engages in the Creature's creation and separates off yet another aspect of his self. This results in Victor being not only physically absent at the time of William's murder but also in the sense of being lacking twice over. The Creature, that is a part of Victor that he is lacking, is also a manifestation of Victor's lack of affection born from his absence from home. Therefore, it can be said that it is literally Victor being absent that killed his brother and condemned Justine.

This, however, is something Victor cannot understand. After citing his absence as the reason for his silence, Victor does little more than describe the court proceedings until it becomes clear that "concerning the picture [Justine] could give no account", at which point Victor calls her "the unhappy victim" (70). This shortly morphs into "my unhappy victim" (72) when he is forced to confront how he would be viewed if those around him knew the situation in its whole. Justine innocently assumes that "none surely would have been so wicked to destroy me wantonly". Victor is not only like all the others who knew Justine for years and out of "fear and hatred of the crime" became "timorous and unwilling to come forward", he is wicked. They spoke well of Justine when called upon, Victor stayed silent. The final condemnation comes from Victor's feminine double, Elizabeth, who demonstrates all the affection Victor only claims to feel because she cannot watch "a fellow creature about to perish through the cowardice of her pretended friends" (71). In *Frankenstein* the word friend also means family and by claiming Justine as her sister Elizabeth also claims her as Victor's sister. Thus Victor allows the death of another sibling out of "self-devoted concern for [...] his own reputation" (Mellor [1988] 1996, 276).

Getting closer and closer to realising the true nature of his relationship to the situation and the Creature causes Victor constant pain. The trial is a "living torture"

(68) during which his “agitation and anguish was extreme” (71). After Elizabeth’s testimony when he finally considers the possibility that the “demon who [...] murdered my brother” framed Justine and doomed her to “death and ignominy” (71) he becomes unable to “sustain the horror of my situation” and upon realising that the public already decided Justine’s fate he “rushed out of the court in agony” (72). He claims a torture greater than Justine’s for himself since she is at least “sustained by innocence” while he is torn apart by “fangs of remorse” forcing him to spend a night in “unmingled wretchedness”. The word wretchedness is of note here as it is derived from the word wretch, the name most commonly used for the Creature and its appearance signals that Victor is close to self-admission.

The final barrier between him and the realization of what he became breaks down in Justine’s prison cell where he is taken reluctantly by Elizabeth, the living embodiment of his capacity for love and affection. There, in her conversation with Elizabeth Justine echoes back Victor’s private musings both from the trial and from the time Victor saw his Creature again by claiming that she was made to feel like she was “doomed to ignominy and perdition” and by claiming that “none but the devil himself” (73) could have been the true murderer. Victor merely listens to the desperate exchange of his sisters, to Justine admitting to a false confession, to Elizabeth promising to save Justine and to Justine resigning herself to death. He cannot take part in their heartfelt farewell. Not even when he is directly addressed. Regardless, the talk has an effect on him. He “gnashed my teeth and ground them together, uttering a groan that came from my inmost soul” (74) as “anguish and despair” finally “penetrated into the core of my heart” (75).

The pain that Victor experiences has significance because it is a mimicry of what the Creature goes through when his heart “fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy [was] wrenched by misery to vice” (209–10) could not “endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot imagine” (210). The pain Victor feels is the pain of becoming the wretch that murdered his brother. Now Victor too “bore a hell within me” (75) just like how the Creature “like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me” (125) when he first turned violent after being rejected by the de Lacey family. Having gone through the process of recognising what he became, Victor is finally able to admit that he is “the true murderer” (74) and that both Justine and William are only “the first hapless victims of my unhallowed arts” (75).

That more victims are to follow is a natural consequence of Victor’s new, more complex relationship with his Creature who fits the Rankian observation of doubles working against their prototypes (Rank 1971, 33). However, the Creature’s purpose cannot be the destruction of Victor’s loved ones because, as Séllei ([1999] 2015) observes, his true desire is to be united with a female and thus the feminine

principle (96). This, due to the stark separation of the masculine and feminine spheres is truly a desire for self-unification. The Creature who was born of pure masculine intellect correctly perceives that the only way to enter society, in fact the only way to become a whole person, is through a union with a representative of the female aspect. If this purpose is the opposite of Victor's own desire then what Victor truly wants is disunion, the splintering of the self represented by Victor's solitary act of creation. Understanding this reveals the true reason for Victor's self-identification with his Creature. It does not bring their purposes into alignment because Victor cannot grasp the nature of his creation's desires, rather it is another act of self-splintering. By identifying with the Creature, the split off part of himself, Victor is rejecting every other remaining aspect of himself that is reflected back in his friends.

Thus Elizabeth, whose "existence was bound up" (78) in Victor's is correct in her unknowingly uttered assumption that "I never could survive so horrible a misfortune [as Justine innocently being executed]" (74). Justine's death could occur because Victor lacks both the aspect of his self that is capable of affection and the aspect that is willing to unite with the affectionate feminine principle. As a consequence, Victor is also incapable of reconciling with his Creature, who as Victor's double, is thus forced to act on Victor's implicit desire for the splintering of the self even when it is contrary to his own desires. It is only because Victor has "no thought nor sense of joy except as it is mirrored also in your dear countenances" (75) that the Creature is "forced to destroy all that was dear to me" (64).

Levine ([1973] 1996) writes that "the family is an aspect of the self and the self cannot survive bereft of its family" (213) and the rest of the novel illustrates that. Every death in the family is also a death of an aspect of Victor, thus the Creature, a double of theirs. Victor's desire for splintering his self kills them one after the other and with that more and more of what made up his self, what made him Victor Frankenstein dies, as well. The death of his masculine self starts with the birth of the Creature, the embodiment of his ambition, as with that he loses not only his ability to create but also his desire to pursue science evidenced by how after the Creature's birth he "wished to fly from reflection and hated my formal studies" (55). It completes with the death of Alphonse, after the last hope of self-unification dies with Elizabeth. The only thing that remains is the Creature, and Victor becomes just as single-mindedly obsessed with revenge as the Creature is. "Revenge remains—revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food" (158) claims the Creature and Victor, who with nothing else left turns into the Creature's double also becomes "reserved for vengeance" (193).

Victor's various acts of self-doubling left him nothing of himself but even on his deathbed he refuses to see that. He rejects Walton's offers of friendship claiming

that none can replace those who are already gone and with that he refuses to form new social ties that could reunite him with lost aspects of his self and turn him back into Victor Frankenstein. Instead, he yet again seeks another disunion by trying to turn Walton into his surviving double by entrusting him with his tale and vengeance much like Caroline entrusted Elizabeth with the continuation of her life. Unlike his mother, Victor does not succeed and Walton apparently rejects the role of the double.

Masculine Doubles

The criteria for categorising someone as a masculine double is that they have to represent an aspect contained within either Victor or the Creature, as opposed to the feminine doubles who represent an aspect that they lack, and die as a result of that. Surprisingly, there are only two purely masculine doubles to speak of.

That the first of these masculine doubles to die is William Frankenstein, Victor's youngest brother, the innocent child of the novel, is no surprise. To both the Creature and Victor, William is the embodiment of the Ideal-I (Lacan 1977, 2), a concept that in simple terms means that ideal image of the self that the self attempts to achieve throughout its life (Zuern, n.d.).

For the Creature William Frankenstein represents everything he wants to become and wants to have. Before he learns how they are connected the Creature only wants to abduct him to "educate him as my companion and friend" (131) as he believes that as a child William is still unbiased. He is "doomed only when he is identified as a son" (Veeder 1986, 384) by crying "my papa is [...] M. Frankenstein" because it changes the Creature's perception of him into that of someone who "belongs to my enemy" (131). It is within reason to assume that in that moment the Creature believed that he accidentally found Victor's son as the child did not specify which M. Frankenstein he spoke of. Another son, a brother but one who is beautiful, well-loved and who can be confident in the help and protection provided by his father. As that is all the Creature hoped to achieve by seeking Victor, when presented with the impossible distance separating him from his ideal self, he responds violently and destroys the child in whom it manifests.

For Victor, William is that double of his that still lives in that ideal state that he himself has lost. As a child Victor was the "idol" (19) of his parents who were "possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence" and who appeared to him as "not the tyrants to rule our lot [...] but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed" (23). That, however, changes when Victor discovers Agrippa. He takes the volume to his father "bounding with joy" but Alphonse

“carelessly” dismisses it calling it “sad trash” (24). This one small moment drives a wedge between father and son, the dismissal of his latest delight becoming so monumental in Victor’s mind that when recounting his tale to Walton he traces all his miseries back to it. This fundamental shift appears in how he talks about his father later on. Veeder (1986) observes that it is like Victor “blames Alphonse for sending him to Ingolstadt” and he feels “driven from home”. He points out that Victor uses a passive language such as “my parents resolved”, “my father thought”, “my departure was therefore fixed” that implies a lack of agency (377). Alphonse has become a tyrant in his eyes to such a degree that even after his mother’s death Victor can obtain only some respite from him before he has to obey his father’s will and leave home.

William, on the other hand, is the current idol of the family. He is at home under the protection of his doting father and he is clearly the favourite of everyone. In the letter notifying Victor of his death there are no less than six endearments attached to William. Amongst others he is called “my darling child” by Elizabeth, “sweet”, “lovely” and “beloved” (59) by Alphonse and he is also referred to as Caroline’s “youngest darling” (60), managing to win even the dead mother’s favour. Later Alphonse claimed that Justine “appeared to love [him] as if [William] had been her own” (80) and about himself that “no one could love a child more than I loved your brother” (78). Even Henry mourns him and calls him a “dear lovely child” (60). Victor had just as much reason to be jealous of William as the Creature, therefore in order for him to be able to return home, this double of his that has occupied his place had to die.

If William was Victor as a child than Alphonse Frankenstein was Victor as a father. He was also the kind of father the Creature wished for as “in bestowing the gift [of a bride] and in caring for him, behaves to his son as the monster would have Frankenstein behave” (Levine [1973] 1996, 211). His death at the end of the novel symbolises the death of any hope of reconciliation between Victor and his own son, but its occurrence is perhaps more closely tied to another way in which Alphonse doubles Victor.

Victor claims that his father died because “he could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him” (189) and that even before his physical death his eyes already “wandered in vacancy, for they had lost their charm and their delight—his Elizabeth, his more than daughter” (188). This account of events is of course highly questionable. “The unconvincing thing about fictional deaths-from-sorrow is precisely that they can occur whenever the novelist requires” (Veeder 1986, 385). Alphonse dying from sorrow over Elizabeth’s death is no more convincing than it would have been if he died after the loss of his wife or son until the three little words, more than daughter, are taken into account. The only other

relationship in the novel described in terms of being more than something is that of Elizabeth and Victor, as by being Victor's bride Elizabeth is more than just a sister. That it resurfaces in connection with Alphonse and Elizabeth puts Victor's previous claim that she was Alphonse's Elizabeth into a new perspective. It is entirely possible that regarding William, Alphonse, the child's father, and Elizabeth, who was entrusted with being his mother, functioned much like a married couple in Victor's absence. However, because Elizabeth is not truly Caroline but Victor's bride, her letter to Victor shows that the role of the married Victor is projected just as much onto Alphonse as the living Caroline's image is onto Elizabeth. Thus Alphonse becomes the double of the Victor who already united with his feminine double and he can receive his original self back only once Victor takes his image back by marrying Elizabeth and becoming complete in reality. That this might be the case is supported by a very similar idea appearing in one of Shelley's later works, *Mathilda*, where Veeder (1986) observes marriage functioning as a form of unification of father and groom (372). However, since Victor never consummated his marriage, Alphonse's double nature was never dissolved and as an idealised self of Victor's he dies from the overwhelming loss of his feminine double who made him whole as a realization of Victor's death wish after the loss of Henry.

Feminine Doubles

The novel's feminine doubles represent a missing aspect of Victor and the Creature, the affectionate emotional self that they have to unite with in order to become whole and be able to fully integrate into society. The novel's method for such unification is marriage and it can be assumed that any marriage either Victor or the Creature could hope to have would have to follow the example of Alphonse's who "gradually relinquished all his public functions" (19) before finally marrying Caroline.

While this is an acceptable course for the Creature, by returning only after his brother's death, Victor already gave proof of his reluctance to leave behind his masculine spaces such as the university in Ingolstadt and to move into the domestic spaces where Elizabeth is confined. For him this kind of self-unification might be impossible as his solitary act of creation betrayed his hidden desire not only to exclude the feminine principle from his life but to eliminate it. Séllei ([1999] 2015) sees this desire expressed in Victor's nightmare about the turning of the living Elizabeth into his dead mother as well, claiming that it not only foreshadows Elizabeth's death but also the death of all women and the death of the feminine principle itself (96).

The two women in the dream indeed mark the beginning and end of the destruction of the feminine presence in the novel. It starts with Caroline's self-elimination and each following death comes gradually closer to the main threat to the independence of Victor's masculine self, to Elizabeth. After Caroline, the next feminine double to die is Justine, whose case was previously discussed. She, as a love interest so far in the past that Victor had to be reminded of not only her family history, but also of his former affections for her, is still a safe distance away from Elizabeth. The next victim, the unborn female creature, the new Eve is closer as she was conceived to be Elizabeth's double by the Creature.

Victor's thought process before destroying Eve's body reveals that while in many regards he thinks of her as just another Creature he finds her far more dangerous. The two of them might be created "in the same manner" and he would be "likewise ignorant" of her "disposition" but he fears that "she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness" (155). He worries that she will not consent to honour a contract made in her name and even more that they will hate each other. He reasons that the Creature who already "loathed his deformity" might "conceive a greater abhorrence for it [...] in female form" and he reasons that the same might be true for Eve who could turn "to the superior beauty of man" (155).

Eve's potential choice of a mate is the core of Victor's anxiety. The being he is about to bring to life with her superior strength could have the power to forcefully unite herself with a man, perhaps even Victor, and force self-unification on him. But even if that does not come to pass and Eve honours the Creature's promise and is satisfied with her allotted mate, the threat does not disappear. If they manage to live "in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for [their] being" (134) then "one of the first results of those sympathies for which the demon thirsted would be children, a race of devils" (155–56). Together the Creature and Eve as a united whole would be able to create, to fulfil Victor's overtly stated goal of creating "a new species [that] would bless me as its creator and source" (40). By successfully bringing Eve to life, Victor would risk aiding and propagating self-unification.

Tearing Eve's body apart makes Victor's desire to eliminate the feminine explicit and even the language describing it negates the kind of union the Creature is hoping for as it "suggests a violent rape" (Mellor [1988] 1996, 279). Victor seems to be aware of the meaning of his actions as he notes that the Creature watched him "destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness" (156). This further strengthens the connection between Elizabeth and Eve, as for Victor after the loss of Henry, Elizabeth will become the one in whom "all that [Victor] may one day enjoy is centred" (180). Given how strongly Eve doubles Elizabeth, it is no wonder that the Creature delivers the threat of "I shall be with you on

your wedding-night" (158) to Victor in an attempt to repay him the misery he has caused, as it can stand to reason that the Creature viewed the night he appeared to "claim the fulfillment of [Victor's] promise" (156) as his own wedding night.

What is surprising is the identity of the next victim. After such a promise and the gradual escalation of the closeness of the victims, the next anticipated death is of Elizabeth's, the last remaining woman's in Victor's life. However, instead of her the next body to grow cold is that of Henry Clerval's.

This at first seems odd: it is so odd that the usually eloquent Creature who tends to give a complete account of his crimes cannot explain it. When talking to Walton he omits what lead to the murder and starts in the moment of it by asking "think you that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears" (209) which implies an emotional state much different from the "exultation and hellish triumph" (131–32) he felt after William's murder and the emotional void that followed Elizabeth's of which he claimed that "then I was not miserable. I had cast off all feeling". He also makes no mention of the disposal of Henry's body, a curiously odd occurrence, simply stating that "after the murder of Clerval I returned to Switzerland" (210). Because of his inability to formulate the reasons behind his actions this might be the clearest instance of Victor's will moving the Creature since unlike the Creature, Victor had a reason to substitute Henry for Elizabeth.

Regardless of his gender, Henry represents a feminine presence in Victor's life. This is noted by Séllei ([1999] 2015) as well, who observes that through interpreting the meaning behind their literary preferences it can be shown that Henry's ideology is a feminine one (93–94). Henry tends to fall into feminine patterns as well, even experiencing an attempt of confinement by his father just like the female characters do.

One of the markedly feminine activities Henry engages in is nursing. Caroline nurses her father and Elizabeth, Justine nurses Caroline and her mother, a hired woman nurses Victor and Elizabeth wishes she could nurse Victor. The only men who engage in this activity are Henry, who chooses to nurse Victor himself instead of hiring "some mercenary old nurse" (50), and Walton, who operates in a place devoid of feminine presence and who is accused by Victor of trying to be another Clerval.

Henry's role as a nurse gains further meaning from Elizabeth's categorical denial of it in her letter. From Victor's account of his illness given prior to the arrival of her letter it is known that "Henry was my only nurse" (47) because according to Victor "he knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself" which is underlined by Victor believing that "surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life" (48). Victor explains that out of concern for his family, Henry has hidden the full

extent of his illness from them in his letters, but nothing suggests that he kept the fact that he was the one nursing Victor a secret as well. Yet Elizabeth, who cites the “constant letters of dear kind Henry” effectively removes him from the side of Victor’s sickbed by imagining that “the task of attending on your sickbed has devolved on some mercenary old nurse, who could never guess your wishes, nor administer to them with the care and affection of your poor cousin” (50).

Why Elizabeth feels the need to do that can be discerned from examining the topics that were on her mind when she wrote the letter: the possibility of Victor’s return, the children of the family, Victor’s childhood love and above all, marriage. It is implicitly present in her mothering tone when she talks about Ernest and William and it comes to the surface after she shares with Victor that William already had “one or two little wives”. It seems that Elizabeth is surrounded by marriages: a Miss Mansfield is soon to marry an Englishman, Miss Mansfield’s sister recently married a banker and even Victor’s old schoolfellow is on the verge of marrying a widow despite his “several misfortune since the departure of Clerval” (53). Since the second line of the letter it has taken Elizabeth until the second to last paragraph to mention Henry again but now he is not “dear kind Henry” (50) but Clerval who is framed as an obstacle that had to be removed so Victor’s old school fellow could marry. This betrays Elizabeth’s own anxiety that by being by Victor’s sickbed in a way she could not, Henry has taken her place in some intrinsic way and has become a barrier between herself and Victor, jeopardising her marriage prospects.

Elizabeth’s fear of being replaced might not be entirely unfounded. During the year in which Victor stays in Ingolstadt, despite her thinly veiled pleas for his return, Henry takes over the role of softening Victor’s mood. In their shared life it was Elizabeth who subdued his sullen mood “to a semblance of her own” (24) but now it is Henry who called “forth the better feelings of my heart; he again taught me to love the aspect of nature and the cheerful faces of children” (56), the latter of which is something that Elizabeth herself seems to have failed to achieve with her letter.

The nature of Victor and Henry’s relationship is also noted by several critics. Séllei ([1999] 2015) notes how Henry nurses Victor with an almost homoerotic love (78) and Mellor ([1988] 1996) identifies Henry as Victor’s “true soul mate” (280) and points to Victor’s “description of Clerval’s haunting eyes [...] [that] verges on the erotic” (281). Several of Victor’s own statements can be interpreted to carry romantic connotations as well, such as admitting that “Clerval had always been my favourite companion” (56) and that he “loved him with a mixture of affection and reverence that knew no bounds” (55) admiring him to the degree that he cannot help but question if “could aught ill entrench on the noble spirit of Clerval” (24).

Victor also acts with more affection, consideration and protectiveness towards Henry than towards Elizabeth. Despite Elizabeth’s urging to return home, Victor’s

journey has to be delayed by a year due to his “unwillingness to leave Clerval in a strange place before he had acquainted himself with any of its inhabitants” (56) which is an excuse that disregards the fact that Henry had already successfully spent an entire season in Ingolstadt not only without Victor’s help but despite being busy nursing him. Victor rather uncharacteristically also considers the sacrifice Henry made for him because “instead of being spent in study [...] [Henry’s time] has been consumed in my sick room” (48). He tries to make up for the wasted time by introducing Henry to all of his former professors, introductions that he had started his academic career with, seemingly forgetting that Henry “had never sympathised in my tastes for natural science”. He is also easily convinced to follow Henry into his studies of the “Oriental languages”, (55) despite how “the structure of languages [...] possessed no attractions for me” (23), finding “great relief in being the fellow pupil with my friend” (55).

Even more surprising is that Victor’s attentiveness towards Henry’s needs and desires did not diminish even when he started gathering information and materials for Eve’s creation during their time in London. This is remarkable because when he was previously engaged in such work he cut all communication with his family to “procrastinate all that related to my feelings of affection” (41). But while he claims that this time as well “company was irksome” to him “the voice of Henry soothed me, and I could thus cheat myself into a transitory peace” (147). He also took care not to diminish his companion’s enjoyment of their trip going as far as accepting an invitation to Scotland that Henry “eagerly desired to accept” despite how he “abhorred society” (148).

The most telling sign of Victor viewing Henry as his other half, his feminine double, perhaps the only one he could unite with, is the stark contrast between how he assessed the Creature regarding the safety of Henry and Elizabeth. Mellor ([1988] 1996) notes that Victor’s “self-devoted concern for his own suffering” (276) prevents him from perceiving the threat to Elizabeth, who might not have died had Victor stayed with her (280). Regarding Henry, however, Victor does not only consider the possibility that the Creature might “expedite my remissness by murdering my companion” but as a precaution against it he also “would not quit Henry for a moment, but followed him as his shadow to protect him” (151).

The impression that Henry is Victor’s true feminine double and thus Elizabeth’s double is further strengthened by Henry oftentimes appearing in the narrative where one would anticipate Elizabeth. He arrives in Ingolstadt the day after Victor dreams of Elizabeth visiting him; he nurses Victor when Elizabeth wishes to; and after her marriage seems secure, Elizabeth sends Henry with Victor to London in her place; and finally, when the narrative foreshadows the death of Elizabeth, Henry’s body is found.

While in the light of their relationship Henry's death appears to be an appropriate response to Eve's unmaking, the Creature's seeming lack of ability to explain it still makes it seem curious. If he had not recognised Henry's significance to Victor and if Victor treated Henry with such marked difference as if he was the only feminine double with whom a union was possible, then why did Henry have to die? In this instance, the Creature's purposes and Victor's, appeared not to be at odds with each other.

The answer to that question might be in a letter of Henry's that Victor received after destroying Eve's body. Henry wrote that "friends he had formed in London desired his return" (159) and that after his return to London he might depart soon to India and before that he would like Victor "to bestow as much of my society on him as I could spare" (160). Henry was leaving him and Victor wanted to stay by his side for as long as he could. Before Eve's destruction this would have aligned him with the Creature's desire for self-unification but in this situation their roles reversed: Victor desired the company of his feminine double and the Creature sought to deprive him of such a union.

As Victor's spirit let loose, it can be assumed that the Creature shares a special bond with his creator so him being able to sense the change in Victor and the urgency with which he had to act to foil him is not something beyond the scope of the already fantastic premise of the novel. That this might be the case is supported by the sheer oddness of everything surrounding the discovery of Henry's body. The Creature's encounters with his victims are all plausible if not always likely, but this is not the case here.

Victor, who selected the "remotest of the Orkneys as the scene of my labours" (152), receives Henry's letter asking him to meet him at Perth the night after Victor destroyed Eve and the Creature departed. The night after that, on the second night after the Creature departs, he sets out on sea from the northernmost islands of Scotland to dispose of the remains of his unborn creation but a storm breaks out that over the course of the night washes him far away from the Orkneys and by the next and third night he arrives at the northern shores of Ireland, at the same village where Henry's body was dropped off, still warm, on the night of the disposal. This course of events would assume that after the Creature departed from Victor's make-shift laboratory he travelled south to Perth, presumably abducted Henry, an assumption that has to be made on account of his body still being warm when discovered, and carried him over to the northern shores of Ireland to dispose of his recently murdered body almost in anticipation of where Victor would end up landing. Without a profound connection, anticipating Victor's arrival would be impossible, without the ability to anticipate him the action would be meaningless. That the impulse for the act was born inside the Creature and was not merely a

manifested side effect of the Creature's nature as a double and that the ever-forthcoming Creature would not explain something as uncharacteristic and outlandish as this if he could, is almost as unbelievable as his animation itself.

That Henry's death was a result of him functioning as Victor's feminine double and his equivalent of the Creature's, Eve is further supported by how the Creature reflects back on it. "After the murder of Clerval I returned to Switzerland heart-broken and overcome. I pitied Frankenstein; my pity amounted to horror; I abhorred myself" (210). He puts the emphasis not on his own loss, but on Victor's and the magnitude of his creator's loss renders the usually eloquent speech of the Creature fragmented. His next admission, "but when I discovered that he [...] dared to hope for happiness [...] I recollected my threat and resolved that it should be accomplished" (210) implies that the Creature was surprised by Victor's decision to marry Elizabeth. The word 'recollect' implies that the Creature either has discarded the idea of revenge and had to collect it again, or that he had forgotten about his threat and had to call it back to mind. Either interpretation would mean that the Creature decided that his vengeance was already fulfilled with the death of Henry Clerval.

What the Creature could not understand about the nature of Victor's marriage with Elizabeth is that while it serves as a union with the feminine double, Victor seeks to use it as a further means of achieving disunion. From the minute he heard the threat, Victor interpreted it as the fixing of the hour in which "he should die and at once satisfy and extinguish [the Creature's] malice" and had expected a "bitter struggle" (158) in which he would either kill or be killed by the Creature. One of the reasons for his short sighted interpretation is perhaps that after Henry's death he started to think like "I should have died on the coffin of Henry" (171) and became suicidal recounting how he "often endeavoured to put an end to the existence I loathed, and it required unceasing attendance and vigilance to restrain me from committing some dreadful act of violence" (173). This attitude and the expectation of the duel greatly contributed to his hasty marriage to Elizabeth. Victor is sure that "if the monster executed his threat, death was inevitable" and the Creature promised to act on his wedding night.

The lingering feeling that Victor would prefer that outcome and that he had already rejected the possibility of consummating and living his union with Elizabeth remains even despite his insistence that although his survival would be freedom "such as a peasant enjoys when his family have been massacred before his eyes, his cottage burnt, his lands laid waste and he is turned adrift, homeless, penniless and alone, but free" (179), it would be made up for by Elizabeth's presence. It appears that Victor can view Elizabeth only as an "inadequate consolation prize", a "possible possession, and never as an erotic and sexually attractive being" (Hindle 1984,

101) which makes his later claim that marrying Elizabeth would make his life worth living feel more like a performance put on for Walton's sake.

Regardless of what Victor would prefer, or perhaps in part because of what he would prefer, the battle cannot take place. It does not matter whether the attempt at a union with Elizabeth is genuine or not, it is still an attempt at self-unification. Elizabeth, who has been Victor's designated feminine double since their childhood and who at points serves as a double to all other feminine doubles, has to die to fulfill Victor's initial desire for the elimination of all things feminine. Since this desire has been separated off from Victor and given an autonomous form in the Creature, Victor cannot hope to control it and thus cannot redirect it at himself.

Thus Elizabeth's death follows the script written by Victor with the destruction of Eve, it takes place on her wedding-night in front of the horror-struck bridegroom described by a language that Hindle (1984) interprets as suggesting sexual violence (104). Elizabeth's death marks the end of the elimination of the feminine and the loss of all potential for achieving self-unification and thus seals Victor's fate as well.

Survivors

There are some characters who managed to escape the narrative and thus survive, but only one of them could avoid completely playing the role of a double.

Ernest Frankenstein is like a step-child of the narrative: it pays very little mind to him despite the fact that by the end of the novel he is the only surviving Frankenstein left. Even this information needs to be divulged from a passing mention of him when Victor remarks that "my father and Ernest yet lived" when he returns after Elizabeth's murder. After this brief mention Ernest disappears from the pages of the novel completely and his absence becomes the only thing confirming that he did not pass after this point since his name is not in Victor's recitals of his lost loved ones.

The reason for his absence is most likely the reason for his survival. He is mentioned so little because he escaped Victor's regard as he could not see any aspect of himself reflected back in Ernest. That Victor mentions Ernest's birth only in passing probably means that he has never been a rival for their parents' affection like William came to be, and Elizabeth's letter reveals that he could not be Victor's academic rival either since he "never had your powers of application" (51). This means that Ernest was perfectly unsuitable to serve as a double, which means that the Creature never had a reason to harm him.

The de Lacey family, on the other hand, was a prime target for doubling as they themselves, just like Caroline, dabbled in self-doubling. The de Lacey family's first

foray into the doubling process was the result of Felix de Lacey's romantic notions of justice and love. He sought to rescue Safie's father, a Turkish merchant, from execution by helping him flee the country by procuring "passports in the name of his father, sister and himself" (112) with the knowledge of the old de Lacey and Agatha, who did not only consent to this ruse but also aided it by hiding in Paris while claiming to have travelled away. With this transference of identity Agatha and old de Lacey essentially created and let loose their doubles into the world. The consequence of this might not have been fatal, but the entire family was ruined as they were deprived of their fortune and sent into permanent exile.

This is lenient compared to what the other doubles experience in the novel but it can be argued that it is so only because the doubling process was interrupted before it could run its course. Agatha and old de Lacey might have created their doubles but Felix did not, so even the creation stage was not completed, and while the merchant and Safie did assume their new identities during their travels, the discovery of the ruse arguably means that they were not recognised as their new identities and thus as doubles. Since their status as doubles was revoked, all participants had the fortune of walking away alive.

An interesting thing to note about this self-doubling attempt is that while Felix could not possibly know, he unwittingly recreated the Frankenstein family's structure by transferring his father's and sister's identities onto the merchant and Safie. Safie, who during their travels was presented as Felix's sister, was to be married to him, and just like Elizabeth, Victor's more than sister, was to be married to Victor. This marriage was promised by the merchant who in this scenario serves as a minor double for Alphonse Frankenstein, the father who has "always looked forward to [Victor's] marriage with our dear Elizabeth" (140). In this latter case even the trope of competing intentions can be found, as while Alphonse wishes for nothing more than the union of his children, the merchant never intended to see his promise through. This similarity is noteworthy because later the Creature will also project double identities onto the members of the de Lacey family to recreate the structure of the Frankensteins.

When recounting the tale of his stay with the de Laceys the Creature introduces Victor to the family in the same way he got to learn about them. This tale also gives a full account of how he came to perceive the cottagers as doubles for not only the Frankensteins but also for the family he wished to have. At first he names them only as "old man", "young woman" and "young man" (98) and gives a simple description of their daily lives, which due to the complete lack of any indicators of familial relationships could lead to the de Laceys being perceived as a family consisting of an aging father, his child and their spouse. This image gets only marginally clearer when familial addresses are revealed. "The youth and his

companion had each of them several names, but the old man had only one, which was 'father'. The girl was called 'sister' or 'Agatha', and the youth 'Felix', 'brother', or 'son'" (100). Notably, the word daughter is missing from that list. This absence could lead anyone familiar with the Frankensteins to assume that Agatha is, much like Elizabeth, more than sister. That the Creature understood their relationship in these terms and that this is the ideal family structure that he internalised, shows in a minor way as well in how the first word he uses for the would be Eve is "companion" (133), the same thing he calls Agatha.

This is not to say that Safie's arrival does not complicate his view of the family. From the very beginning the Creature fixated on the father-son relationship of Felix and old de Lacey claiming that in his eyes "nothing could exceed in beauty the contrast between these two excellent creatures" (96). The figure of old de Lacey in particular is what he attaches himself to the strongest, seeing his own missing father in him. In his mind the Creature assigns the role of being Victor's double to old de Lacey with all the duties that come with it: introducing him into human society and providing him with a companion. He might see Felix as a potential double for himself as he is the one the Creature wants to become but nevertheless, it is Safie who is the most adequate double for the Creature in this situation as she is the one who serves as a model of social integration. That he proudly boasts that "I improved more rapidly than the Arabian" (106) shows that he is aware of the comparison.

The Creature's perception puts the de Laceys into grave danger as they are not aware that they were assigned the role of the Creature's family and that they are expected to perform as such. This danger manifests itself in the Creature's rage at what he understands as a rejection by his family. What saved the de Laceys from the violent consequences of an inevitable second rejection was that Felix was better equipped to deal with the threat presented by the Creature than Victor. As the Creature recounts, at his first approach, Felix without a moment of hesitation "tore me from his father, [...] he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick" (124) forcing the Creature to run away from the cottage. Then, to keep his family safe, Felix alerts at least some people judging by how some villagers "entered into conversation, using violent gesticulations" (126) near the cottage the next day most likely discussing yesterday's events, and how Felix himself claims that he revealed the "dreadful circumstances" (127) that forced his family out of their home to the cottage's new owner. From this latter conversation it also becomes evident that he relocated his family the very same day the Creature appeared to somewhere he thinks they would be safe.

He is right. The Creature never sees the de Laceys again. With their departure he loses the ability to attempt to reinforce their double identities and in his dejection

the only thing he can do is to symbolically murder them through the burning of their old home.

Those Whose Fate Is Yet Undecided

The end of the novel leaves two characters with ambiguous fates. These two characters neither complete the doubling process nor leave it behind.

Robert Walton seems to finish the novel with the promise of survival. At the point of his life when he met Victor, Levine ([1973] 1996) described him as an “incipient Frankenstein, in his lesser way precisely in Frankenstein’s position”. Their ambition, their scientific drive, their loneliness and their blatant disregard for the safety of others in service of their ambition are all qualities that make them doubles. Levine, however, believes that “though this is not stated, in rejecting the vengeance that consumed Frankenstein” he managed to free himself of their connection “into a better (and perhaps a lesser) life – but one to which he returns in bitterness and dejection” (210). Conversely, Séllei ([1999] 2015) argues that Walton’s return cannot be taken as irrefutable evidence of his rejection of Victor’s thinking and way of life because the choice to turn back was taken out of his hands by the looming threat of mutiny. This forced retreat, however, does not rule out the possibility of another attempt later on (103).

That Walton will make another attempt outside the scope of the narrative can be anticipated from the life that formed him, his resemblance of Victor going far beyond the ways that Levine described. He too grew up under the softening influence of a loving sister, is mostly self-educated regarding his life’s great passion, which he, much like Victor, also discovered in books and which his father also rejected. Just like Victor, he left that passion behind for some time but returned to it later unable to find fulfilment in anything else.

Even so, these similarities by themselves would be survivable if there was something to balance them, to soften Walton’s nature. What is alarming is the lack of prospects in front of a Walton who turns his back on all that made him Victor’s double. Walton is a failed poet who is “twenty-eight and am in reality more illiterate than many schoolboys of fifteen” (5) who outside of his foray into poetry devoted the largest portion of his life to acquiring the skills necessary to lead an expedition to the North Pole. To finance his curiosity he used money he inherited from a cousin and it is not unreasonable to assume that the majority of that inheritance was consumed by the costs of the expedition. More importantly, he appears to be incapable of forming human connections. He claims he has no friends. He cannot connect to the people on his ship finding fault with even the most noble of them.

His family most likely disapproves of his venture as evidenced by his father's "dying injunction [that] had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life" (2). The only one he can write to is his sister whose replies are absent, rendering her presence in the novel almost non-existent and Walton's loneliness more acute. Victor is the only one he can come to think of as a friend and as they are doubles that is almost like making friends with his own mirror image. Returning home would not only mean a lesser life, but a hopeless life full of regrets and loneliness.

Without his masculine ambition and the ability to find someone with whom he can achieve that "interchange of those sympathies necessary for [his] being" (134) there is little left for Walton and it does not bode well for him. That at the end of the novel he falls completely silent after attempting to act as Victor's double by reprimanding the Creature only to fall silent and passively report what he sees and hears already carries implications of the wilful elimination of the self that could foreshadow his impending death.

The other ambiguous character, the Creature, leaves the narrative with the image of a dramatic suicide. "I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace, or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus" (231). The image he paints is so vivid that it is not difficult to forget that it is not real and as Hindle (1994) speculates, it might never be. Hindle points out that the Creature is still very much alive at the end of the novel and that "in a deeply ironic text where nothing is quite what it seems, perhaps this is only how things 'appear'" (119). Séllei ([1999] 2015) expresses a similar sentiment when she notes how the Creature merely disappears in darkness and distance from where he can be called forth at any time (103).

The Creature not following through with his proposed actions would not be unusual of him. He spoke the words in a moment of great grief and passion and in similar situations he has a history of changing his mind rather quickly. When he was chased away from the cottage he privately declared "everlasting war against the whole species" (125–26) yet only a few lines later he "could not help believing that I had been too hasty in my conclusions" (126) then when he learns that the de Lacey's had departed he changes his mind again and burns down the abandoned cottage. The same happens with William. His first idea is to seize him but a moment of great passion changes his intentions and he ends up strangling him to death. He admits to being indecisive at the end of his narrative, telling Victor how he "haunted the spot where these scenes had taken place [William's murder], sometimes wishing to see you, sometimes resolved to quit the world and its miseries forever" (133). He apparently decided on the latter, seeking refuge in the mountains, yet he approached Victor with a request for a companion shortly after Victor entered his

domain. Then, yet again, when he sees his newfound hope destroyed by his father, he runs away with a howl of misery, just like he did after the rejection of the de Lacey's, and just like back when he shortly returns to try to reason with Victor. He threatens Victor with being with him on his wedding night but as Victor accuses, "he had murdered Clerval immediately after the enunciation of his threats" (179) and later he goes back and forth on whether he wants to make good on his original threat. Even when he lures Victor north claiming that at the end of their journey he wishes to "wrestle for our lives" (195) he still mourns and cries over his creator's death. After all these contradictions it would be quite shocking if his suicidal ideation would be more than just a moment of passion, a beautiful rhetoric, one that is perhaps performed for the benefit of his audience, or even only as a symbolic act of suicide much like how the burning of the de Lacey cottage was the symbolic murder of the family.

Thinking about the chances of the Creature's survival, another aspect to consider is his status as a double. If Victor's death was enough to sever the link between the two of them then technically the Creature already exited the doubling process and is a survivor. If Victor's death changed nothing and the Creature is still moved by his will, then he might follow the pattern of working against the wishes of his double and survive simply because Victor would wish for his death. Either way, unlike with Walton, he has many possibilities in front of him. Admittedly, he might truly commit suicide when reaching the north pole or he might choose to live there as harsh environments do not seem to affect him negatively. His encounter with Walton might convince him that winning the sympathy of humans might not be beyond his reach and he might attempt to return to society or, since Victor Frankenstein is dead, as his double he might even decide to become the new Victor Frankenstein and act as his prototype as originally intended. After all, with bringing the Creature to life, Victor manifested his ambition in an autonomous physical form and after his death it could be said that that Creature is literally let loose from the grave, possessing all of Victor's knowledge in the form of a journal containing "the whole detail of that series of disgusting circumstances which produced [the Creature] [...] [including] the minutest description of my odious and loathsome person" (119).

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Motherhood, Sexuality, and the (Fe)Male Gaze in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*

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In my paper, I want to explore the idea that the heroine in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* is a "woman in process" (Kathleen E. B. Manley 1998, 71), focusing on three main aspects connected to this journey of self-discovery. One is the presence of the mother and the mother-daughter relationship. Another is sexuality and how the heroine's attitude towards it changes over the course of the story. Finally, the third is the significance of gazing, proposing that by the end of the story, a female gaze emerges.

Keywords: motherhood, sexuality, gazing, female gaze, Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*

1. Introduction

Fairy tales have been a part of everyday life and growing up for a long time. They serve as a kind of instruction guide for children to learn the appropriate behaviour for a man and a woman. Merja Makinen (1992) describes them as "parables of instruction for children" (4). Since women have been in charge of raising children throughout history, storytelling also fell mostly on their shoulders. It is important to note, however, that these stories, the so-called 'old wives' tales', existed only in oral form for centuries; it was only later that "Charles Perrault, the Grimm Brothers, and other compilers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transposed oral folk tales into fairy tales" (Mary Kaiser 1994, 30). So, a genre of sorts that had an "essentially feminine form" (30) suddenly became a part of masculine culture, that of "the published text" (30). According to Angela Carter (1990), old wives' tales are "worthless stories, untruths, trivial gossip, a derisive label that allots the art of storytelling to women at the exact same time as it takes all value from it" (xi). Taking this into consideration, perhaps it is not surprising that, today, fairy tale retellings are an important part of women's writing and the feminist discourse. First of all, it is a way for women to take back control over these stories that are centuries old and contribute to the "literary 'official' culture" (Kaiser 1994, 30). They also serve to draw attention to the stereotypical representation of women and men in traditional fairy tales, usually depicting heroines as passive, with no

real power or agency, whose greatest attribute is their beauty, as opposed to villainous women—evil stepmothers and old witches—who, in fact, are active and have power, something these stories teach girls to avoid. They also have damaging messages about sexuality, the relationship between women, as well as what a ‘real’ man is supposed to be like. In the words of Jackie Morris (2015), “stories that live for thousands of years, handed from storyteller to audience over time, mouth to ears to heart to head, should change to fit the modern world” (par. 8). Therefore, fairy tale retellings aim to call into question the traditionally accepted values in these stories, usually doing so through a twist (be it a shift in point of view, gender reversal, or the introduction of a new character, for example), ultimately changing the “implied values” (McDermott 2017) of the originals.

Angela Carter’s 1979 short story collection entitled *The Bloody Chamber* is made up of ten rewritten fairy tales. Carter uses several techniques to put a spin on the well-known stories, and they also work on a level of intertextuality. According to Makinen (1992), “Carter’s tales do not simply ‘rewrite’ the old tales [...]—they ‘re-write’ them by playing with and upon (if not preying upon) the earlier misogynistic version” (5). They also touch on subjects that were previously not discussed or that were uniquely discussed from the male point of view. As Seda Arikan (2016) puts it, Carter was one of the female writers who “started to decode the latent meanings in texts narrated by ruling sexist male ideology and to retell some earlier writings from the female point of view” (118). Since many of these tales are male-directed “narrations about female experience” (119), a fresh perspective was very much needed.

In my paper, I want to develop further the idea presented by Kathleen E. B. Manley (1998) that “The Bloody Chamber” story is a tale of a “woman in process” (71). I want to analyse how the mother-daughter relationship’s evolving contributed to the journey of self-discovery the heroine experienced over the course of the story. In addition, another aspect I want to consider is to look at how sexuality is portrayed and how the heroine’s attitude towards it changes as the story progresses. Finally, I want to explore the phenomenon of gazing and the positions of power associated with it. Through analysing the stages of the heroine’s journey, my claim is that by the end of the tale, the heroine has developed a kind of female gaze that allows her to occupy a position of power and break away from the expectations set for women by a patriarchal society.

2. Motherhood and Mother-Daughter Relationships

2.1 *The Introduction of the Mother Figure*

In traditional fairy tales, a seemingly compulsory element is depicting mothers in one of two ways. Either they are the perfect birth mother who tragically dies at the very beginning of the heroine's story, thus becoming an unattainable ideal who provides no comfort or help and is not present for the heroine's journey, or they are the evil stepmother, "greedy, ambitious, and ruthless" (Andrea Dworkin 1974, 38), who is usually the one in the way of the heroine reaching her happily ever after and so needs to be defeated by the end of the story. They are also seen solely as mothers; they exist (or do not exist) in relation to the main character, but there is no mention of their past or any deeper insight into their psyche. However, in Angela Carter's rewritten fairy tale, "The Bloody Chamber", there is a birth mother who is alive. As Robin Ann Sheets (1991) puts it, Carter "restores to prominence a figure who is strikingly, ominously, absent from fairy tales, from pornographic fiction, and from the Freudian theory of female development: the strong, loving, and courageous mother" (645). In this paper, I want to explore the effect the mother's presence has on the story and how her relationship with her daughter influences the heroine's journey of self-discovery.

The most obvious consequence of this change is at the end of the story. In the 'original' Bluebeard story (the one eventually written down by Charles Perrault, which Carter later translated), the brothers come to the rescue of a helpless sister: "He recognised his wife's two brothers; one was a dragoon, the other a musketeer. He fled, to save himself, but the two brothers trapped him before he reached the staircase. They thrust their swords through him and left him for dead. Bluebeard's wife was almost as overcome as her husband and did not have enough strength left to get to her feet and kiss her brothers" (Hallett and Karasek 2009, 226). However, in the rewritten version, Carter not only keeps the mother alive but even has her save the heroine: "I cast one last, desperate glance from the window and, like a miracle, I saw [...] A rider, her black skirts tucked up around her waist so she could ride hard and fast, a crazy, magnificent horsewoman in widow's weeds. [...] Every moment, my mother drew nearer" (Carter 1993, 45). She gives hope to her daughter to hold out a little longer, and then, at the crucial moment, she is the one to cast the bullet that frees the heroine: "Now, without a moment's hesitation, she raised my father's gun, took aim and put a single, irreproachable bullet through my husband's head" (48). The fact that another character introduced by Carter—Jean-Yves, the (blind) piano tuner—is also present in this scene yet is not the one to save the heroine is crucial. In my opinion, it emphasises the outdated nature

of notions such as women's dependence on men to save them and suggests the alternative of women helping each other instead of the usual depiction in which women frequently go behind one another's back, mostly in order to get to a man – Elizabeth Johnston (2005) calls this the “trope of female rivalry” (4). The fact that the heroine grew up without a father but had a strong mother figure as well as a loving nurse in her life also emphasises the importance of women supporting each other and draws attention to traditional fairy tales' frequent attempts to remove supportive female figures from the heroines' lives and portray them growing up without a positive female adult role model. As Dworkin (1974) puts it, in these stories, “the only good woman is a dead woman” (41).

In addition, the mother gets a concise backstory from Carter. She clearly has had a life before becoming a mother, and she is described as a tough, warrior-like woman: “My eagle-featured, indomitable mother; what other student at the Conservatoire could boast that her mother had outfaced a junkful of Chinese pirates, nursed a village through a visitation of the plague, shot a man-eating tiger with her own hand and all before she was as old as I?” (Carter 1993, 6). This description also complies with Sheets's (1991) idea that the mother should be seen and accepted “as an independently existing subject, one who expresses her own desire” (654). In Carter's (1993) story, the heroine can count on her mother: “Assistance. My mother. I ran to the telephone” (34), even if they do have their differences and arguments, just like any regular mother and daughter. Carter adds nuance to the mother character and thus presents a mother-daughter relationship that is not perfect but feels truly lifelike and infinitely relatable for most female readers.

Moreover, the positive influence of the mother is present throughout the text. She is a source of inspiration, a role model of courage for her daughter: “When I thought of courage, I thought of my mother” (Carter 1993, 45). When the heroine discovers the bloody chamber, it is her mother's thought that helps her go on and urges her to look for an out: “My mother's spirit drove me on,” (33). Furthermore, the mother is not only an excellent inspiration but also crucial in the heroine's journey of self-discovery. According to Manley (1998), “the bride becomes aware of and begins to use the material in her character provided by her mother” (75). She recognises the traits she inherited from her strong, independent mother who chose a marriage founded on love instead of money, which helps her shed the passivity that is characteristic of her at the beginning of the story, especially in her relationship with the Marquis. However, this does not happen completely and all at once; she does not instantly get magically confident and infinitely powerful. She does experience setbacks, “[l]ater she does lose courage as she and Jean-Yves await her husband's summons to her execution, relapsing into passivity and despair” (75), which, I believe, challenges the stories in which heroes and heroines become

brave and undefeatable at the snap of a finger and provides readers with a more relatable and accessible model, empowering them as they most likely also struggle with something.

Furthermore, a crucial change to the story is the fact that it was the mother who made it possible for the heroine to learn music and “ultimately provides her with a career” (Manley 1998, 76). This not only allows the girl to make a living on her own at the end of the story, but it is also crucial for her survival. Because there is “a field in which she is more knowledgeable than her husband” (76), she is able to get an ally into the palace in the form of the piano tuner. Of course, the significance of this is revealed only later in the story; however, it all comes down to the mother’s raising of her daughter, “the little music student whose mother had sold all her jewellery, even her wedding ring, to pay the fees at the Conservatoire” (Carter 1993, 14). The heroine’s mother also made sacrifices for her daughter; nevertheless, her aim was to allow her to get an education and learn a skill that would allow her to provide for herself and be independent. She thus instilled values in the heroine that are vastly different from those possessed by women in traditional fairy tales, who, according to Dworkin (1974), “have one scenario of passage [...] First they are objects of malice, then they are objects of romantic adoration. They do nothing to warrant either” (42). In fact, it was the heroine’s talent in music that captured the Marquis’s attention at first, not her beauty: “my little love who brought me the white gift of music” (Carter 1993, 42), emphasising that women have more to offer than their looks and that they can do something to change their fates themselves: “if my music had first ensnared him, then might it not also give me the power to free myself from him?” (35).

2.2 The Mother-Daughter Relationship

The introduction of the mother character clearly affects the outcome of the story. Her relationship with the heroine is crucial when it comes to the journey of self-discovery upon which the heroine embarks. When considering the relationship between mother and daughter, I found Sheets’s (1991) idea about the “Oedipal models of development which privilege separation over dependence” (654) to be an interesting starting point. Despite the fact that “some readers see the protagonist’s reunion with her mother as a regression” (654), I would argue that the relationship has been through a lot over the course of the story, and it is not the same mother-daughter relationship as it was in the beginning. In the beginning, mother and daughter disagree, among other things, about what the right reasons for marrying someone are: “Are you sure you love him? [...] She sighed” (Carter 1993,

6). By the end, it turns out the mother was right. However, she does not treat her daughter in a way that makes her feel inferior or like someone who must suffer for her mistakes. At the end of the story, they live on as equal partners who each retain their subjectivity. The heroine still has her voice and her independence: “I felt I had a right to retain sufficient funds to start a little music school here, on the outskirts of Paris, and we do well enough. Sometimes we can even afford to go to the Opéra” (48). The use of pronouns in this sentence reveals a lot about the evolution of their relationship. The daughter still makes her own decisions; it is her inheritance, and the mother does not take over control because of her daughter’s past mistakes or the fact that she moved back in with her. However, they do share the rewards, and everybody brings something to the relationship. From a traditional mother-daughter relationship where there is typically some form of hierarchy, their relationship, in my view, transforms into a true partnership by the end of the story.

On the other hand, the fact that the mother had doubts about her daughter’s marriage yet still took a step back and allowed her to follow her own path, suggests that she treated her as an equal at the beginning as well, and saw her as someone capable of rational decisions on her own – or at least allowed her to make her own mistakes. This signals that the daughter needed to grow and change in order for them to reach a partnership built on equality, though the mother’s development is also worth mentioning. Although the daughter is proud of her mother’s defiance and her decision to marry for love, she also seems determined – perhaps unconsciously assuming the same defiance as her mother had – to do the exact opposite and marry for money: “‘Are you sure you love him?’ ‘I’m sure I want to marry him,’ I said. And would say no more. She sighed, as if it was with reluctance that she might at last banish the spectre of poverty from its habitual place at our meagre table” (Carter 1993, 7). She is also very curious; in the words of Manley (1998), “she is not only curious about the locked room, but she is also curious about marriage [...] and about sex” (76), and, unlike in Perrault’s version, where curiosity is presented as “the most fleeting of pleasures; the moment it is satisfied, it ceases to exist and it always proves very, very expensive” (Hallett and Karasek 2009, 226), here, “her curiosity actually helps her in her process toward womanhood” (Manley 76). The mother seems to understand her daughter’s need to find her own path instead of following in her mother’s footsteps. She treats her as an equal, recognising her subjectivity and that she is completely capable and should be allowed to make her own decisions, even if they turn out to be mistakes in the end, as that is part of the learning curve. Carter thus makes a powerful statement against traditional fairy tales where parents (mostly fathers) often treat their children as commodities and always seem to know better, hence providing an alternative – that the parents have to learn to let go just as the children have to learn to take responsibility for their

decisions, only to come out on the other side as more mature, more understanding and equal partners.

As I mentioned before, both the mother and the daughter go on a journey of self-discovery in the story. The heroine's journey, compared to the original, is presented as "a young woman's initiatory quest for knowledge rather than as the story of an overly curious girl who makes a disastrous marriage" (Cheryl Renfroe 1998, 82), evoking "strong associations with the biblical story of the temptation of Eve" (82). Carter thus gives a different interpretation not only to Perrault's story but also to the age-old story of the original sin that is usually blamed entirely on Eve, depicting both as a "necessary and bold initiation into self- and worldly knowledge rather than as an act of foolish disobedience" (83). Even though the mother's journey is less pronounced and happens more in the background, I would argue it is just as important for the feminist discourse since it describes the experiences of a mother learning how to let go of her child, how to transform her 'mother-role' and rediscover herself as a woman whose daughter has grown up and moved away and therefore does not need full-time care anymore. Considering birth mothers rarely make it to this point in traditional fairy tales—Dworkin (1974) describes Cinderella's birth mother, for example, as "good, pious, passive, and soon dead" (38)—Carter's inclusion of the mother's experience and the different stages connected to it is especially significant:

I tenderly imagined how, at this very moment, my mother would be moving slowly about the narrow bedroom I had left behind for ever, folding up and putting away all my little relics, the tumbled garments I would not need any more, the scores for which there had been no room in my trunks, the concert programmes I'd abandoned; she would linger over this torn ribbon and that faded photograph with all the half-joyous, half-sorrowful emotions of a woman on her daughter's wedding day. (Carter 1993, 1)

This is a topic rarely discussed¹ in fairy tales, partly due to the fact that they usually end with marriage, not start with it. Here, Carter describes beautifully the mixed feelings a mother experiences when she witnesses her daughter getting married. She has to learn to balance her worrying with her wish for her daughter to find happiness on her own. The heroine senses and shares these conflicted

¹ Just four years after *The Bloody Chamber* was published, Carol Ann Duffy won the National Poetry Society Competition with her poem entitled "Whoever She Was", describing the experiences of a mother as her children are growing up. Despite Duffy winning the prize, her poem, exploring a similar theme as Carter presents, was not received very positively: "This is quite an effective evocation of some eerie moments in the relation between motherhood and childhood, but much of the detail is predictable, and the language is not very interesting, so that the poem doesn't improve with repeated readings." ("Woman Wins", 1984) To me, this is clear proof of how underappreciated a mother's journey is and how innovative and crucial Carter's handling of the matter is.

feelings: “And, in the midst of my bridal triumph, I felt a pang of loss as if, when he put the gold band on my finger, I had, in some way, ceased to be her child in becoming his wife” (Carter 1993, 1). In my opinion, this describes a strong bond between mother and daughter who are clearly in tune with each other (so, it is no surprise that the mother senses there might be something wrong towards the end of the story and goes to rescue her daughter). Instead of propagating the idea of constant rivalry between mother and daughter, which, featured in her non-fiction book entitled *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History*, Carter describes by saying “[i]n this enforced and involuntary relationship, how can mother and child be anything but enemies?” (Carter 1979, 1865), in *The Bloody Chamber*, she emphasises the importance of supportive, equal relationships between women, going against the expectations set by a patriarchal society. This also defies Dworkin’s (1974) claim that there are only “two definitions of woman” in fairy tales: “There is the good woman. She is a victim. There is the bad woman. She must be destroyed. The good woman must be possessed. The bad woman must be killed, or punished. Both must be nullified.” (48), presenting characters in the rewritten story who are much more relatable. Neither woman is totally good nor totally bad, they both have a journey ahead of them; however, they work together and rely on each other, so neither of them is destroyed—in fact, it is the strong, powerful man who ends up being punished and ‘nullified.’ Ergo, supportive relationships between women, especially among mothers and daughters, play a crucial part in women’s journey of self-discovery. Mother and daughter each play a part in the other’s personal development, allowing one another to change, grow, and turn into life-like characters who have agency over their decisions.

3. The Portrayal of Sexuality

The second aspect to consider when analysing the heroine’s journey of self-discovery is how her relationship towards sexuality changes as the story progresses. Arikan (2016), in her essay entitled “Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber*: A Feminist Stylistic Approach”, discusses the importance of a female writer taking back control over the discourse about sexuality, especially female sexuality, that is inherent in traditional fairy tales. Even though these messages are usually disguised in the original versions, conveyed through metaphors or word associations, considering fairy tales “have the significant effect to reflect the background of a society, and also to contribute to the creation of a collective unconscious” (Arikan 2016, 118), meaning they and the values communicated through them are “known and even internalized by many people” (118), Carter’s refreshing approach is very much

needed to provide a different point of view. In this paper, my focus will be on how she uses language to question ideas about sexuality that our patriarchal society has accepted as the norm, as well as how female and male sexuality are presented in the story.

3.1 Language Use

First of all, as Arikan (2016) points out, “the power of language and discourse, as many intellectuals have foreseen, is the main weapon in Carter’s stories” (118). In fact, Carter (1983) herself expressed the significance of language use: “Yet this, of course, is why it is so enormously important for women to write fiction as women—it is part of the slow process of decolonising our language and our basic habits of thought [...] to say things for which no language previously existed” (75). In *The Bloody Chamber*, sex is discussed and described openly and, according to Makinen (1992), “Carter’s texts have always engaged with eroticism” (9). Carter tackles crucial issues in part through the language she uses, thus communicating a message wildly different from what we are used to from the traditional stories. Carter gives the heroine the opportunity to tell her own story, from a first-person narrative, making sure that the “female voice *exercises power* in these stories” (Arikan 2016, 119). It is worth comparing the situation she describes with the words and phrases she uses. In much of the story, the heroine is in a subordinated position; she succumbs to her older, wealthy, and experienced husband’s wishes, whether it is about what she wears: “He made me put on my choker” (Carter 1993, 18), or about her first sexual experience: “I had heard him shriek and blaspheme at the orgasm; I had bled [...] I had been infinitely dishevelled by the loss of my virginity” (19). According to Kaiser (1994), “[w]atching herself being disrobed by him, the bride perceives herself as a pornographic object” (33). She describes this scene as one where “the bride has been reduced to an unaccommodated body, while Bluebeard retains all the accoutrements of power, wealth and taste” (33). Kaiser’s description suggests that the heroine is entirely passive in this scene and just fulfils the role prescribed to her by centuries of female passivity held up as an example to be followed. However, I disagree with the reduced role she presents and claim that, in fact, the heroine is aware of her objectification, the type of role her husband assigns to her and, through the language she uses, she disempowers the ideals of male activity and female passivity, ultimately “raising questions about the cultural constructions of femininity” (Makinen 1992, 6). The following passage, where the heroine compares the image of herself and her husband to a piece by Rops, is very indicative of this: “the child with her sticklike limbs, naked but for her button

boots, her gloves, shielding her face with her hand as though her face were the last repository of her modesty; and the old, monocled lecher who examined her, limb by limb. He in his London tailoring; she, bare as a lamb chop. Most pornographic of all confrontations” (Carter 1993, 16). In this passage, the heroine is aware of how she herself, and women in general, are objectified. By comparing the role she fills in this scene to that of a “lamb chop”, she takes away some of the power of the objectification and points out the absurdity of her husband seeing her as a piece of meat and finding pleasure in it. She describes the act as if she were impartial, a simple bystander, and certainly not like someone who is consumed by passion: “He stripped me, gourmand that he was, as if he were stripping the leaves off an artichoke—but do not imagine much finesse about it; this artichoke was no particular treat for the diner nor was he yet in any greedy haste.” (Carter 1993, 15). The word use and the distancing evident in this passage can be explained by Carter’s comments on the topic of pornography, saying how the plot is “always the same [...] There is no room here for tension or the unexpected” (Carter 1979, 208). Thus, the roles each person fills are already assigned. The woman endures what the man inflicts, there is simply no questioning these pre-determined roles. However, in my opinion, an effective tool Carter employs to call attention to the existing, harmful power-relations at play between men and women that society considers to be the norm, showcasing how deeply this idea can be internalised by women, is her language use and her powerful metaphors. It reinforces the idea that knowledge is power and suggests that once the women are aware of what is happening and how they are objectified, they can free themselves of such cultural constraints.

While the previous example was more about how women are seen, I believe the different objects and adjectives associated with the Marquis reveal a great deal about the nuances that Carter adds to the original story. As Arikan (2016) points out, traditionally, “flowers are related to females with some connotations such as naivety, pureness and fragility” (124). By associating the scent of lilies to the Marquis, Carter flips this metaphor on its head. The lilies also signify something dangerous and potentially harmful: “The lilies I always associate with him; that are white. And stain you” (Carter 1993, 16). Unlike the purity that flowers used to signify, the lilies are a source of danger here that can even cause ruin. She does acknowledge how “it must seem a curious analogy, a man with a flower, but sometimes he seemed to me like a lily” (8), pointing to the heroine’s awareness of traditionally accepted metaphors and implied gender roles. However, she cannot help but compare her reality to the values she, too, inherited from stories and cultural conditioning, recognising that perhaps it is not as black-and-white after all. She also describes the Marquis as cat-like, “though he was a big man, he moved as softly as if all his shoes had soles of velvet, as if his footfall turned the carpet into snow”

(7). His 'manly' size is put opposite his ability to move about quietly and delicately. It seems to me that these instances hint at a bit of androgyny, a mixing up of traditional gender associations. In a way, this aligns with Arikan's (2016) claim that Carter "decodes the gender roles that are strongly established in the reader's unconscious from the beginning of childhood by fairy tales, the book appears as a resistance against them" (120). My contention is that the language used by Carter clearly establishes a type of resistance, both when it comes to the assigned roles regarding sex and male as well as female sexuality.

3.2 Attitude Towards Female Sexuality

Carter also addresses the topic of female sexuality. Throughout history, female sexuality has always been seen as something demonic, something not to be discussed. Very early, in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, women and female sexuality were associated with demons and the devil. An influential church father, Tertullian, claimed that women are "the Devil's gateway. *You* are the unsealer of that forbidden tree" (qtd. in Miles 2008, 28). Later, in the Victorian period, the 'angel in the house' ideal was widespread, and women had to be seen and behave as saint-like, chaste women. In the words of John Ruskin (1865), for example, women were described as "enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise" (149). It was around the 1970s, at the time of the Second Wave of Feminism which, in part, focused on sexual liberation and "redefining women's sexuality" (Anne Enke 2003, 637), that these topics started to come to the forefront. Although some things have changed since the 1970s, I believe Carter's portrayal of female sexuality has many layers and is relevant even today, decades later.

First of all, she does not deny that the heroine is interested in experiencing "white-hot passion" (Carter 1993, 10) and that she is curious about sex: "I lay in bed alone. And I longed for him" (24). At the same time, she also manages to "break the ideological link between sex and romance" (Sheets 1991, 641). We learn early on that the heroine does not love the Marquis, yet she still experiences physical attraction: "my heightened, excited senses told me he was awake and gazing at me" (Carter 1993, 12). Granting women the opportunity to embrace their sexuality, and breaking away from the double standard that still exists between men and women when it comes to sex and desire is crucial in itself; however, in my opinion, there is another, perhaps more important aspect of this that one has to consider: how the heroine herself reacts to her feelings. The way I see it, she seems to have rather conflicted emotions about how her body reacts. This is a reoccurring theme throughout the text: "I was aghast to feel myself stirring" (16);

“I longed for him. And he disgusted me” (24); “And, in the red firelight, I blushed again, unnoticed, to think he might have chosen me because, in my innocence, he sensed a rare talent for corruption” (22). I believe that these statements are important to consider as they draw attention to how deeply-rooted the patriarchal ideas of female chastity and passivity are, and how difficult it is to overcome women’s “own sense of their ‘lack’” (Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, Emily Abd Rahman and Zainor Izat Zainal 2010, 28), “especially when all we have to inscribe our own sexual identities from are cultural constructions” (Makinen 1992, 13). In my opinion, the appearance of pornography in the text also proves this point. The heroine finds a book of the Marquis’s that contains “nasty pictures” (Carter 1993, 18). A girl is displayed in a subordinate position to a man, reinforcing the typical roles that men and women traditionally assume in a sexual relationship and that are featured in pornography. In Carter’s (1979) words, “She is most immediately and dramatically a woman when she lies beneath a man, and her submission is the apex of his malehood” (135). The girl has “tears hanging on her cheeks like stuck pearls” (Carter 1993, 17), and the heroine’s reaction to this is “painful, furious bewilderment” (18), while the husband simply laughs at it. This suggests to me that the picture reinforces what the heroine has already known and likely even feared—after all, she was “innocent but not naïve” (17)—, that female sexuality equates “female masochism”, which is a myth “based on a conscious willingness and desire to be dominated” (Wan Yahya, Rahman and Zainal 2010, 35). According to Wan Yahya, Rahman, and Zainal (2010), this myth is the basis that the porn industry is built on and that leads to the spreading of images about intimacy that depict a dominant man and a woman who submits to him, who has no choice but to enjoy being dominated. The heroine’s first sexual experience is no other: “A dozen husbands impaled a dozen brides” (Carter 1993, 18), which left the heroine “infinitely dishevelled by the loss of my virginity” (19). Despite her expectations that “her sexual initiation will bring her from childhood to womanhood, from innocence to full sexuality” (Renfroe 1998, 84), what she experiences is more what Makinen (1992) describes as “the damage done by the old inscriptions of femininity as passive” (5). After all, the language use is important here again; “impale” is not a word that implies consent or mutual pleasure. It also demonstrates Carter’s (1979) description of how “[w]omen do not normally fuck in the active sense. They are fucked in the passive tense and hence automatically fucked-up, done over, undone” (424). However, this is all part of the heroine’s process of becoming more mature and defiant against the expectations of society: “the girl’s changing attitude toward wealth, sexuality, and marriage then, while signalling progress in her own personal value system and a return to many of her mother’s ideals is, at the same time, a reversal of the expectations held for her by society at large” (Renfroe 1998,

86). Ergo, over the course of her journey of self-discovery, the heroine experiences her sexuality first according to the expectations held up to women, by learning to enjoy her objectification, but later, as she evolves as a person, she develops tools to deviate from this and take back control over her own body and what happens to it.

3.3 Attitude Towards Male Sexuality

Besides tackling the controversial matter of female sexuality, Carter also calls attention to the problems of masculinity and male sexuality widely accepted by society. One of the most significant ways Carter does this is the introduction of the character of Jean-Yves, the poor, blind piano tuner. He can in no way be considered a traditional male hero who is normally described as “handsome and heroic [...] What matters is that he is both powerful and good [...] What matters is that he matters, acts, succeeds” (Dworkin 1974, 43)—he is described as a gentle, shy boy: “‘I can be of some comfort to you,’ the boy said. ‘Though not much use.’” (Carter 1993, 44), and he is not the one to save the heroine in the end, at least not entirely on his own. This in itself is a significant point to remember. The introduction of a character so different from what is typical in traditional fairy tales and so different from the typical idea we have of what an ‘ideal’ man is like points to Carter’s intention to change and add nuance to the portrayal of men in folktales that can be just as harmful in setting up unreasonable expectations as the traditional perceptions of women are. By traditional standards, the piano tuner cannot be considered ideal at all. However, he turns out to be a much more suitable and preferable partner than the rich, powerful, and ‘manly’ Marquis who possesses typically desirable male qualities. So, it is of great importance that the person who ends up being the life partner of the heroine, Jean-Yves, “has neither the power of the Marquis nor the glamor of a fairy tale prince” (Sheets 1991, 654).

The fact that the piano tuner is blind emphasises this diversion from traditional male ideals. Because he does not have the ability to watch her, the power imbalance is not present in their eventual relationship. As Sheets (1991) points out, “in a culture that eroticizes domination, it is not surprising that some readers are reluctant to accept Jean-Yves as the hero. His relationship with the narrator does not appear to have a sexual dimension” (654). It is true that the way we are socialised, sex is a crucial part of a romantic relationship, and if that part is lacking, it is seen as unusual and inherently dysfunctional. These ideas are somewhat supported by the way the heroine describes Jean-Yves; there is nothing sexual in it, no hint of (physical) attraction: “Though they were blind, his eyes were singularly sweet” (Carter 1993, 36). According to Patricia Duncker (1984), “blindness, as symbolic

castration, may signal the end of male sexual aggression” (11). This, then, suggests that the alternative to a dominating, powerful husband is a sweet, harmless hero who ultimately lacks any sexuality. Taking into consideration the traditional way we view sexuality, this may be true. However, as Sheets (1991) puts it, “perhaps if Carter were to continue the story, she would develop a male sexuality centered on smell, touch and sound; indeed, this is already implicit in Jean-Yves’s extreme sensitivity to music” (655). So, it is not that their relationship lacks a sexual dimension but rather that the type of sensuality that characterises their relationship is so foreign in today’s culture that we as readers find it hard to recognise it. However, that does not mean that it is a bad thing; in fact, it could be seen as the way forward. I agree with Sheets’s views but would add that, besides drawing attention to the fact that there is not only one way of being intimate in a relationship, it is also significant that Jean-Yves and the heroine started the relationship as friends. They were cordial towards each other, then became allies in the face of danger. Then, gradually, they became life partners: “He seemed to know that I had smiled” (Carter 1993, 25). This suggests that Carter saw friendship as a better basis for a relationship than sexual attraction. Their relationship, this way, is founded on trust, mutual respect, and equality; qualities that should, and are here, valued more than physical attraction. According to Makinen (1992), this suggests that, for Carter, “successful sexual transactions are founded on an equality and the transforming powers of recognizing the reciprocal claims of the other” (9). Whether it is the non-traditional hero that led to here or someone or something else, the end result is the same: Jean-Yves and the heroine have a much healthier relationship, whether the reader completely understands all aspects of this relationship or not. Therefore, it can be said that Carter challenges the reader’s perception of what is traditionally considered to be male and female sexuality, and, with the help of language use and metaphors, she goes against such cultural constructions, offering a possible alternative instead.

4. The Significance of Gazing

4.1 Traditional Direction of the Gaze

The third aspect important for the heroine’s journey of self-discovery is gazing. An objectifying male gaze is ever-present throughout the story. My argument is that, at the culmination of the heroine’s journey presented in the story, she learns to ‘look back’, developing a female gaze that grants her agency and is crucial for the

outcome of the story. Laura Mulvey (1999) wrote extensively about visual pleasure and the male gaze in her essay entitled “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”, claiming that “looking itself is a source of pleasure” (835), and it is “essentially active” (835). Traditionally, it is a man who is the gazer, the one who looks, and a woman is the one being looked at. Moreover, gazing usually comes with a sense of power and is often connected to sex and desire. The male as the onlooker is an active participant while the woman is seen as an object, “simultaneously looked at and displayed” (837) as a source of pleasure for the man. This type of gazing is very much present in *The Bloody Chamber*: “his eyes, dark and motionless as those eyes the ancient Egyptians painted upon their sarcophagi, fixed upon me. I felt a certain tension in the pit of my stomach, to be so watched, in such silence” (Carter 1993, 12).

The way I see it, at the beginning of their courtship, the act of looking was already used as a tool to exert power over the heroine: “He had loved to surprise me in my abstracted solitude at the piano. He would tell them not to announce him, then soundlessly open the door and softly creep up behind me [...] and clasp his hands over my eyes as I was lost in a Debussy prelude” (Carter 1993, 8). The husband seems to like being the only one with the power of the gaze. He actively seeks out situations where the heroine is preoccupied and his sudden appearance causes her shock. However, a fascinating twist on this is the fact that the heroine finds a way to balance out this unequal power setup with the use of additional sensory organs: “But that perfume of spiced leather always betrayed him” (8). By being able to prepare for his appearance with an acute sense of smell, she lessens the imbalance of power. She still feels obligated, though, to hide this shift in power: “after my first shock, I was forced always to mimic surprise, so that he would not be disappointed” (8). I find this aspect of the relationship fascinating. The heroine is forced, partly by her internalised patriarchal values and partly by the expectations of her suitor, to keep up the illusion of a more pronounced power imbalance than exists in reality, just to keep the Marquis happy. The suitor thus has a lesser image of the girl, and the girl chooses to keep him in the dark. Even though she claims it is for his benefit, keeping up the façade of being less skilled and smart than she really is benefits her in the long run. It also points to a trend centuries-old where the woman is taught “to accept those constraints as “natural,” inevitable—as “given” (Kaplan 1983, 36), and to learn not to show her real talents if they are greater than the man’s so as not to harm his image of himself.

As the story progresses and we get closer to the wedding night, descriptions of the husband having a possessive gaze become increasingly present: “I saw him watching me in the gilded mirrors with the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horseflesh” (Carter 1993, 11). She herself feels as though she was now

becoming his possession, and she succumbs to his needs: “And so my purchaser unwrapped his bargain” (16). These descriptions show her passivity: “[a]t once he closed my legs like a book [...] Not yet. Later” (16), which calls to mind Carter’s (1979) characterisation of the pre-determined roles men and women take on in sex: “woman has no other function but to exist, waiting. The male is positive, an exclamation mark. Woman is negative. Between her legs lies nothing but zero, the sign for nothing, that only becomes something when the male principle fills it with meaning” (87). The basis for aligning herself with the idea of such a strong power imbalance between husband and wife may be the traditional male-female societal roles. Moreover, the difference between their age, experience, and wealth also forces her into a submissive role: “He was older than I. He was much older than I” (Carter 1993, 8); “how it must have been my innocence that captivated him” (20). This is reinforced by the roles inherent in the traditional direction of gazing: “men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession” (Kaplan 1983, 42). Nevertheless, the fact that it is the heroine’s words, her description we read, suggests that she is aware of how she is perceived, and she seems to have a deep understanding of the reasons behind it. Since there is power in knowledge, I would argue that the fact that we read these objectifying descriptions from a female point of view serves to lessen their effect and the power position that these sentences are supposed to describe. Thus, by using the words and expressions we associate with how men think of and see women, the heroine takes away some of that power and attempts to create an equilibrium.

4.2 The Experience of Being Looked At

Apart from portraying the traditional direction of the gaze, Carter also plays on Mulvey’s (1999) idea that “there is pleasure in being looked at” (835). The heroine is aware of all the eyes she attracts when appearing with her powerful fiancé: “Yes. I did. On his arm, all eyes were upon me. The whispering crowd in the foyer parted like the Red Sea to let us through” (Carter 1993, 10). She seems to enjoy the jealous gazes and the power that her newly acquired position comes with, evidenced by the special position she is now in when entering a crowd. This way, it seems like the power is not with the onlooker for once but rather with the one(s) being looked at. The one described above is a special situation, though. In this scene, it is the couple versus the crowd in awe. The distribution of power is rather different when the main characters are alone. Throughout the text, the reader gets to know hardly anything about the actual conversations that take place between the heroine and her husband. The story is told through the heroine’s point of view and, the

way I see it, she chooses to focus on her feelings and perceptions and describe their relationship thus. So, since a recurring theme of their interactions is him looking at her, without saying anything, gazing receives an additional significance. "I felt a certain tension in the pit of my stomach, to be so watched, in such silence" (12), describes the heroine one of their interactions of tension-filled silence. However, this does not seem to make her recoil. In fact, the idea that she managed to capture his powerful gaze seems to empower her: "I swear to you, I had never been vain until I met him" (12). However, at this point, this pleasure and empowerment, to some extent, come from Kaplan's (1983) idea that "[h]er sexual pleasure in this position can thus be constructed only around her own objectification [...] given the male structuring around sadism, the girl may adopt a corresponding masochism" (38). Kaplan thus suggests that the heroine's behaviour so far complies with Mulvey's initial idea that women had learned to get pleasure out of their own objectification. While both Kaplan and Mulvey associate passivity with this, I would argue that, eventually, the heroine is able to use her objectification for her own good, gaining agency and breaking out of the passive role assigned to her.

Another interesting aspect of the gazing described in the tale is that, as the story progresses, the heroine starts to appropriate her husband's gaze more and more. The first time she sees what he sees is a memorable experience for her:

I'd never seen, or else had never acknowledged, that regard of his before, the sheer carnal avarice of it; and it was strangely magnified by the monocle lodged in his left eye. When I saw him look at me with lust, I dropped my eyes but, in glancing away from him, I caught sight of myself in the mirror. And I saw myself, suddenly, as he saw me, [...] And, for the first time in my innocent and confined life, I sensed in myself a potentiality for corruption that took my breath away. (Carter 1993, 11)

Following this experience, however, instances where the heroine appropriates the male gaze—and gets pleasure from it—become more and more frequent: "And, as at the opera, when I had first seen my flesh in his eyes, I was aghast to feel myself stirring" (16). His gaze and what she presumes to see in his eyes allow her to get to know a new side of herself, no matter how scary what she thus finds is: "No. I was not afraid of him; but of myself. I seemed reborn in his unreflective eyes, reborn in unfamiliar shapes" (22). She seems cautious and reluctant to really get to know this side of herself. However, this is where mirrors and their significance come into the picture. Whenever she is afraid to look or is not supposed to see what (who) is behind her, there are usually mirrors to step in instead of her actual eyes: "I could not meet his eye and turned my head away, out of pride, out of shyness, and watched a dozen husbands approach me in a dozen mirrors and slowly, methodically, teasingly, unfasten the buttons of my jacket and slip it from my shoulders" (15). Even

though the mirrors are there in the master bedroom for the Marquis to see his prey better, they also turn out to serve the heroine in her learning about the male gaze.

Although Kaplan (1983) claims that “men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession which is lacking in the female gaze. Women receive and return a gaze, but cannot act upon it” (42), meaning the heroine is not capable of achieving anything with her gaze, I would argue that, with the help of the mirrors, there is one instance where she almost succeeds. At the crucial point of the story, when the heroine’s visit to the bloody chamber has not yet been revealed to the Marquis, she attempts to delay the moment of truth by trying to seduce her husband: “I forced myself to be seductive. I saw myself, pale, pliant as a plant that begs to be trampled underfoot, a dozen vulnerable, appealing girls reflected in as many mirrors, and I saw how he almost failed to resist me. If he had come to me in bed, I would have strangled him, then” (Carter 1993, 41). I believe that, in this scene, the heroine grabs hold of the power by creating an image, with the help of the many mirrors, that appeals to her husband’s male gaze. What she displays—a weak, powerless girl—is in stark contrast with what she thinks—that she is ready to kill him, should she get the chance—, suggesting how aware she is of the situation. As Carter put it, “great women [...] once they have tasted power, once they know how to use their sexuality as an instrument of aggression, they use it to extract vengeance [...] These women murder” (Carter 1979, 424). The heroine is clearly manipulating the male gaze here, therefore I disagree with Kaplan’s (1983) notion that “women are left merely with the limited control they can wield through their sexuality” (44). True, the heroine is attempting to take full advantage of the power provided by her sexuality, but my contention is that she actually succeeds in transgressing these limitations and occupies a position similar to that of the powerful male gaze’s, not least thanks to the additional sensory organs and the countless mirrors available to her to utilise. In the words of Anna Pasolini (2016), “self-awareness and action stem from a mirroring process where a transformation in the way of looking underpins the reconfiguration of gender relationships. Thus the other [...] is no longer perceived as ‘object’, and both characters are allowed to become subjects of the gaze” (52). Ergo, the heroine is no longer constrained by the passivity forced upon her both by her husband and wider society, but she is able to secure a powerful position with the help of her female gaze. Accompanied by mirrors and additional sensory organs, she is able to ‘look back’.

4.3 *A Twist on the Male Gaze*

The fact that Jean-Yves is blind is a clear twist on the male gaze. As the eventual partner of the heroine, the fact that he does not possess the powerful male gaze is significant in terms of the future of their relationship. Unlike her relationship with the Marquis, her new relationship seems to lack the obvious power imbalance and anxiety-inducing subordination. Instead, the heroine is “busily engaged in setting up house with a piano-tuner” (Carter 1993, 49), the word choice indicating that the two are on equal grounds.

Moreover, the twist is especially interesting in relation to the permanent mark branding the heroine’s forehead: “when I involuntarily glanced at myself in the mirror, I saw the heart-shaped stain had transferred itself to my forehead, to the space between the eyebrows, like the caste mark of a brahmin woman” (Carter 1993, 42). The heroine attempts to remove the stain; however, she soon gives up and seems to accept it as a punishment she deserves for her behaviour: “but this red mark would not go away, either, no matter what I did, and I knew I should wear it until I died” (44). Even at the end of the story, when some time has passed since the events at the castle occurred, she still feels shame for having been marked. The last sentence raises interesting questions about the source and motivation behind this sense of shame: “No paint nor powder, no matter how thick or white, can mask that red mark on my forehead; I am glad he cannot see it—not for fear of his revulsion, since I know he sees me clearly with his heart—but, because it spares my shame” (49). Her newfound partner cannot see the mark, perhaps he is not even aware that it is still there. Yet the heroine is forever aware of it and regards it as a reminder of her past mistakes. On the one hand, I believe the fact that her partner cannot see the mark suggests that she is not influenced by the male gaze and, by extension, by the values of a patriarchal society. Her sense of shame does not come from the fact that he constantly reminds her of it or that she sees it reflected in his eyes. It is her own shame; however, one has to wonder where exactly this determination of having made a mistake and having to then suffer for it comes from. According to Sheets (1991), “the narrator feels ashamed of the materialism that drove her to marry the Marquis and of her complicity in sadomasochism” (650). Sheets adds that the heroine “achieves a much more complicated sense of morality” (650) by the end of the story than the heroine in Perrault’s version; however, to me, Sheets’s idea suggests that the heroine internalised this shame based on male-centric ideals: she defied tradition and was open to sexual pleasure, and she was also curious and active, so she has to suffer. I disagree with this interpretation and much prefer Renfroe’s (1998) suggestion, that “shame has been pressed upon women by the dominant interpretations” and that “women’s disobedience [...] is seldom ad-

mired" (91) by society. So, those who defy the long-held societal beliefs and decide to go against the norms will likely be excluded from their community. However, by the end of the story, the heroine "has attained a future life of independence and self-respect" (Renfroe 1998, 91), even if that does mean that she has to endure other people's malicious comments. In my opinion, this is what explains her never-fading mark: she "must pay the price of my new knowledge" (Carter 1993, 40), that new knowledge being, according to my interpretation, that it is possible, maybe even preferable, to go against certain traditions and societal norms in order to grow and evolve as a person. The heroine goes on a journey of self-discovery and ends up among people (her mother and her partner) who accept her for who she is, which is far more rewarding than being accepted by a whole community but having to live a lie. According to Pasolini (2016), "the scar left on the body signifies a change that has taken place in the identity of the girl" (65), which simply means that she learned and evolved over the course of the story. The fact that this change has left a visible mark on her simply signals that she is no longer a stereotypical, passive heroine in a fairy tale, learning instead to embrace change and gain agency over her own life and decisions, continuing her journey of personal development.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that the issues Angela Carter's rewriting of the Bluebeard story deals with are still relevant today and form an important part of the feminist discourse. First of all, the introduction of the mother character not only affects the ending of the story but is also crucial when it comes to the journey of self-discovery the heroine experiences over the course of the story. Carter also offers an insight into the rarely-discussed experiences of a mother who has to learn to let go of her child. By depicting the close relationship between mother and daughter and how each of them evolves throughout the story, Carter points out how crucial good female role models are and how significant their lack of representation in traditional fairy tales is. Secondly, sexuality and sexual liberation were heavily debated topics at the time Carter wrote the short story collection. Besides openly discussing female desire and sexuality, she also points out how damaging traditional depictions and therefore expectations of sexuality can be, both when it comes to men and women. With the help of metaphors and the language she uses, she allows the heroine to gain some power in spite of her reduced role as someone to be objectified. Finally, while the traditional direction and power-relation connected to the male gaze are, without a doubt, present in the story, my argument is that, with the help of mirrors and other sensory organs, Carter presents a kind of female gaze as well;

a position of power for the woman that helps her 'look back', leave behind the societal constraints imposed on women, and continue her journey of self-discovery.

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Cannibalism as a Metaphor of Consumerism in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*

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This paper explores the representation of cannibalism in David Mitchell's novel, *Cloud Atlas*, and delineates two levels on which it appears; the first context portrays cannibalistic tribes, while the second one displays an industry of producing and recycling human clones as fast food. In addition, this analysis focuses on the confrontation of what it means to be civilized or savage, and on the emerging social issues revolving around consumer culture, as the juxtaposition of consumer society and the figure of the cannibal challenges the concept of consumer society by questioning if it is civilised at all or not.

Keywords: cannibal, consumer society, consumer culture, materialism, environmental degradation

1. Introduction

The theme of cannibalism often occurs in literary works, mostly with the intention to represent the notion of “otherness,” with which the readers are unable to identify themselves, or have difficulties doing so. The repugnance that is triggered by the figure of the cannibal makes the motif a powerful tool to achieve an alienating effect. In David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, the metaphor of cannibalism can be seen as interweaving with the consumer culture and society, since the phases of purchasing, consuming, and producing waste eventually lead to the maximal depletion of resources, and as such a society can destroy its future, which can be considered as an act of gradual self-consumption.

Mitchell's novel incorporates six storylines embedded into each other in a story-within-a-story manner, evoking the Russian Doll motif that, in fact, symbolizes the structure of the novel. This complex narrative structure, on the one hand, enables the reader to observe consumer society from a variety of perspectives; on the other hand, reflects on the theme of cannibalism through the way each chapter is eaten up by the preceding one. Furthermore, the novel displays cannibalism on two different levels: the tribal one, which portrays cannibalistic tribes, and the industrial one, referring to the industry of producing then recycling human clones as fast food. My paper focuses on the representation of cannibalism in *Cloud At-*

las, the tension between being civilized or savage, and the emerging social issues revolving around consumerism—the shifting personal and social values due to the increasing influence of materialism, as well as the nonchalance and ignorance about the exploitation of natural resources.

2. Narrative Technique and the Russian Doll Structure

Cloud Atlas demonstrates a unique technique of narration employing multiple storylines. It introduces six stories that all exemplify different genres, and as a further twist, each of them are linked together by being interrupted by the succeeding story. The first five narratives each stop abruptly in the middle, until the sixth unfolds without interruption, and then, in a reversed order mirroring the first half of the novel, all the chapters come to their conclusion. The first narrative titled “The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing” is written in the manner of a journal or travel narrative, which is read by the protagonist of the second story—Robert Frobisher who himself is the composer of the seventeen letters constituting the “Letters from Zedelghem.” Subsequently, these get in Luisa Rey’s possession, who is the heroine of the detective thriller titled “Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery.” The following chapter—“The Ghastly Ordeals of Timothy Cavendish—” is a comic memoir that reaches the next story as a film adaptation. Thus, in “An Orison of Sonmi-451,” Sonmi, the human clone condemned to death, draws strength and comfort from watching this movie, while her story is transmitted through an interview that is in fact her last testimony documented by an Archivist. The last narrative is titled “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After,” and according to Nazalee Raja’s interview with David Mitchell, it is a vernacular story of a post-apocalyptic tribe member told around a feast. The narrator Zachry recollects a determining period of his life, in which Sonmi’s testimony plays a huge role, as, in the course of time, Sonmi became remembered as a goddess.

The settings of the episodes vary from one story to another—from the Chatham Island on the Pacific Ocean through Belgium to the United States—, whereas the temporal structure maintains a linearity. The first narrative is set around 1850 and the following chapters depict later periods. Some of them are explicitly defined, for instance, in “Letters from Zedelghem” Robert Frobisher dates his letters to 1931, while in “The First Luisa Rey Mystery” it is frequently mentioned that the episode is set in 1975. Notwithstanding, the last two stories are more difficult to anchor; even if the sub-narratives imply that the scenes take place on the Korean Peninsula and Hawaii, the exact time is debatable in both cases. This absence of a definite time at this stage of the novel is essential to obscure the borderline between

the two dystopian chapters: the totalitarian-capitalist dystopia and the post-apocalypse. This way Mitchell unquestionably positions both prospects in the future, but without any specific predictions regarding when they would occur.

The interconnectedness arching over time and space not only achieves a feeling of totality, a universal wholeness, but also gives the impression of a story-within-a-story manner of the narrative structure. In fact, if we want to be precise and faithful to the narrative itself, we may call it a matryoshka structure, seeing that this phrase appears in three of the six stories. In the “Letters from Zedelghem,” the title of a composition is “Matruschka Doll Variations” (Mitchell 2014, 52), in “An Orison of Sonmi-451,” a circus freak is called “Madame Matryoshka” (Mitchell 2014, 353), while in “The First Luisa Rey Mystery,” Sixsmith, a scientist assisting Luisa Rey, gives an explanation of time as being “an infinite matrioshka doll of painted moments” (Mitchell 2014, 409). Based on Mitchell’s revelation of the primordial factors in composing the novel, Sarah Johnston-Ellis notes that “through the creation of the Russian doll structure each story can be seen as to be “eaten” by its successor and later “regurgitated” by the same’ to mirror and underline the overarching theme of the novel, which is the nature of predation in the pursuit for power” (qtd. in Mitchell 2005). As Mitchell affirms, *Cloud Atlas* is interwoven with the theme of how “individuals prey on individuals, corporations on employees, tribes on tribes, majorities on minorities, and how present generations ‘eat’ the sustenance of future generations” (Mitchell 2005). This predacity characterizes each narrative; the novel provides the “repeated mantra of its first predator, Henry Goose” (Hicks 2016, 64) that “the Weak are Meat the Strong do Eat” (Mitchell 2014, 508). Accordingly, the following chapters exemplify how the “weak are poisoned, cuckolded, blackmailed, assaulted, imprisoned, enslaved, and, ultimately, eaten . . . by those with more cunning and power” (Hicks 2016, 64).

3. Tribal Cannibalism

Based on preliminary works investigating the metaphor of cannibalism, Bartolovich (1998) concludes that the cannibal has become “a site of conflict in which different groups meet in their quite different uses and accentuation of the term, and struggle over its meaning” (209). It is ascertained, however, that the figure of the cannibal conveys a sense of hostility. In the first place, it is constantly associated with barbarity, cruelty, and a lack of moral limits, owing to the fact that it violates the taboo of consuming one’s own kind, a fellow human being, which, evidently, additionally comprises the act of murdering that is in itself another morally condemnable deed. The figure of the cannibal, for this reason, evokes an instantaneous

repulsion, which makes it an apt tool in literature to display a sense of otherness and alienation, an unsurmountable difference.

Kristen Guest in her study in 2001 notes that “the idea of cannibalism prompts a visceral reaction among people precisely because it activates our horror of consuming others like ourselves. Ultimately, then, it is the shared humanness of cannibals and their victims that draws our attention to the problems raised by the notion of absolute difference” (3). The paradox evoked by the image of humans ingesting other humans as food questions the self-identification of the cannibal itself and the boundaries that are established to divide the “edible” and the “non-edible” human being. The shared humanness of predator and victim discussed by Guest is the origin and the centre of this dilemma.

Both chapters of the novel incorporating cannibalism in the form of primitive tribes are temporally significantly distanced from the reader. The terror and incomprehensibility of such cruelty is more credible in the historically detached and the dystopian context, due to the fact that the reader may feel secure of the assumption that in our advanced and civilized—a term that will need further explanation—society that kind of brutality and inhumanity could never occur.

“The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing” is the first chapter of the novel, and at the same time, chronologically the earliest episode, since it reaches back to the mid-nineteenth century. The setting and even the form of the narrative, which resembles a travel narrative, adjusts to the historical context. “The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing” does not incorporate cannibals explicitly, but cannibalism is employed as the backbone of the narrative as it is, from the first moment, constantly discussed, which achieves the sensation that the figure of the cannibal even in absence manages to build an atmosphere of lurking danger. The first scene introduces Dr. Henry Goose with the image of him digging out human teeth spat out by cannibals on the shore of an island on the Pacific Ocean. Consequently, the theme of cannibalism emerges at this preliminary stage, along with Goose apparently being positioned in proximity with the tribal cannibals, taking over the status of the predator. His intention is to take revenge on a noble woman in London by selling the teeth to the dentist who makes dentures for her; his benefit would be twofold, since he would not only be able to accuse the lady of eating with cannibals’ teeth, but he would also earn good money for the teeth. However, this act and the intent focus on the teeth that is the symbol of eating and devouring “puts Western elites in close proximity to the act of cannibalism itself” (Bayer 2015, 352) and foreshadows their transformation into the “consumer” whose primary concern is satisfying its hunger, not only for food, but also for money, power, and social recognition.

The storyline indeed portrays consumerism at its very beginning. First of all, the idea behind the travel narrative is to explore and exhibit a field that is yet

unknown, which geographically refers to the Pacific Ocean, while abstractly indicates the “discovery” of consumer culture. Further evidence for this is the period in which the chapter is set, the mid-nineteenth century which is connected to the first scholarly analyses about the influence of consumption on culture and society (McDonald and Wearing 2013, 21). In addition, the narrative presents one of the vital elements of the development of a consumer capitalist system, the deliberate “training of appetite.” The phrase is only understood in the colonial framework, as it means the aim of colonisers “to generate the most trade-beneficial ‘appetites’ in the natives” (Bartolovich 1998, 220), which was vital to create adequate conditions for trading. Given that the basis of trading is a difference in needs and desires, the induction of certain desires occasionally becomes fundamental.

This is precisely what the “Nazareth Smoking School” (Mitchell 2014, 501) demonstrates. The function of this institution is exactly what its name suggests, to teach how to smoke while combining it with a religious sermon. Its main purpose is to incite an addiction for tobacco in the Polynesian native people, as a way to provide them with motivation to work for the colonisers. This process gives the aboriginals a reason to value money, and a desire to accumulate it; they work, so that they can buy. Furthermore, employing the name Nazareth, that is Jesus’s birthplace, also bears considerable significance. On the one hand, it marks the birth of a new era which, here, is undeniably the age of consumer culture, while, on the other hand, the religious connotation indicates the enormous impact this paradigm shift carries. As a matter of fact, in a recent study, Matthew McDonald and Stephen Wearing (2013) summarise Georg Simmel’s observation that at the turn of the twentieth century consumer culture began to replace religion in aspects “that it cultivated tastes, provided a basis for the construction of self-identity and a sense of one’s place in society, just as the practice of religion had done so successfully for many centuries prior” (24). This examination materializes in the novel; it is further proved by the absence of religious institutions in “An Orison of Sonmi-451,” which depicts the culmination of consumer capitalism, and then by the sudden reappearance of the belief in a divine entity in “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After,” the chapter that envisions a microcosm after the collapse of consumer capitalism.

“Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After” particularly seems to be centred around the question of who can be considered civilized and who is savage, while eliminating—or at least reducing to a minimum—the discourse of enlightenment, which may seem to be the easiest answer to explain what it means to be civilized. This narrative depicts a small post-apocalyptic community, the Valleysmen who are left as the only civilized society among savage and cannibalistic tribes. As previously mentioned, the locations of the last two narratives are not explicit; yet, it is defi-

nately known that they are separated by the “Fall” that is supposedly the decline of advanced civilization resulting in the depletion of natural resources and a global nuclear war, once again alluding to the Biblical Fall marking the triggering to Christian civilization.

In “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After,” the only representative of scientific knowledge is Meronym, a member of a secluded community that is itself perishing due to an incurable plague, even though they are the descendants of genetically programmed humans modified precisely to be protected against the rough circumstances of an environment without advanced technology. The core of the chapter is her recount of how the civilized world has destroyed itself by ripping out the skies, boiling up the seas, poisoning the soil with atom, and upsetting human reproduction with defective genes (Mitchell 2014, 286), as the Valleysmen are challenged by the repercussions of these events and the loss of scientific knowledge. Meronym differentiates between the savage and the civilized human in the following way:

The savage sat’fies his needs now. He’s hungry, he’ll eat. He’s angry, he’ll knuckly. He’s swellin’, he’ll shoot up a woman. His master is his will, an’ if his will say-soes ‘Kill’ he’ll kill. Like fangy animals . . . Now the Civ’lized got the same needs too, but he sees further. He’ll eat half his food now, yay, but plant half so he won’t go hungry ’morrow. He’s angry, he’ll stop ’n’ think why so he won’t get angry next time. He’s swellin’, well, he’s got sisses an’ daughters what need respectin’ so he’ll respect his bros’ sisses an’ daughters. His will is his slave, an’ if his will say-soes, ‘Don’t!’ he won’t, nay. (Mitchell 2014, 318)

On the basis of this definition, savage people are more identical to animals as they are driven by impulses and desires, have little perception of a future except for an immediate one, and lack any moral understanding whatsoever—concerning their fellow human beings anyway. The civilized according to this narrative constitute the opposite; a person in possession of reason and above his or her desires, who controls them rather than is controlled by them, and as such adopts a sustainable lifestyle. This interpretation of savage and civilized denotes a significant confrontation between the dominance of the body and that of the mind, which is predominantly associated with modern Western philosophy.

In his overview of the correlation between capitalism, consumerism, and its approaches to the body, Michael Carolan (2005) describes “the dichotomy of mind and body” (88), according to which “the body is the physical, the animalistic, and the uncontrollable. It represents passion and irrationality. The mind, on the other hand, is reason. It represents the emancipating force that frees us from the bonds of nature and the shackles of desire” (Carolan 2005, 88-89). In addition, he points out the two archetypes of the body defined by Mikhail Bakhtin; the carnivalesque or grotesque and the classical. The carnival body represents the domination of the

body and passion over mind and reason (Carolan 2005, 89), and, as Mark Paterson (2006) notes on the grotesque bodies in his study, it celebrates the “pleasure and excess as compared with the regulated, disciplined bodies of everyday socio-economic entrenchment” (89). The classical body signifies its inverse, when the mind and reason is in control of the body, rules it and suppresses its desires (Carolan 2005, 89). Following this line of thought, cannibals can definitely be recognized as carnival bodies, seeing that they lack any kind of bodily control as they please their irrational hunger and misplaced desire for human meat. The extent to which they are characterized by uncontrollable voraciousness surpasses any sense of humanity or their “shared humanness” (Guest 2001, 2) with their victims.

Yet, the cannibal also seems to serve as a mirror to consumer society to underline the carnival side of consumers which is partly expected of them and partly disapproved. This is the result of the “dual imperatives in consumer capitalism” (Carolan 2005, 92), which at one point demands self-discipline and work, but otherwise encourages “to release control: to give in to the commodified world around us” (Carolan 2005, 92) and to the pleasures it offers. The word itself “consume” implies this paradox, because it connotes corporeality to a large extent, denoting the act of devouring and absorbing something (food, commodity, service, experience, etc.), yet besides the meaning of using up or destroying, the word originally also means consummating, “to bring to completion” (Paterson 2006, 8). Nevertheless, the relentless pursuit of the classical body is instilled into the advanced civilized society, in which consumers are supposed to achieve a perfect condition; a body that exudes youth, health, wealth, and, most importantly, self-discipline. In his study examining culture and society in the framework of capitalism, Daniel Bell observes the essential contradiction within Western bourgeois society as one between the principles of industrialism and modernist culture, which demonstrates the paradigm of the noted phenomenon:

The characteristic style of industrialism is based on the principles of economics and economizing: on efficiency, least cost, maximization, optimization, and functional rationality. Yet it is this very style that is in conflict with the advanced cultural trends of the Western world, for modernist culture emphasizes anti-cognitive and anti-intellectual modes which look longingly toward a return to instinctual sources of expression. The one emphasizes functional rationality, technocratic decision making, and meritocratic rewards; the other, apocalyptic moods and anti-rational modes of behavior. (1978, 84)

4. Industrial Cannibalism

The most critical chapter of *Cloud Atlas* in relation to consumer culture is the fifth one, “An Orison of Sonmi-451.” It portrays a dystopia set in the fictitious Nea So Copros, today’s Seoul. This state incorporates the features of a capitalist industry and a totalitarian regime, which results in the comprehensive indoctrination of consumer values in every layer of the society. The economy, as is expected of a consumer capitalist state, depends on the continuous production and consumption of goods and services. The narrative places a heavy emphasis on the harsh representation of these two components by depicting a state based on the ruthless exploitation of enslaved human clones and manipulated citizens.

The novel—but particularly this storyline—severely criticizes consumer culture, perceiving it as necessarily generating false values for the most prestigious goods and services, while diminishing individuality and human relationships. The consumer society is mirrored in two ways in “An Orison of Sonmi-451;” the first one is evidently through the representation of the citizens, who themselves are labelled as consumers of Nea So Copros, and are presented as being oppressed and brainwashed, due to which they are not aware of their own subjection. In this not-so-distant future, microchips, which are implanted under the skin, are used for the identification of citizens. These chips register one’s personal data; name, age, profession, and they even record the spending of the individual. Nevertheless, most ironically, these devices are called Souls. This single concept further proves the distorted perception of value in the narrative, since in this context the term, soul, attains a new connotation; a person’s consumerist identity monitored by the state. Likewise, one of Nea So Copros’ catechisms states, that a “Soul’s Value is the Dollars Therein” (Mitchell 2014, 341), which implies that a person’s worth depends on his or her financial status, but moving further it also suggests that the soul has lost its meaning as the spiritual part of a person. Thus, on the one hand, this case demonstrates the earlier noted lack of religious traditions in the advanced consumer culture where “the worship of commodities” (McDonald and Wearing 2013, 24) occupies the dominant place in human value system. On the other hand, this transfer of meaning eliminates the recognition and importance of inner traits of human beings, and instead inseparably conjoins personal value with the material.

This process, however, provokes the estrangement between people, owing to the fact that the act of never-ending purchasing occupies the primary position in their lives and their emotional needs remain unsatisfied, which eventually leads to an inability to identify and manage one’s feelings. The long-term deficiencies in a society arise when such an indifferent approach towards one’s environment

develops into a substantial human trait, and pleasing one's selfish interest at any costs becomes self-evident; just as Kasser (2002) maintains: "[w]hen materialistic values dominate our society, we move farther and farther from what makes us civilized. We treat each other in less humane ways. We allow the pursuit of money to take precedence over equality, the human spirit, and respectful treatment of each other" (91–92). Taking into consideration the previous section that delineated what can make people civilized, Kasser's judgment seems to be in concord with the conflict of mind and body. According to his description, the soul and the sense of humanity, as incorporeal constituents, signify the mind, and they are contrasted with money that denotes the material reality and the body. The storyline too puts great emphasis on the distinction of these two categories, insisting on the incapability of the consumer society to achieve a balance between them.

Another instance for this is provided with the quota system; for the reason that the capitalist state hinges on the purchasing and consumption of material goods and services, the citizens of Nea So Copros are forced to spend a certain amount of money each month. They have to fulfil a given quota in order to meet the obligations of their social positions; the higher a person stands in the social hierarchy, the more money he or she has to spend. Neglecting the quota involves severe consequences. An individual who disregards it, becomes excluded from the mainstream society and ends up in places that are especially maintained to serve as a terrifying example. The district Huamdonggil, for example, functions as "a chemical toilet where unwanted human waste disintegrates, discreetly; yet not quite invisibly" (Mitchell 2014, 332), which is a motivating force for the citizens to maintain the cycle of working and spending.

This instance, again resembles the dual imperatives noted by Carolan, but here the spending—that is the indulgence in the commodified world—is not only expected but becomes transformed into just as much of an obligation as working is in order to make a living. It is notable how people who do not serve the consumerist state or who diverge from its value system become devalued and dehumanized, because it suggests the commodification of humans, as they are classified based on their usefulness—here it signifies the usefulness of citizens to the state. McDonald and Wearing (2013) defines commodification as "the transformation of an object, service, time, ritual or even a person into a commodity, which is not by nature a commercial entity" (23). What Mitchell created is an apt portrayal of a consumer society that is born out of capitalism. Although, the quota system appears to be a farfetched idea, the defects of consumerism are already present in contemporary society, where appearance and belongings determine one's social standing, while the acknowledgment of a person is measured according to their financial competence. Henry Giroux's (2005) remark that "under neoliberalism everything either is for

sale or is plundered for profit” (2) ultimately materializes in *Cloud Atlas*, seeing that in Nea So Copros, citizens may even sell their right to have children, this way derogating the most fundamental human relationship.

Furthermore, the other mirrors held up to consumer society are, in fact, the fabricants, who can easily be called commercial entities. They are manufactured and sold just as any other products. This exaggerated scheme definitely seems to echo the concept of commodification, and its theoretical forerunner, Karl Marx’s idea of how labour “produces itself and the worker as a *commodity*” (McDonald and Wearing 2013, 22). The dulling of clones is a form standardization to convince the public of their lack of individuality and character, thus their lack of human nature, so that their enslavement and utilization on the market would be justified. Sonmi explains it to her interviewer as “to enslave an individual distresses the conscience, but to enslave a clone is merely like owning the latest mass-produced six-wheeled ford” (Mitchell 2014, 191). This observation identifies individuality as the core of humanity, but if considering fabricants as doubles to consumers, then it accuses the consumer of lacking humanity, that is typically described as comprising kindness, compassion, and very importantly empathy; characteristics that are fundamental to functional relationships and are unattainable in an alienated society.

Yet another perception on the issue offers the fabricants as the most ideal labourers seeing that they are bred in “wombtanks” and are genetically programmed to endure long hours awake and any kind of climate or environment a simple human would not be able to survive, for instance mines or radioactive lands. Deprived of basic rights, clones are not acknowledged as humans, they function simply as mass-produced slaves for twelve years when they are slain and recycled as meat for restaurants and a substance, called Soap, for fabricants, which is, gruesomely, their only source of nourishment. This is the point where cannibalism enters the narrative.

After their death, fabricants are handled as nothing better than livestock, considering that their cadavers are processed as butchered animals in a slaughterhouse, described as being “manned by figures wielding scissors, swordsaws . . . blood-soaked, from head to toe. . . . [T]he devils down there snipped off collars, stripped clothes, shaved follicles, peeled skin, offcut hands and legs, sliced off meat, spooned organs” (Mitchell 2014, 359). The Archivist, conducting the interview with the protagonist Sonmi-451, voices the central paradox of the novel by refusing to accept how “such evil could take root in our civilized state” (Mitchell 2014, 360). However, it is simply the business of industry exploiting every possibility for a higher profit. After all, what could be more cost-efficient than the cycle of recycling the free workforce to feed the new one? Sonmi who is produced to serve in a Papa Song diner remarks that “fabricants cost very little to

cultivate, and have no awkward hankerings for a better, freer life. As a fabricant [e]xpires after forty-eight hours without a highly genomed Soap . . . ‘it’ will not run away. . . . [F]abricants are the ultimate organic machinery” (Mitchell 2014, 341). Indeed they are the most perfect machinery of industry and capitalism, after all, given that they depend on one specific sustenance that contains drugs, refraining them from gaining intellectual stimulation, they do not desire anything on their own and have no life at all except for the work they are programmed to do—obviously, overtime is no trouble for them.

Based on the previous interpretations, it seems reasonable to state that, in the narrative, people symbolizing consumers are entirely passivized and portrayed as, what McDonald and Wearing (2013) describe as “unthinking automatons . . . manipulated and controlled by the corporate marketing and advertising machine” (8). This perspective rejects the idea of a free willed consumer; rather it regards them as agentless objects deprived of individuality, and manipulated and moulded into mass products, which is a central concern of consumer critics. The analogy of clone and consumer conveys this fear of the overall standardization of human beings in the name of globalisation. The soap that typically symbolizes cleanness, in this context, rather appears as another indicator to brainwashing, since the Soap sustaining clones contains drugs that hinder personality development and intellectual inquiry, and seats them in an unquestioned complacency, this way reflecting an era of passive and “docile bodies . . . that have been discursively inscribed to embody the moral, political, and social conventions of a socio-political system” (Carolan 2005, 98).

To examine the chapter from another perspective, the figure of the fabricant can also be regarded as the key factor and epitome of the juxtaposition of cannibalism and consumerism. The basic problem with the metaphor of cannibalism representing capitalism or neoliberalism is the difference in their so-called appetite. Cannibals are characterized by “absolute, unlimited” (Bartolovich 1998, 213) consumption, seeing that satisfying their hunger equates with the termination of the agent that is the target of the cannibal’s hunger. However, the “capital’s own ‘hunger’ and ‘thirst’ for the ‘living blood’ of labour” (Bartolovich 1998, 213) cannot become so ultimate, owing to the fact that killing off its labour power—the worker—would obviously impede the functioning of the capitalist system. In “An Orison of Sonmi-451,” the main source of labour power are fabricants, who are, in fact, consumed by the capitalist industry. In addition, by the process of recycling them, they become reinstalled into the capitalist system, constructing it just as the devoured (human) meat becomes an integral part of the cannibal body.

The “system of organized cannibalism” (Hicks 2016, 64) of Nea So Copros, is in analogy with “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After” which represents the threat of

being consumed by cannibals. This parallel displays how the moral conscience of the cannibal tribes is at about the same degree as that of the corpocratic entrepreneurs, considering their similar indifference to the mass slaughter of humans they execute. It again sharply calls to attention that living in an enlightened and scientifically advanced era is not equivalent to being civilized. As a matter of fact, the novel gives a cross-reference between the distorted values of the dystopian future in “An Orison of Sonmi-451” and the present days that is represented by “The Ghastly Ordeals of Timothy Cavendish.”

Cavendish’s story truly mesmerizes Sonmi, probably for the reason that she identifies the resemblance between her imprisoned situation and that of Cavendish. After he signs the custody papers that he considers to be a hotel registry, he is incarcerated in a nursing home, that is ironically called Aurora House, where old people slide to the bottom of the social hierarchy, as they are deprived of their freedom and dignity, similarly to the fate of the fabricants. The way Sonmi refers back to Cavendish’s time clearly indicates that it is their past—the early twenty-first century, which again leads us to the conclusion that Nea So Copros is the future of enhancing consumer capitalistic and materialistic domination of our present. The parallel between the two chapters is based on the perception of people who diverge from the values that a society demands from its members. Old people can be considered as the “human waste” (Mitchell 2014, 332) of society, due to the fact that they are not part of the workforce anymore, which makes them useless for the consumer capitalist state. Besides, they contradict consumer ideals, such as youth, fitness, and control over the body.

5. The Natural Disaster of Consumerism

The greatest contradiction—and the most telling motif—of the novel is the irony of the name Nea So Copros, since the word copros derives from the Greek *kopros* that apparently means excrement. This instance, consequently, bitterly illustrates consumer society in its entirety as waste. Furthermore, this notion reflects on the issue of waste production as well that is an inherent characteristic of consumerism, yet one which severely devastates the environment. The novel portrays the concerns critics of consumer culture maintain, namely, that by adopting a purely materialistic perspective, not only human relationships deteriorate, but humanity’s relationship with its natural environment. On the one hand, this process can be considered as the result of the formerly mentioned alienation and estrangement. On the other hand, it may be observed as the consequence of the struggle to “consume” the environment in the sense of controlling and shaping it to our liking. It appears

that humans have ceased to see the inherent value of nature and have begun to assume themselves superior to it. In this manner, by deluding themselves into believing that they have the right to dominate nature without any consequences, they feel empowered to take advantage of and make a profit out of it. However, this phenomenon articulates another range of ecological crises; Michael Carolan (2005) suggests that at this point we encounter a paradox, “in our attempt to control, we are simultaneously releasing onto the world entities that we cannot control . . . cross-species contamination from GM (genetically modified) foods, flood levees that break, and unmanageable forest fires, just to name a few such examples. Such is the *irony of modern control*: in seeking it we only make it more unattainable” (104).

Along these concerns, *Cloud Atlas* presents the dilemma revolving around the growth-based economy, which, noted by McLaughlin 1993 (cited in Smith 1998), is recognized as being “intrinsic to capitalism” (42), and the limitless expansion neoliberalists advocate. Sonmi’s report of how “Nea So Copros is poisoning itself to death” (Mitchell 2014, 341), provides instances of what could be—and what already is—the result of present day natural exploitation: “Its soil is polluted, its rivers lifeless, its air toxloaded, its food supplies riddled with rogue genes. The downstrata can’t buy the drugs necessary to counter these privations. Melanoma and malaria belts advance northwards at forty kilometers per year. Those Production Zones of Africa and Indonesia that supply Consumer Zones’ demands are sixty per cent uninhabitable” (Mitchell 2014, 341).

Beside the devastation of soil, water and air, epidemics strike the populace, while more and more land becomes maximally depleted. Due to the immense power of the totalitarian regime, the public of Nea So Copros is thoroughly dazzled into ignorance of the environmental destruction falling on them, while those who are aware of it play the role of the “wilfully blind” (Mitchell 2014, 130). “The First Luisa Rey Mystery” portrays the advancing nuclear industry, and relevantly offers the remark about corruption that “every conscience has an off-switch hidden somewhere” (Mitchell 2014, 103). According to the plot, Luisa Rey, a journalist, aims to disclose the dangers of the new HYDRA reactor at Swannekke Island that gives place to Seabord Inc.—the provider of nuclear energy. Although the chapter remains faithful to its genre, the detective thriller, and in the end good conquers bad, we see that in the long-term, capital triumphs. Even though Luisa accomplishes her goal and averts a catastrophe in the 1970s, the reverberation of the same industry persists for more than a century reaching Nea So Copros in the form of a genomics unit that bears the name HYDRA as well, and that is responsible for manufacturing fabricants. This resemblance reinforces the message of the omnipotent authority of capital owners reaching across time and space, and the dangers of wilful ignorance.

The degradation of the environment is, in fact, a current critical situation that requires attention and a solution. Besides the pollution of the environment, there is also the threat of overconsumption, that is, according to an explanation by Humphery 2010 (cited in McDonald and Wearing 2013), “the consumption of products and services ‘at a level over and above that which is necessary to maintain a reasonable standard of living and at a rate that is greater than can be environmentally sustained in terms of resource provision and the handling of waste’” (115). This concept again resembles the figure of the cannibal and the notion of the uncivilized; how the satisfaction of immediate desires surpasses logic. The ignorance about environmental problems portrayed in the novel mirrors today’s mainstream approach to the issue, which raises the question: how far can we go before we fall?

6. Conclusion

Given these points, it can be claimed that David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas* depicts considerable issues concerning the social and environmental consequences of consumerism. The narrative structure, on the one hand, enables the reader to observe the capitalist economy and society from different times and perspectives; at its emergence, its culmination, and its collapse. On the other hand, by resembling a Russian doll, it mirrors the motif of incorporation that is central to the figure of the cannibal and its absurd motive for devouring. As a criticism on consumer culture, the novel questions the notion of civilization, and by juxtaposing the consumer society with tribes of cannibals, it challenges the concept of the consumer society. The chapter titled “An Orison of Sonmi-451” exemplifies the potential dangers of such a society, seeing that it displays humans that are created like commodities, treated utterly as instruments and slaughtered like animals. The way the privileged put millions of lives in jeopardy to secure their own social and financial power, or how the concept of human value drops out of sight to give place to monetary worth resembles current societal tensions. In addition, *Cloud Atlas* proposes the crisis of environmental destruction as an attribute of consumerist production, and foreshadows the danger of consuming our natural resources by the depiction of a post-apocalyptic community. In the light of the listed facts, I contend that *Cloud Atlas* incorporates the figure of the cannibal as the central motif to criticize consumer society for being not only short-sighted, but also for lacking a sense of humanity and civilization.

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Writing as Remembering: Proust's Influence on Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*

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This paper aims to examine the influence of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* on Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* in order to emphasise that Proust's influence extends beyond the Bloomsbury group. The two protagonists, Marcel from *À la recherche* and Miriam Henderson from *Pilgrimage* share the path of becoming authors which is revealed in relation to the process of remembering. Remembering requires a unique handling of time and memory; notions that are based, in the case of these novels, on the theories of Henri Bergson and Paul Sollier.

Keywords: Proust, Richardson, Bergson, Sollier, time, memory.

Introduction

Dorothy Richardson's literary career started with writing short pieces of journalism for a periodical from 1904. What really brought attention to her, however, was the novel sequence *Pilgrimage*. The first of the altogether 13 volumes (or "chapters" as Richardson chose to call them) of *Pilgrimage* was published in 1915, titled *Pointed Roofs*, and the last chapter, *March Moonlight*, came out in 1967. Most of her books received mixed critical reviews but Virginia Woolf penned a relatively positive article about the fourth volume, *The Tunnel*, in 1919. She wrote that Richardson had shown an understanding of the difference that exists between "what she has to say and the form provided by tradition for her to say it", and that "this book is better in its failure than most novels in their success", even though, like her previous novels, it still lacks the "shapeliness of the old accepted forms" (81). Virginia Woolf was a founding member of the Bloomsbury group, a group of writers and artists from the early twentieth century that included Virginia and Stephen Woolf, Vanessa and Clive Bell, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster. Mary Ann Caws and Sarah Bird Wright state in their book *Bloomsbury and France: Art and Friends* that what connected the wide variety of people within the Bloomsbury group was France—more precisely, French culture and literature. Caws and Wright (2000) suggest that an "aesthetic dialogue" was formed between French and British artists during the years before and after the Great War, and that this international artistic interaction resulted in

the exchange of innovative “theories and techniques developed by French novelists, poets, and critics” (19). Most of these had a profound impact on the *Belle Époque*, including Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and, most importantly, Marcel Proust.

Writers of the Bloomsbury group were deeply influenced by Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*). Caws and Wright (2000) argue that the members of the group considered Proust “the most revered French writer” (11). Henri Peyre and Baucum Fulkerson state in their article already in 1940 that the influence of French literature “has certainly never been as powerful” as in the two decades before the Second World War, approximately from 1920 until 1940 (328). Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Edward Morgan Forster all took great interest in Proust, and he soon became a frequent topic of conversations, letters and studies. Thus, the literary connection between the Bloomsbury circle and Proust has been thoroughly researched, but the one between the works of writers outside the most intimate circle of the Bloomsbury group, for instance, Dorothy Richardson, and those of Proust has not been given much attention. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the influence of Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* on Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage* in order to emphasise that Proust’s influence on English literature was so extensive that it would be a mistake to restrict the possibility of this influencing factor only to the Bloomsbury group. The two protagonists, Marcel from *À la recherche* and Miriam Henderson from *Pilgrimage* share the path of becoming authors themselves, and that this process is revealed in the novels in relation to the process of remembering. Both in *À la recherche* and in *Pilgrimage*, remembering requires a unique handling of time and memory, notions that are based, in the case of these novels, on the theories of Henri Bergson and Paul Sollier. While contemporary critics Judit Karafiáth (2007) and Matthew Taunton (2016) consider time and memory rather exclusively in relation to the act of remembering, this article argues that a clear distinction has to be made between time and memory in order to fully comprehend the process of remembering as described by Proust and Richardson. The article further argues that Henri Bergson’s ideas on remembering and Paul Sollier’s thoughts on memory are fundamental to the creation of the narrative in both *À la recherche du temps perdu* and *Pilgrimage*.

The Treatment of Time in *À la recherche du temps perdu*

Time has a key role to play in Proust’s *À la recherche*. “Combray”, the first chapter of *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann’s Way*), already embodies and incorporates all the themes of the later chapters and volumes, and, as Leo Bersani (2013) claims, the relation of this chapter to the rest of the novel sequence is “Proust’s most profound

statement about the nature of mental time” (xi). Throughout the work, the narrator is looking for time that is supposedly “lost”, and which he only “finds” in *Le Temps retrouvé* (*Time Regained*), the last volume, after volumes of self-doubt and trying to find himself while chasing time. At a crucial point in the narrative, he actually realises that writing the book itself is the only way to recover what he has lost through the years:

Then a new light arose in me, less brilliant indeed than the one that had made me perceive that a work of art is the only means of regaining lost time. And I understood that all the material of a literary work was in my past life, I understood that I had acquired it in the midst of frivolous amusements, in idleness, in tenderness and in pain, stored up by me without my divining its destination or even its survival, as the seed has in reserve all the ingredients which will nourish the plant. (Proust [1927] 2018, 283)

Simultaneously, the narrator finds his subject as well: time, the past, *his* past. He claims that “it was that notion of the embodiment of Time, the inseparableness from us of the past that I now had the intention of bringing strongly into relief in my work” (Proust [1927] 2018, 296). In other words, the narrator discovers that by remembering, that is, retelling the past through his own subjective point of view, through his perception of *internal time*, he can actually capture the past. Naturally, capturing the past means he can move forward in *external time*, and write his book, which at this point is self-realisation itself.

Time was a central concept of philosophic and scientific investigations at the end of the nineteenth century. Judit Karafiáth (2007) states that Henri Bergson was one of the first philosophers to redefine time in modern terms (45). Marcel Proust himself was a student when Bergson's studies came to light; in fact, Proust was Bergson's student at Sorbonne in Paris. Louis-Auguste Bisson (1945) calls Bergson's influence on Proust's *oeuvre* an axiom, claiming that Proust's novels are constantly linked to Bergson's theories (104). For instance, Proust read Bergson's doctoral thesis *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (later published as *Time and Free Will: Essay on the immediate data of consciousness*), as the example of a short sentence shows in the third volume of *À la recherche, Le Côté de Guermantes* (*The Guermantes Way*): “you remember that book of philosophy we read together at Balbec, the richness of the world of possibilities compared with the real world” (Proust [1920–1921] 2019, 104; qtd. Vial 1940, 1193–1194). This comparison between reality and possibility—dividing the world into two according to what is real and what is possible (that is not [yet] real)—was an important theme in Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, especially in the second chapter, entitled *The Multiplicity of Conscious States; The Idea of Duration*. Much of this essay is dedicated to differentiating between and determining the nature of two types of time: *external* and *internal time*.

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson states this about the different kinds of time:

Now, let us notice that when we speak of time, we generally think of a homogenous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space [...]. [...] it is to be presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space. That which goes to confirm this opinion is that we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession; it follows, that pure duration must be something different. (Bergson [1889] 2001, 91)

Bergson differentiates between the objective, real, *external time* which can be measured by objective numbers, for example (and which he also identifies with space), and *internal time*, that is, the subjective perception of time experienced internally which he calls "*la durée pure*", pure duration. When it comes to duration, he also says that "as soon as we try to measure [pure duration], we unwittingly replace it by space" (Bergson [1889] 2001, 106). Space here means the objective, external time as he claims that the moment we start to objectively try and measure *internal time*, we get to the domain of *external time*. Bergson later specifies in his study that "we are more inclined to regard duration as a subjective form of our consciousness" (210). Regarding objective time, Vial (1940) suggests that it is when the consciousness reflects on something situated in the past that one can conceive the flow of time and how time becomes one with the idea of its flow. Consequently, consciousness becomes measurable by time, and by applying this measure to the exterior world, it is possible to get hold of the *external* or *objective time* (1198).

Proust's own method regarding the treatment of time in a narrative seems to be in accordance with Henri Bergson's theory about the two types of the temporal perception as laid out in *Time and Free Will*. This is because *external* and *internal time* are both present in the narrative of *À la recherche*, although it should be noted that primarily, it is the narrator's perception of *internal time* that shapes the way the story is narrated. In *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (*In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*), the second volume of *À la recherche*, the narrator himself explicitly addresses one's perception of time and how writers should treat it in their novels:

In theory one is aware that the earth revolves, but in practice one does not perceive it, the ground upon which one treads seems not to move, and one can live undisturbed. So it is with Time in one's life. And to make its flight perceptible novelists are obliged, by wildly accelerating the beat of the pendulum, to transport the reader in a couple of minutes over ten, or twenty, or even thirty years. At the top of one page we have left a lover full of hope; at the foot of the next we meet him again, a bowed old man of eighty, painfully dragging himself on his daily walk about the courtyard of an almshouse, scarcely replying to what is said to him, oblivious of the past. (Proust [1919] 2017, 52)

In other words, the narrator claims the movement of time to be generally unrecognised, since, as with the revolving of our planet, people are too small particles within the overwhelming whole to be able to see every small movement forward, whether that is in space or time. As he continues, he acknowledges immediately that novelists should reflect on this phenomenon by, for example, speeding time up at certain points, jumping decades at a time, if necessary. This is important because what he decides to “jump over” (or leave out from the narrative), what he chooses to tell are all going to be choices based on his own subjective perception of *internal time*, not on the *external time*. In *Du côté de chez Swann*, much more detail is dedicated to events like how Swann falls in love with Odette, or how the narrator (called Marcel) later falls in love with Gilberte, than to events like the way Swann and Marcel fall out of love. This is because the former events are perceived by the narrator to be of great importance, while the latter events do not seem to matter much to him.

In “Un amour de Swann”, the second part of *Du côté de chez Swann*, Swann meets Odette de Crécy, and slowly he falls for her. Although the exact length of their relationship is not given, Swann talks about years saying “to think that I’ve wasted years of my life, that I’ve longed to die, that I’ve experienced my greatest love, for a woman who didn’t appeal to me, who wasn’t even my type!” (Proust [1913] 1992, 521). The reason for highlighting this sentence is that it helps explain Marcel Proust’s use of *external* and *internal time*. *External time* is always easier to detect because it is an explicit and objective expression of time passing; here, it is present in the mentioning of the years that have passed. However, *internal time* is also present: it exists in the way the narrator *subjectively* decides to tell the readers something with an abundance of detail and information, while with other events, he is not as generous. The years Swann mentions here are described extensively; the narrator comfortably takes hundreds of pages to capture the course of Swann and Odette’s love. However, when it comes to the actual closure of the relationship, there is a difference:

Once, when they had gone away ostensibly for a month only, either they succumbed to a series of temptations, or else M. Verdurin had cunningly arranged everything before-hand to please his wife, and disclosed his plans to the “faithful” only as time went on; at all events, from Algiers they flitted to Tunis; then to Italy, Greece, Constantinople, Asia Minor. They had been absent for nearly a year, and Swann felt perfectly at ease and almost happy. (Proust [1913] 1992, 510)

This passage shows that the nature of the description of the love story starts to become much less exhaustive once Odette and Swann have grown apart, “as though this moral distance were proportionate to the physical distance between

them” (Proust [1913] 1992, 510). Bergson’s theory about identifying external time with space thus becomes part of this picture, too, exactly because of the way physical and moral distance is treated here. The more (*external*) time Swann and Odette spend apart, the greater the physical and moral distance will be between them. However, from another point of view, after describing with detail Swann’s day-to-day life as he grew closer and closer to Odette, this act of “jumping” a whole year in the matter of a line is quite a change. In fact, it is a clear indication of how the narrator’s *internal time* leads the narration at this time in the story.

The situation is quite similar in *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*: after taking quite an effort to describe Gilberte and himself falling in love, the narrator does not describe in great detail the actual end of his love for her. Just like in *Du côté de chez Swann*, finishing off the relationship is done in a matter of a few lines, although the actual time that it took for the narrator this time was two years: “I had arrived at a state almost of complete indifference to Gilberte when, two years later, I went with my grandmother to Balbec” (Proust [1919] 2017, 208). Just as in the case of Marcel’s story, *external time* is indicated here, too; it is possible to know exactly how much time has passed. Moreover, the feeling of being separated comes to Marcel only once they have spent a considerable amount of (*external*) time apart, which could only happen, once again, with being geographically, physically separated in space. Therefore, existence within the limits of external time and space has the same characteristics and consequences in *À la recherche*. This notion can be traced back to the Bergsonian thought of *external time* being nothing but space: measurable, calculable and objective.

What is more, in his own narrative, it is Marcel through whose perception of time these events are described, thus revealing his personal judgement. What he perceives as a longer period of time with much to tell, he will tell accordingly (e.g. the process of falling in love), but when he perceives a period to be more transient and passing, he will not go into great detail about it and will cut that part quite short. Either in the case of Swann and Odette in *Du côté de chez Swann*, or in the case of Marcel and Gilberte in *À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, when it comes to actual events being described, it is the narrator’s sense of *internal time* that leads the way, since it is up to his own judgement what he chooses to tell and at what lengths he is willing to go to give detail on certain events.

The Treatment of Time in *The Tunnel*

Time plays a similar, yet different, role in Richardson's *The Tunnel* to Proust's *À la recherche*. The presence and effect of time is much more difficult to grasp in her work than in Proust's, in which it is often the narrator himself who gives voice to the importance and to the presence (or passing) of time. María Francisca Llantada Díaz argues that Dorothy Richardson had read Proust passionately and makes the case that Richardson's notion of narrative time had been influenced by Proust's treatment of temporality in *À la recherche*. "Richardson's obsessive and enraptured readings of Proust's novels could be taken as the reason of their striking influence on *Pilgrimage*" (Llantada Díaz 2009). What she does not mention, however, is that Henri Bergson's theories are present in Richardson's treatment of time in *The Tunnel*. Nor does she mention that the Bergsonian concept of time appears in this modernist novel, even if in an altered form.

The Tunnel lacks any real manifestation of *external time*. This leaves the reader with a very subjective point of view and with an equally subjective perception of time. Lloyd N. Goldman (1960) perceives that "everything in the book seems to be happening almost at once" (119). This is originally a Bergsonian idea taken from *Time and Free Will* that is concerned with the workings of *internal time* (*pure duration*): "it is enough that, in recalling these states, [*pure duration*] does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole" (Bergson [1889] 2001, 100, my italics). For example, *The Tunnel's* sixth chapter starts with the following lines describing Miriam sitting at the train station:

Miriam sat on a damp wooden seat at the station. Shivering with exhaustion, she looked across at the early morning distance, misty black and faint misty green...Something had happened to it. It was not beautiful; or anything. It was not anything... That was the punishment... The landscape was dead. (Richardson 1919, 128)

There is no explanation whatsoever as to why she is there, when she went there and how much time has passed since the previous chapter. There is no foreshadowing that would lead to this change of place and time in the previous chapter either. The passage continues with a description of the landscape and then, there comes a shift:

They are not my sort of people. Alma does not care for me personally. Little cries and excitement and affection. She wants to; but she does not care for anyone personally. Neither of them do. [...] It was so tiring that one could not like being with her. She seemed to be carrying something off all the time [...]. (Richardson 1919, 129)

Miriam jumps back to earlier years' experiences and feelings, seemingly without any reason, and there is also a very strong change in person, time and space. The explanation that could account for these changes is that this is all happening inside the narrator's head: she is following her line of thought lead by her sense of internal time. This is a clear indication of how the Bergsonian *internal time* shapes the style of narration.

One important preoccupation that Miriam has throughout *The Tunnel* is writing, just like Marcel in *À la recherche du temps perdu*.

"You know you're awfully good stuff. You've had an extraordinary variety of experience; you've got your freedom; you ought to write."

"That is what a palmist told me at Newlands. [...] she kept saying whatever you do, write. If you haven't written yet, write, if you don't succeed go on writing." (Richardson 1919, 151)

Here, in *The Tunnel*, Hypo Wilson (whose character is based on novelist H. G. Wells) advises Miriam to write, and interestingly he mentions her experiences as a possible topic for her writing, which can be interpreted as Wilson encouraging Miriam to write about her own past. Eventually, while starting to reflect on her life at the end of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam decides to finally dedicate herself to writing, and the novel she is going to write will be the novel sequence *Pilgrimage*.

Richardson creates two cyclical processes in *Pilgrimage*: one in which the protagonist becomes what she was destined to become: *an* author, and one in which the protagonist/narrator becomes *the* author of the work itself. She becomes one with the author of the novel sequence, one with Dorothy Richardson herself. This is exactly what appears at the end of *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Discussing *Pilgrimage*, Joanne Winning (2000) describes this as "an act of the writer producing her own life both as a continuous narrative and as a fiction" (15). In other words, one cannot really separate certain realities from one another because, in the cyclical process of life, they are destined to become one. It seems that they do not make sense without each another. Curiously, Proust always denied that his novels would have autobiographic features, as he denied that he would have any knowledge of Henri Bergson (Bisson 1945, 104; Vial 1940, 1192). Richardson, on the other hand, was much more forthcoming. When asked in response to a criticism of *Pilgrimage*, she answered: "isn't life the plot?" (qtd. in Winning 2000, 15). Alluding to the fact that the plot of her novel sequence is largely based on her own life, a life that is not yet concluded, she said: "*Pilgrimage*, whose conclusion was clear before it was begun, is not yet finished" (qtd. in Winning 2000, 15).

Time is crucial both in *Pilgrimage* and in *The Tunnel*, as it is Miriam's task to take into consideration how time has passed in her life and write about what has happened to her. Rebecca Bowler (2016) suggests that "it is this continual self-reflection that makes *Pilgrimage* a tour-de-force of modernism" (6), and later on she adds that "Proust and Richardson (among a few others) are pioneers in the transformation of "literary impressionism into something quintessentially modernist" (232). This is because instead of *regaining* time,

they are *reshaping* time (232). The incessant flow of time gives a profound understanding of the past and a clearer consciousness of the present and these contribute to a new way of explaining the realities of Miriam as well as of Marcel (the narrator of *À la recherche* who shares his first name with Marcel Proust) (Paradisi 2012, 57).

Being conscious of the passing of time, and actually time itself, is much less explicit in *The Tunnel* than in *À la recherche*, but the two protagonists share a very similar, if not identical, path to becoming writers, and the result is much the same too—which is the books being written. Undoubtedly more complex in *À la recherche du temps perdu*, time nevertheless has similar roles in the narration and in the ending of the sequences in both novels. Both Marcel and Miriam have to realise that in order to become writers, they have to dig deep into their own selves to be conscious of the depths of their past. In *À la recherche du temps perdu* as well as in *The Tunnel*, this way, they become conscious of how time behaves (passes) and how their memories may serve as tools to recreate their own reality. Therefore, in other words, the way the two protagonists can get in touch with their own past is through remembering; through their memories.

The Use of Memory in *À la recherche du temps perdu*

As mentioned before, time has a multifunctional role in *À la recherche du temps perdu*. On many occasions, different Bergsonian perceptions of time (*internal* and *external time*) influence how the narration flows. They also affect how much information the narrator includes about the various events in the narration. These events are told with the use of the first-person narrator Marcel's memory and his constant and unique remembering of past events. Proust first tested his ideas on the use of memory in narration in *Jean Santeuil*, written between 1896 and 1900. At that point in time, though, he was not yet a mature writer and he was not able to create a story that would make use of the workings of human memory. Therefore, he left *Jean Santeuil* unfinished (Carter 2001, 34; Azérad and Schmid 2013, 68). Proust had become a more mature thinker by the time he started writing *À la recherche* around 1909. Roughly a decade passed between the composition of the two works, which gave Proust the time and opportunity he needed to work on his ideas on memory and narration. As a consequence, *À la recherche du temps perdu* is a significantly more complicated work than *Jean Santeuil*. This is primarily manifested in the way memory works and the theory of remembering unfolds during the seven volumes: Proust now clearly differentiates between *voluntary memory* (*la mémoire volontaire*) and *involuntary memory* (*la mémoire involontaire*). He does this in order to accommodate his ideas and those of Henri Bergson.

Bergson himself did have a theory concerning memory, in which he distinguished between *habit memory* (*souvenir-habitude*) and *memory image* (*souvenir-image*). However, as

Judit Karafiáth (2007) explains, the former represents knowledge and conformity in remembering, while the latter symbolises detailed personal memories (45). Bergson (1991) addresses the *memory image* in the second chapter of *Matière et Mémoire*, entitled “Of the Recognition of Images; Memory and Brain”, in which he makes it clear that he associates these memory images primarily with movement (95). Such an idea does not seem to be crucial to Proust’s theories as he rather focuses on, for instance, the temporal aspect of remembering, hence the importance of Bergsonian ideas of time. Furthermore, in an interview with Élie-Joseph Bois (1913), Proust himself refuted the claims that when it comes to the use of memory, *À la recherche* is a Bergsonian work. Proust’s distinction between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* in fact rather focuses on sensations, on the narrator sensing the world around him. So the question naturally arrives: if not Bergson, then who inspired Proust to make the distinction between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory*? Who helped him distil his ideas on memory so that, after failing to finish *Jean Santeuil*, he eventually wrote (and finished) a seven-volume novel sequence a few years later?

Marcel Proust’s father, Dr Adrien Achille Proust was a famous doctor who wrote several articles and books on medicine (*Traité d’hygiène publique et privée*, 1877; *La défense de l’Europe contre le choléra*, 1892). W. L. Werner (1931) notes that the father was interested in neuroscience, and that Jean-Martin Charcot’s writings on neurobiology were regular topics in Proust family discussions (276). Charcot was the teacher of Sigmund Freud, for example, and of another neuroscientist: Paul Sollier. Suffering from psychological exhaustion, Marcel Proust spent six weeks in Sollier’s sanatorium at the end of 1905 and the beginning of 1906 (Bogousslavsky 2007, 133). Sollier had already written two theses on memory, *Les troubles de la mémoire* (1892) and *Le problème de la mémoire* (1900) by that time. His latest, *Le mécanisme des émotions* (1905), was published just a few months before Proust was admitted to the sanatorium (Bogousslavsky and Walusinski 2009, 130). According to Edward Bizub (2006), right at the beginning of Proust’s stay at Sollier’s sanatorium, he and Sollier had a quarrel about Bergson. Proust probably wanted to impress the French doctor, or test his knowledge, or provoke him, as Sollier was famous for harshly disagreeing with Bergson (184). The latter can be seen, for example, on the pages of *Le problème de la mémoire* (Sollier 1900, 11–12).

As a doctor, Sollier was interested in the medical study of hysteria and neurasthenia. Sollier’s treatments were aimed at “awakening the inhibited cortical areas, mainly in stimulating apparently forgotten memories”, for example, in traumatised soldiers (Bogousslavsky and Walusinski 2011, 108). Sollier highlights in *Le problème de la mémoire* that it is through the senses that he aims to bring back memories from the past: “la reproduction des images de ces souvenirs se ferait, elle,

par l'intermédiaire des centres fonctionnels moteurs ou sensoriels"¹ (Sollier 1900, 92). In other words, his treatments were based on evoking memories in the patients by introducing them to sensations. Bogousslavsky (2007) states that "Sollier tried to obtain a 'catharsis' through sensory stimulations and awareness of inner and outer stimuli" (134). Sollier—in fact made them relive certain experiences from their past, as though they were there again, in those moments. In his thesis on memory, he presents his concepts of memory and remembering this way:

A memory is an image [...] which reproduces a past impression. Re-experiencing is something more: it is not only the appearance of an image into the field of consciousness, but this appearance is so clear and is accompanied by such a precise and intense reproduction of the state of personality of the subject at the time of the initial impression, that this subject again believes they are going through the same events as before. (trans. Bogousslavsky and Walusinski 2011, 110–111)²

The sensations bring back memories that have been long buried in the patient's mind. Through Sollier's sensory experiments, not only were the memories recovered but also the personality of the patient at that time, as well as his/her past thoughts and emotions connected to who they were at that point in time. In other words, the patient's *involuntary memory* helped the patient reconnect to his/her past self. In addition, self-recovery or identity-recovery is a process that has been discussed with regard to time as well. The main point there was that with the help of reconnecting with his past (which is actually done with involuntary remembering), Marcel can finally get in touch with time and put it into words, thus becoming a writer and realising himself.

Sollier also discusses how hearing a word, for example, might involuntarily bring back certain images from the past: "Each memory is composed of unequally intense elementary images whose essential character is the ability to be associated with each other. [...] Simultaneously, these images (according to the subjects) can be awakened by the memory of a word" (Sollier 1892, 32, my translation).³ Here,

¹ The images of these memories would be reproduced through the motor functional or sensory centres. (my translation)

² "Le souvenir est une image [...] reproduisant une impression passée. La reviviscence est quelque chose de plus : c'est non seulement l'apparition dans la conscience d'une image, d'une impression ancienne, mais avec une teinte nette, et de plus accompagnée de la reproduction si précise et intense de tout l'état de personnalité du sujet au moment de l'impression première, que ce sujet croit de nouveau traverser les mêmes événements qu'autrefois" (Sollier 1900, 29).

³ "Chaque souvenir est composé d'un certain nombre d'images élémentaires dont les unes et les autres sont d'inégale intensité, mais qui ont pour caractère essentiel d'être associées chacune à toutes les autres. [...] Le souvenir d'un mot éveille en même temps, mais d'une façon prédominante suivant les sujets, ces différentes images."

Sollier essentially explains that memories are composed of a number of images (some of higher, some of lower intensity) and that they all constitute the same memory. He also claims that these images can be revoked in one's memory *involuntarily*. This idea is the basis of both Sollier's and Proust's work. Both emphasise the fact, though, that voluntary remembering will not have the same results as the evocation of memories involuntarily. Sollier explains this with a simple, almost proverbial example: the more one tries to remember something, the further the memory will drift. Thus, the will power (*la volonté*) proves counterproductive. However, if one is not forced to remember, the memory comes back right away involuntarily, bringing the emotions of the past with it. Marcel of *À la recherche* describes the same thought right at the beginning of *Du côté de chez Swann*:

It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture [our own past]: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling. (Proust [1913] 1992, 60)

This idea is crucial to our understanding of the volumes of *À la recherche*: it points to the fact that Proust's novel sequence is not simply about telling the story of Marcel's past but rather it is about *how* that story from his past is narrated. The passage suggests that no matter how hard one tries to remember something from the past using one's intellect, only a sensation will bring back the whole of the memory. A similar thought process can be recognised in this to a previous one related to a distinction between Bergson's *external* and *internal time*. Bergson claimed in *Time and Free Will* that will power is also futile in that forcing ourselves to measure our sense of internal time will only result in "creating" external time. Here, forcing the intellect, the will power in theory would transform involuntary to voluntary remembering. However, the point Proust makes in *À la recherche*, like Sollier in *Le problème de la mémoire*, *voluntary memory* and *will* are deemed powerless because only the *involuntary memory* has the power to capture the past.

According to Anna Balakian, the *voluntary memory* in *À la recherche* represents the "chronological, rationally remembered events of the past", while the *involuntary memory* works with the "more vivid though less structured visions" of the past (96). A well-known example for the latter is the famous madeleine scene from *Du côté de chez Swann*, the first volume of *À la recherche*:

And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before mass), when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it. (Proust [1913] 1992, 60)

Marcel, the narrator, struggles to remember the past but the taste of the madeleine is suddenly able to bring back his childhood memories, and all the emotions, thoughts, reflections attached to the sweet madeleine. In the words of Llantada Díaz (2009), "the difference between outside and inside is blurred, as the person interiorises external objects, connecting them intimately with his/her own self, giving them another dimension, a more spiritual form of existence" (paragraph 5).

This idea shows great similarity to the one Sollier (1900) used in his memory sessions with his patients, when he sought to bring back memories with sensory stimuli (92). However, Proust knew better than Sollier the artistic value of these moments of *involuntary memory*. Proust recognised them as moments of inspiration. He believed also that these memories can work towards re-creating reality, can help find the time that a character would feel was "lost" in his/her daily existence (Carter 2001, 34). Proust thus uses this "technique" of remembering to create an opportunity for his narrator, Marcel, to actually "recapture" his past, which will be Marcel's chief aim. Marcel struggles with his relationship with time throughout the seven volumes of *À la recherche*, and it is when he realises the power that lies within remembering that he can finally understand how time works (at least, for him). This is how he becomes self-identical: he finds himself in being able to capture time though remembering. In literary circles today, Marcel Proust and his novel sequence is well-known for this special way of using memory to create the narrative, so much so that he is called by the *litterati* as "the apostle of passive memory" (Lalou 1927, 2).

The Use of Memory in *The Tunnel*

Dorothy Richardson was an enthusiastic reader of Proust's work. María Francisca Llantada Díaz (2009) mentions that Richardson often talked about her admiration of the French writer in her letters to Beaumont Wadsworth, and she also wrote an extended review, entitled *Mr Clive Bell's Proust* (paragraph 3). Richardson's close acquaintance with *À la recherche* is rather noticeable in her novel sequence *Pilgrimage*.

Memory and remembering are tremendously important notions in both series of novels. Valentina Paradisi (2012) claims that "in Richardson's case, memory is the most important of the wide range of mental phenomena to which she pays attention. If we take *Pilgrimage* to be a single work, it is significant that memories open and close the novel" (49). Memory is the principle on which the narrative depends: its role is to organise and arrange past experiences according to the narrator's subjective point of view. Remembering has the power of creating a kind of constancy against temporal erosion, that eternal destructive force which naturally and inevitably comes with time passing. However, while Proust considers losing and regaining time of equal importance, Richardson takes these matters much

more nonchalantly (54–55). Miriam of *Pilgrimage* is not as conscious of the passing of time as Marcel is in *À la recherche*. A further reason as to why memory is such a critical concept in the works of both authors is that memory has to fill in the role that the omniscient narrator would normally play in other novels (55). As Leon Edel (1955) puts it, “this removal of the author from the scene [...] created the need to use the memory of the characters to place the reader in a relationship with their past” (15). This means that it is memory (and the act of remembering) that is responsible for creating one of the chief relationships of the novels: the relationship between the reader and the narrator. Besides this, Marcel Proust’s differentiation between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* had an influence on Richardson’s narrative style. *The Tunnel* contains several instances of her use of *involuntary memory*, instances that are similar to ones that were described by Paul Sollier in the medical field, and later used by Proust in his literary work. Proust’s influence is clearly visible in the way remembering works in Richardson’s *The Tunnel*.

As mentioned earlier, during his psychiatric sessions, Sollier used to retrieve events from his patients’ past and recover their past self with all the old emotions and thoughts that had become attached to their personalities from an earlier period in their lives (Sollier 1900, 29). He also identified the emotions that had resurfaced during the sessions as the consequence of involuntary remembering (114–115). Proust used *involuntary memory* as a tool to build the narrative of *À la recherche*. One of the features that echoes Sollier in the way Proust uses involuntary remembering is how a past state of the personality is brought back together with the state of emotions from that time. *The Tunnel* is not different in this respect:

“Is she German?”

“Well... I think, as a matter of fact, she’s part Austro-Hungarian and part—well, Hebrew.”
A Jewess... Miriam left her surroundings, pondering over a sudden little thread of memory. An eager, very bright-eyed, curiously dimpling school-girl face peering into hers [...]. (Richardson 1919, 122)

In this passage, the *involuntary memory* is triggered by Miriam hearing the word “Hebrew”. This causes her consciousness to invoke an old memory that has attached itself to the word, and in an instant, she is back in her past again as a little girl without wanting or trying to remember. Importantly, this memory soon turns out to have a negative significance in Miriam’s life as her thoughts and feelings re-emerge from the shadows of the past. She feels those emotions, has those thoughts as if they were part of her present condition. This means that when *involuntary memories* appear in *The Tunnel*, they bear emotional information with them. This is a feature of Marcel Proust’s work as well, since in *À la recherche*, Marcel also shows emotional attachment when, for example, memories resurface in the madeleine scene.

Involuntary memories tend to come back because of certain sensations: a smell, a taste, a noise. The madeleine scene in *À la recherche* is a perfect example for this and so is the next scene from Richardson's *The Tunnel*:

But the moment she had just lived was the same, it was exactly the same as the first one she could remember, the moment of standing, alone, in bright sunlight on a narrow gravel path in the garden at Babington between two banks of flowers, the flowers level with her face and large bees swinging slowly to and fro before her face from bank to bank, many sweet smells coming from the flowers and amongst them a strange pleasant smell like burnt paper [...]. It was the same moment. (Richardson 1919, 251–252)

In both cases, the taste brings back quite a huge chunk of memory from the narrator's childhood. There are several sensations affecting Miriam in the moment described but she emphasises only one of them: the sense of smell. The smell of burnt paper involuntarily takes her back to a moment of the past due to which she re-experiences that particular fraction of the past as if it was in the present, as if it was "the same moment" (Richardson 1919, 252).

Although the core features of the treatment of memory are the same in *The Tunnel* and in *À la recherche*, there are still a number of differences that need to be mentioned. Firstly, in *The Tunnel*, *involuntary memories* may also appear when Miriam is in a "dreamy state" (Goldman 1960, 104), that is, when her psyche is relaxed or passive, but also unstable in a way. In such a dreamy state of mind, Miriam does not exist consciously in the present, thus, she is much more prone to wander off into the past. Secondly, while Proust only uses *involuntary memory* in his novels, Dorothy Richardson makes use of both the *voluntary* and the *involuntary memory*. In *The Tunnel*, when the past is involuntarily evoked, it sets off a stream of consciousness, and sometimes a "directive force", that is, the will power (or the intellect) starts to control the evoked experience in order to reveal "relevant and significant details" about it (Goldman 1960, 106). This force can be referred to as the power of *voluntary memory*:

She closed her eyes and drifted drowsily back to the moment of being awakened by the sudden cry. In the instant before her mind had slid back and she had listened to the muffled footsteps thudding along the turf of the low cliff above her head, waiting angrily and anxiously for further disturbance, she had been perfectly alive, seeing; perfect things all round her, no beginning or ending... there had been moments like that, years ago [...]. Her mind wandered back amongst these; calling up each one with perfect freshness. They were all the same. In each one she had felt exactly the same; outside life, untouched by anything, free. She had thought they belonged to the past, to childhood and youth. (Richardson 1919, 251)

The trigger above is the mentioned “dreamy”, passive state of mind which enables the memory to come back to Miriam involuntarily, though still in a rather shapeless and mysterious form. This is when Miriam can best find a connection to her past and “discover in the pattern of her experience a unifying thread” (Goldman 1960, 104–105). It is also important to note that after the *involuntary memory* appears, the intellect *voluntarily* interrupts the flow of remembering, and *continues* with the act of remembering. In this instance, remembering becomes a conscious, wilful action on Miriam’s part. This is significant because in this respect *The Tunnel* is different from *À la recherche*. Richardson does not explicitly differentiate between *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* like Proust, she uses both without restrictions. When it comes to remembering, *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* are found close together within the narrative of *The Tunnel*.

One final feature that differs in Proust and Richardson is the effect that memory has on narration. Proust’s narrative focuses entirely on the past and uses only instances of *involuntary memory* – thus rendering the narrator powerless until the moment he realises how he can “tame” time itself. Richardson’s storytelling is different in that, instead of Miriam constantly going backwards into the past, she rather brings the past to the present by using both her *voluntary* and *involuntary memories*. This contributes to the feeling of everything happening simultaneously in *The Tunnel* (Goldman 1960, 119). It also means that Miriam as narrator has a somewhat larger influence on her own storytelling: her narration does not rely on anything else other than herself and her own consciousness.

Conclusion

Pilgrimage has been called the “English, feminine *À la recherche*” (Paradisi 2012, 49), and it is true that there are many instances in which Proust had an influence on Richardson’s work. Most obviously, in both works, the narrators, Miriam and Marcel become fictional authors and in fact the actual authors of the novel sequences, making it difficult to separate fiction from reality at the end of *À la recherche* and *Pilgrimage*. Other than this, in Proust’s novels time becomes the central theme because the narrator’s aim is to find lost time and figure out how to actually capture it—and capture it, he does, due to the realisation of the power that lies within remembering the past and writing it down. But while in Proust’s work time is both subjective and objective, in Richardson’s novels perception of time is entirely subjective. Both authors make use of Bergson’s theories on remembering but objective, *external time* does not play as important a role in *The Tunnel* as it does in *À la recherche* as it is almost entirely through Miriam’s consciousness that the

reader gets to know all the events of the book. When it comes to Sollier's influence on the use of memory in Proust and in Richardson: Proust uses both *voluntary* and *involuntary memory* to form the narrative, although he makes more use of involuntary memory, while Richardson prefers using them together, although she does sometimes use only one of the types to build the narrative of her book(s). Finally, it is worth emphasising the point that Proust and Richardson (under Proust's influence) lead both protagonists (Marcel and Miriam) to a state of mind where they can fulfil their destinies and become authors. That is because in order for them to become writers, they have to realise the power of their own ability to recall and to capture the past, and write their own stories through remembering. *Pilgrimage* is not simply an "English, feminine *À la recherche*" but an English female modernist writer's re-thinking and re-working of Proust's famous novel sequence of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, one that clearly indicates Proust's influence on British literature beyond the modernist circles of the famous Bloomsbury group of Vanessa and Clive Bell, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf.

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Private Prison Cells: The Dynamics and Variety of Ian McEwan's Space Concepts of the Postmodern Gothic

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The paper will examine the dynamics of changes in the concepts of spaces in the selected novels written by the contemporary British author Ian McEwan. It will define the role of representational spaces in McEwan's early novels (*The Cement Garden*, *The Comfort of Strangers*) and concentrate on the term of intense focalization in the author's recent novel *Nutshell*. The main aim of the paper is to trace the presence of the uncanny in McEwan's fictional spaces and explore the theme of space violation and disturbing human privacy within the closed space which points out to the genre of postmodern Gothic.

Keywords: Ian McEwan, postmodern chronotope, space violation, the uncanny, postmodern Gothic

1. Introduction: Space Narrative

In his *Theory of Space in Narrative*, Zoran distinguishes three levels of space in literature, the first one being the topographical level in which space functions as a static entity. Secondly, space in accordance with time implies the chronotopic level, it is the space dynamically imposed with events and movements, and thirdly, the space in literature functions on the textual level as the space imposed with verbal sign, it is the representational space which supplies the “reconstructed world” (Zoran 316).

As for the topographical level of fictional spaces, the text can express topographical structure employing direct description as well as other textual components, such as a dialogue or another form of the narrative (Zoran 316). Theoretically, within the narrative tradition of realism, it may allow us the creation of a topographical map¹ including the spatial existence of characters. In McEwan's *Comfort of Strangers* (1981), it would have been possible to draw a map of Venice according to the movement of characters in particular streets, even though the name of the city is never mentioned directly. It should exist as a universal city which is subject

¹ Cf. David Harvey's mental mapping in Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 13.

to globalization and thus functions as a labyrinth of the characters' aimless movement. Hence, the topographical level does not play a crucial role in the postmodern spatial construct and the aim of this paper shifts towards the chronotopic and textual levels of analysis.

Secondly, in Zoran's structural theory, the chronotopic level of the text is to be considered. It is undoubtedly more productive to concentrate on the chronotope as Henri Lefebvre stated that we cannot rely on literature in terms of providing "true pictures" of the world (Lefebvre). Thus, the topographical level of the novel, especially in the postmodern sense, cannot be sufficient even within the poetics of realism. According to Paul Smethurst, the chronotope provides us with information "how an author has arranged representational space to convey conceptions and anxieties about space and time in society" (Smethurst 62). The paper will further concentrate on McEwan's anxiety in the space of his early novels, namely in the theme of violation of private space, human alienation, and isolation of particular characters. The aim is to examine the changes in McEwan's tone and poetics in the 21st century in the context of the space analysis.

2. Postmodern Space Representations

Postmodern theories frequently focus on defining the notion of *place* in contrast with the definition of *space*. Space is understood as more abstract, it is the undifferentiated space with the potential to become a place as we experience it and endow it with value. Thus, the relation between a place and space may be described as dialectical, as a relation between presence and absence (Smethurst 55). "Place never has complete presence, both because it is always disappearing and being reproduced, and also because much of its presence is conditioned by representational spaces which are properly absent from concrete structures and spaces that constitute physical place" (Smethurst 55).

McEwan's use of representational spaces may be analyzed particularly in his early novels, *The Cement Garden* and *The Comfort of Strangers*. The house on the outskirts of a city in *The Cement Garden* occupied by four orphaned siblings, or a model city in *The Comfort of Strangers* become symbolic labyrinths of the postmodern civilization without any specific existential aim. According to K. Vránková, the house in *The Cement Garden* reflects "the emptiness of the future [...] caused by the ruin of social and family ties [...] representing a deep and passionate desire to defy the transitoriness of life by preserving the idealized and unchangeable image of childhood" (Vránková 2019, 127–8). Amsterdam as a place in the eponymous novel also functions as a representational model for the characters who in the final

crucial scene visit a city hotel because they want to make use of the benevolent legal system of the country. In the grim and grotesque scene, the two former friends misuse the law which allows legal euthanasia and paradoxically enough they commit murder poisoning each other. The fictional setting of the Amsterdam hotel then becomes a representational place selected by the author due to its symbolic quality.

The postmodern chronotope in McEwan's novels thus functions as a form of *Weltanschauung* producing a time-space map of the contemporary world. In *Solar*, McEwan's 2010 novel, the variety of fictional settings becomes more globalized as the main protagonist travels worldwide for both professional and private reasons. The novel focuses on extreme contrasts as for the climate of the opening and final part, introducing the character in the first scene taking part in an Arctic expedition, and finding him on the verge of death of a heart attack in Mexico in the extremely hot climate of the last scene. The novel's focus on the environment points to the global world changes in the climate and reflects the character's crisis in the globalized world.

3. The Violation of Private Space in the City

Looking back at the history of space representations of the city in the course of the 20th century, London indeed displays its modernist legacy, particularly in McEwan's novel *Saturday*, published in 2005. Taking place in just one day (and the dreadful night), it reflects the Woolfian heritage and mirrors *Mrs Dalloway* in several aspects.² In spite of the modernist allusions in the space-time structure of the novel, *Saturday* is an expression of postmodern fear of potential dangers that lurk from London narrow streets and may terrify even the self-confident and relatively well-situated characters. Therefore, we can trace the presence of the uncanny in the novel. The crucial incidents of space violation happen either within Perowne's own private space of the house or in the neighbouring streets of his residence, the very first incident of the plane accident being witnessed by him directly from the window of his bedroom. Therefore, the line between his professional space of work in the hospital, the private space of his home residence, and public and social life in the street, is very thin and the public space seems to intrude into his privacy radically. The most serious incident, which starts in the street but is later shifted into Perowne's residence, affects the whole family and has its climax in the hospital,

² Philip Tew analyzed the details of the comparison between *Saturday* and *Mrs Dalloway* in *The Contemporary British Novel* (2007).

over the operation table where the main character faces a moral choice; either to let the criminal and the initiator of the brutal assault live or let him die. In comparison to other McEwan's characters of his novels, this moral choice is clear and the neurosurgeon has a chance to forgive his enemy and deserve his moral credit.³

As for the violation of the private space in McEwan's novels, the bedroom seems to be the place most exposed not only to perversion and macabre incidents (in *The Cement Garden*, *The Comfort of Strangers*) but it also reflects particular moments of the characters' existential crisis in their individual lives (*Saturday*, *On Chesil Beach*) or the critical moments of the lives' beginnings and ends (*Nutshell*). Thus, the private space of the bedroom points indirectly to the title of McEwan's early collection of short stories *First Love, Last Rites* (1975), and it expresses postmodern uncertainties and fear of the violation of privacy as the main themes of McEwan's novels.

According to Nora Pleßke⁴, public and private spheres of human life become permeable in the postmodern city, especially through the media. Such a notion may be reflected both in McEwan's *Saturday* and *Nutshell*. In the latter novel, the yet unborn hero constructs his idea of the outside world not only as he listens to his mother's voice and her dialogues with his father and with Claude, his uncle, but also as he perceives the noise of the city and overhears the radio news. His sarcastic comments on the world situation and contemporary society then become the source of humour and irony.

Nevertheless, the tone of the narrative in *Saturday* remains as serious as the main protagonist's profession. The climax of the novel is based on the interpenetration of "public drama into the private" (Pleßke 196) as the criminal assault of the neurosurgeon's patient affects the whole family, intruding into the party.⁵ Another aspect of the interpenetration of the public sphere into the private life of the characters of the novel is the confrontation of social classes. Henry Perowne becomes confronted with a criminal whom he offends and enters his private space, revealing Baxter's medical diagnosis and thus humiliating him. The consequent revenge of the criminal, i.e. his intrusion into Perowne's private residence, is of course an inappropriate reaction. However, Perowne, who had deliberately stressed his social status in the

³ In McEwan's other novels, *Solar* (2010) and *Amsterdam* (1998), the main protagonists, particularly the worldwide known scientist awarded Nobel Prize in physics and the editor and the music composer in *Amsterdam*, are not as gifted as far as their moral credit is concerned.

⁴ For more, see Nora Pleßke, *The Intelligible Metropolis: Urban Mentality in Contemporary London Novels* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014), 223.

⁵ The motif of organizing a party and the final climax where the protagonists of *Saturday* become exposed to a deadly threat contribute to the context of intertextual allusions the novel shares with *Mrs Dalloway*.

car accident, became involved in more serious problems behaving condescendingly towards a person representing a lower social class. Moreover, Perowne indirectly expresses his contempt towards the crowd protesting in the square, again with the feeling of his social superiority. Thus, we may interpret the intrusion of the public sphere into the private one as a “moral lesson” for the neurosurgeon who becomes aware of his limits but also of his professional skills. In his professional sphere, he acts like someone who is morally strong and is finally able to forgive the criminal. He has to face the challenge not to succumb to the strange and possibly dangerous other, and defend the familiar space. Foucault considers the space between familiarity and strangeness as a heterotopian space of liminality⁶, which is the characteristic position the protagonist of the novel has to face in the climax of *Saturday*.

4. McEwan's London and the Urban Experience

For Henri Lefebvre, the starting point for the conceptualization of space is the lived experience of place. Nevertheless, spatial practices tend to become the subject of conceptual aestheticization, especially of the modern urban existence. More specifically in the case of the urban space representation, as David James points out, “fictional settings often coerce us to participate in the way spaces are perceived” (James 15). Hence, our image of the city is to some extent enriched by the creation of fictional spaces in spite of our lived experience.

According to the phenomenological theory of Merleau-Ponty⁷, the lived space and subjective existential experience related to a particular subject results in a form of psychological introspection and points out to the reflections about the self and the look within.

McEwan's 2016 novel *Nutshell* offers such introspection in an extreme example of the tight, enclosed, uncanny space of the mother's womb. The novel is set in a Georgian London house which, ironically, reflects the postmodern sense of human corruption, moral decay, and deterioration of a family. *Nutshell* is an allusion to “family relations” of a Shakespearean tragedy but it also points out criticism of contemporary materialism, the hunt for money and human cruelty accompanying the feeling of intensive physical passion and ignorance. The space of the novel can be understood and perceived by the reader in two ways. The “outside” world is,

⁶ For more, see Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”, trans. Jay Miskowic. *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*. no. 5(1984): 46–49.

⁷ For more, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1962).

paradoxically, limited to the house interiors which are kept consistently unclean because of the mother's decision to ignore basic cleaning habits, resulting in omnipresent heaps of garbage around the house, rotten food, and massive dirt. The state of the household reminds the reader of McEwan's first crucial novel, *The Cement Garden*, in which the children's behaviour reflects a revolt against social norms and their paralysis after the parents' death. In *Nutshell* the mess becomes a symbol of the woman's omnipresent ignorance of her marriage and her social role of a to-be mother. The house is generally dilapidated for particular reasons as the lovers intricate the murder plot to get rid of the husband, the house owner. The first person narrator, however, projects the novel's perspective from the "inside" of his mother's womb: "So here I am, upside down in a woman. Arms patiently crossed, waiting, waiting and wondering who I'm in, what I'm in for." (Mc Ewan 2016, 1)

In *Nutshell*, the reader enters the essentially biological inner space of the yet unborn child, who, in many respects, resembles a little nameless Hamlet, and consequently witnesses the moments between the child's conception and his birth. From the psychological point of view, it is the space-time of being and becoming, a certain mode of the narrator's dream-time which depends intensively on his imagination of space perceived by other senses (the sense of hearing, tasting and possibly smelling things from the outside world). Symbolically, the space of the mother's womb represents a prison cell, an enclosed, tight space from which there is no escape. Therefore, the narrator's existence becomes extremely painful before he even enters the outside world. His desire is to be born, to act and prevent his father's murder. He calls for more space since the spatial limits of the womb become tragic before his birth and the lack of space for action frequently leads him to suicidal attempts. Though the situation seems to be hopeless and extremely dramatic, the reader can finally hope for a minimum level of justice as the child is born before the murderers can escape.

5. Intense Focalization in *Nutshell*

According to David James, McEwan's narrative technique is based on the "intensely focalized reception of distances and proximities, moment to moment [as] McEwan emphasizes these perspectival restrictions, conveying spectacular events by accreting successive details rather than intervening as a narrator. [...] McEwan shows us how space in the novel can rarely be dissociated from the artistry of narrative perception" (James 10).

In *Nutshell*, the reader is offered a limited narrative perspective of the yet unborn child. The term intense focalization, as defined by James, can be understood as "a

preferable alternative to its predecessor-term, point of view" (James 10), and in the particular case of *Nutshell*, it becomes associated with the prenatal perspective of the narrator. Therefore, the tight and enclosed space is narrowed and determined merely by the baby's imagination based on what he mainly hears and perceives other than visual senses. He can perceive the bodily functions of his mother, becomes affected by her emotions, blood pressure and her physical condition. More specifically, his mood and his feelings change sometimes rather involuntarily according to the amount of alcohol in his and his mother's veins, which, as for the mother's behaviour, seems irresponsible, or in the extreme measure, a sign of her moral perversion. Hence, moral questions arise not only in the speech analysis of the mother and her lover, who are involved in the murderous plot against the baby's father, but the way she treats the child is careless from the start in every stage of her pregnancy. What is in question and what causes the "little Hamlet's" main dilemma is his right for existence since he does not seem to be in the position of a wanted child. However, his attempts to kill himself in the mother's womb is rather desperate, as well as his striving to be born prematurely. There is no doubt he will witness his father's murder even before he is born, as the space of the womb holds him tight. Even the option of preventing the murder seems hopeless. The only thing he can announce is his mere existence which is, however, rather uncertain and depends on his mother's will to let him live on and be born. McEwan's recent spatial experiment in *Nutshell* seems to be based on the author's most cruel intention to change the space concept of the baby's safe and at first very comfortable place in the nearest proximity of the mother inside her body into a place of horror and a prison-like cell from where there is no escape. There is also the psychological development of the baby's mind as he matures with every successive phase of the mother's pregnancy. However, this is not the only way for his physical and mental development. He gains experience with the knowledge of the murderous plot against his father, learns more details of the crime arrangements, and the dramatic tension of the narrative is intensified not only by the approaching date of his birth but also by the upcoming act of murder. As for the narrative perspective of intense focalization, the baby's mind works rationally as if it were the reasoning of a young adult person, with a sense of humour, irony and bitterness of the prenatal life experience, metaphorically reflecting existential thoughts of Shakespeare's tragic hero. His instinctive feelings are related to the mother in the closest attachment which is rather ambivalent. However, in his physical and mental existence, he is imprisoned in the mother's body where he is merely able to overhear other people's dialogues, trying to intervene in vain. Thus, his dilemma of revenge and his ability to act become spatially limited, and therefore he has no option but to wait until he is born. As part of his emotional struggle he is driven by the love of his moth-

er and he has to admit that he loves her unexceptionally regardless of any space for rational reasoning. In *Nutshell*, McEwan constructs the extraordinary mental world producing the so-called time-space compression (Harvey 1990, 284), in which spatial and temporal distances shrink in an extreme example. The amount of information the unborn child can grasp and absorb into his mind is another extreme paradox of the text, which may be interpreted as a result of the influence of media and globalization.

The establishment of the so-called spatial mentality is, according to Harvey, “prone to transformations” (Harvey 1985, 34). Its change reflects the attitudes of fictional characters towards space and their perception of the space which surrounds them. In *Nutshell*, McEwan’s experiment of space perception relies on the experience of the yet unborn hero who creates a mental map of London out of the elements the character perceives without seeing anything of the outside world. This aspect of the spatial experiment may be seen as extremely unrealistic even if we consider the scientific development in the field of examining the mind of an unborn child.

6. The Uncanny as a Part of the Postmodern Gothic

Defining the Gothic aspects in postmodern fiction, one should consider the interaction of Gothic elements in the context of postmodern literature in general. Both Gothic and postmodern literature blurs the boundary between the real and the fictional, considering the sublime effect of terror, the atmosphere of gloom and suspense and taking into account the demonic aspects of the main characters of postmodern Gothic fiction. The sublime aspect further points out to the unrepresentable, including the subjectivity and a self-conscious narrator of the postmodern Gothic novels. The “Uncanny”, as pointed out by Lucy Armitt, “unravels itself even in the act of being written/read, and in the process, appears to take on a life of its own” (Powell, Smith 78). Hence, the text of postmodern Gothic fiction becomes open to the multiplicity of meanings, in an uncanny affinity with the literary tradition of the postmodern and the Gothic, simultaneously.

Among the variety of space concepts of McEwan’s novels, *The Cement Garden*, *Saturday*, and *Nutshell* reflect the focus on the theory of the Postmodern Gothic. In McEwan’s novels, the uncanny seems to lurk from behind the corners of London houses and apartments, in the extreme example of *Nutshell*, the confined and ghostly atmosphere becomes unravelled first from the point before the main character is even born. McEwan structures the concepts of inner spaces of the house or home with the sense of the postmodern Gothic as something “unhomely”, in correspondence with Nicholas Royle’s theoretical concept of the uncanny:

But the uncanny is not simply an experience of strangeness or alienation. More specifically, it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context. It can consist in a sense of homeliness uprooted, the revelation of something unhomely at the heart of hearth and home. (Royle 1)

In *The Cement Garden*, the unhomely becomes closely associated with the vaguely described events in connection with the parents' either sudden death in the case of the father, or in the description of the mother's illness resulting in the process of her dying. The reaction of the adolescent narrator and his sisters can be analyzed as a reaction to the repressed moment of terror (as described by Steven Bruhm in *Contemporary Gothic: why we need it*), where the uncanny is associated with the traumatic experience of the loss of parents, and it reflects upon the inexpressible experience connected with the parents' death. The adolescents' reaction to the situation and their spontaneous behaviour is then perceived as a deviation from the social and moral norms. Nevertheless, such behaviour can also be understood as resulting from the want of "desires and objects that have been forbidden" (Hogle 263): "These unconscious desires center on the problem of a lost object, the most overriding basis of our need for the Gothic and almost everything else. That loss is usually material [...], but the materiality of that loss always has a psychological and symbolic dimension to it" (Hogle 263).

McEwan's critical point in *The Cement Garden*, which can be read as a social study of the characters' behaviour, stresses the lack of moral authorities and family values. In accordance with the idea of Fred Botting, this notion of space can be considered as a form of cultural exhaustion (Hogle 277–99). The dilapidated house on the outskirts, occupied only by four orphaned siblings, becomes a fragmentary world, a cultural desert that symbolically reflects the loss of meaning in human lives of the postmodern era.

In *The Comfort of Strangers*, the concept of the city resembles a labyrinth of anonymous streets, reflecting the boredom and intellectual crisis of the main characters. The title of the novel becomes strangely ambiguous as the strangers in the city, the two main protagonists, are comforted first in death. In *The Uncanny*, Nicholas Royle mentions the theory of the death drive, which, according to Jonathan Dollimore (*Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture*), becomes "life's driving force, its animating, dynamic principle" (Royle 85). As Royle claims further, the theoretical approach to the death drive had been stated in Freud's essay "The Uncanny" in 1919, without being mentioned explicitly. The death drive works in silence, Royle states (Royle 86), in correspondence with the general approach to the theoretical concept of the uncanny. It is "demonic, diabolical" (Royle, 88) and "eerily uncanny." In *The Comfort of Strangers*, the characters seem to be driven into

death within the principle of the death drive, surrounded by the uncanny presence of the city. Their human existence ends up in silence, in a vortex of meaningless violence which contributes to the postmodern theory of the uncanny and corresponds with the absurdity of human actions in the contemporary civilization.

In correspondence with McEwan's omnipresent sarcasm underlying the title of the novel, the characters ramble around the city in lethargy, spending the days half asleep as if they were numb, in a state of paralysis and sensual crisis. The author's concept of space in *The Comfort of Strangers*, in which the city contradicts its image of an ideal tourist destination that should bring a particular excitement to the senses, reflects Lyotard postmodern theory of unrepresentability: "[...] modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure" (Lyotard 340).

In the sense of the postmodern cultural fragmentation and plurality (Botting 113), the city in *The Comfort of Strangers* can be perceived as an empty space. It remains anonymous as well as universal, it loses its proper name and the structure of the plot of the novel is hardly based on events, in correspondence with the postmodern theory (Slocombe 65). The plot becomes uneventful in a peculiar cycle of the characters' boredom until the climax in which the couple experiences a sublime moment before their death, in the hope that "something will happen, despite everything, within this threatening void, that something will take place and will announce that everything is not over" (Slocombe 65). In the novel's conclusion, the overwhelming motif of meaningless violence and exaggerated brutality reminds the reader of the postmodern crisis of humanity, and the presence of the uncanny that merely lurked from behind the scene becomes clearly revealed.

In *The Contemporary Gothic*, Stephen Bruhm states that Postmodern Gothic focuses on the experience of shock and trauma in a blend of fear and desire (Hogle 268). In her theoretical approach to the presentation of the modern theories of the sublime, Kamila Vrankova expands this notion further:

Dealing with the experience of shock or trauma, the postmodern concepts of the sublime draw on a paradoxical desire to speak about what cannot be uttered in words. In this respect, the sublime is a protest against the notion of silence as nothingness, or indifference. Corresponding with the inexpressible as an urgent presence of something (instead of nothing), it is associated with what cannot be spoken and cannot remain in silence at the same time." (Vrankova, 2018, 5)

The experience of shock or trauma resulting in silence is a moment which permeates the lives of the majority of characters of the aforementioned novels. The extreme and grotesque example of a similar trauma can be traced in *Nutshell*. The yet unborn hero confronts the existential question whether his life will be worth it, as he contemplates in his private prison cell of the mother's womb, in the confined Gothic space which in a way resembles a coffin. Creating an intensively morbid image of someone being buried alive, through the hero's limited ability to move or act, McEwan makes use of the omnipresent sense of the macabre, alluding not only to Shakespeare's tragedy but also to his early novels. The yet unnamed hero of *Nutshell* faces an existential crisis of Hamlet unborn. In correspondence with Royle's notion of the Uncanny, in *Nutshell*, the sense of one's self is strangely questionable, the hero is surrounded by the feeling of uncertainty in the presence of something weird and mysterious that is being experienced (Royle 1) as a part of a metafictional play upon the reader and the Shakespearean characters within the play.

7. Conclusion

In the dynamic development of his space concepts, McEwan works with the category of the literary uncanny as the most frequent spatial practice. In connection with the theme of anxiety of space violation and ignorance of individual privacy, the characters/ victims of the novel *Saturday*, *Amsterdam* and *Atonement* should be mentioned. They are victims of the uncanny in the Freudian sense since they suffer from intellectual uncertainty and the reader's feeling of the presence of the uncanny approaches the real uncanny experience. McEwan's literary works rely on the presence of the uncanny through the depiction of the environment that seems to be familiar in its detailed description but lurking behind the scene there is the sense of the unexpected, unfamiliar and unhomely that should be anticipated at all times. The interrelationship between the protagonist and his spatial surroundings allows the existence of the uncanny in McEwan's novels as a spatial phenomenon. In *The Comfort of Strangers*, the urban labyrinth of a holiday resort forms the architecture of the uncanny as the plot twists from a boring ramble through the city into the brutal and unexpected final scene. The general use of darkness which hides potential criminal assaults becomes characteristic for *Atonement* and *Saturday*, spying in the dark forms the uncanny element in *Sweet Tooth* and *The Innocent*.

The limitations of McEwan's space concepts reflect upon the closed spaces as they occur in the works of Gothic fiction. Extreme examples of isolation or imprisonment in a confined space frame the space concepts of McEwan's first novel, *The*

Cement Garden, and *Nutshell*, one of McEwan's latest works. In *Nutshell*, the reader is offered an insight into a spiritual space of the Hamlet yet unborn. The mental space of the child becomes a paradoxical distortion of Shakespeare's metaphor of the king of infinite space through interior monologues which allow the child a premature encounter with the truth of the outside world.

Considering the development and the dynamics of McEwan's space concepts, they seem to include a relatively narrow scope of fictional settings, both urban and rural. As for the images of the English countryside which appear in the short novel *On Chesil Beach*, or in episodic settings of *Sweet Tooth* and *Amsterdam*, the author makes use of traditional realistic techniques of natural descriptions in an evocation of a particular lyrical mood which corresponds with the feelings of characters on the scene. The author's major interest, however, centers in urban settings that reflect human alienation, isolation of individuals and existential crisis. As a result of intense focalization, McEwan's London is to some extent a mere mental space, mainly in his novels *The Cement Garden* or *Nutshell*. On the other hand, it is understood as a global metropolis in *Saturday*, similarly to McEwan's other novels (*Amsterdam*, *Solar*, *Sweet Tooth*). Both the private space of the individual and the global cityscape become united by the theme of space violation, the ignorance of privacy and the presence of the uncanny in the majority of McEwan's works.

From the most private space in *Nutshell*, intimate spaces in *On Chesil Beach* or *The Cement Garden*, McEwan proceeds to the globalized world in *Amsterdam*, *Saturday* and *Solar*. His characters are being watched, followed and spied on in the author's focus on the combination of the character's professional and private sphere of life in his contemporary works.

McEwan's focus on intense focalization and the presence of the uncanny contribute to further studies of the spatial dynamics of his works. The themes of breaking social conventions and the occurrence of taboo topics in his novels underlined by the omnipresent sense of the grotesque seem to reflect an unlimited variety of ideas and interpretations of both the fictional and real world.

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Transgression of the Sublime

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Kamila Vránková. 2019. *Metamorphoses of the Sublime: From Ballads and Gothic Novels to Contemporary Anglo-American Children's Literature*. České Budějovice: Pedagogická fakulta JU.

The scholar who studies the sublime, after a time, is likely to realise that several domains of humanity—in arts and in the humanities—are linked to the abundance of the aesthetic quality. Kamila Vránková has done intensive research and in her highbrow work, she presents the multiplicity of the theoretical approaches. In the thorough historical introduction on the development of the concept, in five subchapters, she highlights the origins of the term; its classical, Longinian understanding; then the 18th-century readings of the sublime (Dennis, Addison, Shaftesbury, Lowth, Baillie); in a separate part, the connections of the English Gothic fiction and the Burkean treatise titled *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*; the Kantian and the Romantic notions; finally, the modern and postmodern questions of the representation of the sublime in Derrida's, Lyotard's, Žižek's, and Jean-Luc Nancy's works. Reading the thirty-five-page introduction, the reviewer wonders whether and in what ways the results of her research will be applicable in the analytical parts: in the five chapters discussing Romantic and Victorian literary works, and in the four parts on children fantasy literature. Her analyses do not simply and cleverly rely on the interpretations of the sublime but they move beyond the theoretical framework—in accordance with the transgressive character of the presented quality.

In the chapter titled “Variations and Transformations of the ‘Lenore’ Motif in European Ballads,” the figure of the demon lover, the revenant, is presented and the phases of the luminal-spectral passage are displayed in several groups of works from Scottish folk ballads to selected English, German, Polish, Czech and Serbian romantic poems. The author pays special attention to the sublime auditory and visual images while, unfortunately, she does not quote too many lines from the analysed lyrics. The reviewer thinks that in the whole book, the readers could be happier to receive more textual evidence supporting the sophisticated ideas of the interpretations. In the case of the Lenore motif, in addition to E. A. Poe's

“The Raven”, Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s “The Blessed Damozel” could have been referred to, mainly due to its emblematic imagery, though it is the topic that is worth amplification and refinement in the future. In the next chapter, different elements of the Gothic masterpiece, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* are focused on, for instance, the roots of the monster figure, the intertextual allusions, the creature’s self-education and even pop cultural connections, except one thing—the sublime quality of the work. The possible ethical and Kantian connotations of the novel are thematised only in the last paragraph while the Burkean ones already appear in the introduction (24–25).

Still in the Romantic block, the fourth chapter presents the temporary and spatial perspectives of Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, where the “subliminal” (borrowed from J. B. Twitchell, 62) atmosphere is portrayed to mirror the characters’ mind and the threshold state of their existence. It is time to call attention to the brilliant footnotes attached to the main text of analysis that provide further tracks of ideas; in this chapter, for instance, with Todorov’s notion of the fantastic (66) and Bakhtin’s “chronotypes” (71); the latter will be explored in detail in children’s fantasies. Moving to American literature, the author examines Nathaniel Hawthorne’s works, namely in *Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys*, *Tanglewood Tales* and *The Marble Faun* and her main concern is about the rites of passage the characters undergo. The process of maturation—from the preliminal to the postliminal via the liminal stages—is based on Arnold van Gennep’s theory, while in the sublime reading the Burkean fearful and the Kantian moral implications are pointed out. The explication is made more stratified with the Greek and Roman mythological allusions (here, even the stories of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* are recalled), which together with the other cultural and artistic hints present the sublimity of the examined texts. It is the longest chapter of the book and it links the first, “Romantic part” with the second on Gothic children literature. But, as a strange intermezzo, the comparative analysis of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* follows, in which the questions of the voyage, self-quest, and otherness are discussed. Here, in addition to the recall of Deleuze’s theory of sensation, Gadamer’s and Lévinas’s (and even Bakhtin’s) emphasis on dialogicity/dialogism, the sublime terror of otherness is mentioned (107). The reviewer misses the elaboration on the sublimity of excess—a topic being thematised in the introduction and neglected later—since the Rhys novel *sensationally* provides examples of the “too much” quality of otherness.

In the second part, where children’s fantasy works are explored, the author entangles the lines of her previous theorising on the sublime. In the introductory and contextualising chapter titled “Searching for the Other: Ethical Aspects of Fantasy Adventure in Contemporary Anglo-American Fiction for Children,” Vránková

says that “the notion of the sublime in modern fantasy stories draws on [...] the desire for harmony between the visible and the invisible, between the physical and spiritual experience. The feeling of the sublime, following an encounter with the higher forces, acquires a moral significance, in which the anxiety inspired by the inexplicable is accompanied by pleasure” (109–110). The morality of the fantasy works is claimed to be in accordance with the Kantian sublime while the acceptance of the other and its call hints at the Levinasian understanding of sublimity. In addition to the history In this chapter, the classification of children’s fantasies is provided (after Goldthwaite), which is beneficial, regarding the plenitude of the narratives. In the chapter on the exposition of children’s time-travel fantasies, so many time-slip stories are commented on that the argumentation is hardly possible to follow.

The most elaborate analysis of the fantasy stories is given in the last two chapters, especially the concluding one, “The Formless and the Unspeakable in J.K. Rowling, Chris Priestley and Lemony Snicket.” Here several quotations assist the reader to find the way in the labyrinth of the selected novels—as if the reader were to explore the Gothic revival of the sublime theories. The reading of Rowling’s *Harry Potter*, Priestley’s *Tales of Terror* and Snicket’s *Series of Unfortunate Events* shows the author’s best: due to her skill of accenting even minor details and, together with her concentration on the recurrent features of the sublime (namely, fear of the unknown, crossing the boundaries and transcendental experience), she manages not only to elucidate the studied works but also to arrange them in the original theoretical framework of her book. The reviewer is impressed by the bibliography that would be even more useful to researchers, scholars and students if an index of the frequently cited authors and concepts had been added.

Kamila Vránková’s *Metamorphoses of the Sublime* is an exhaustive monograph with fruitful insights into the immense amount of the examined works; moreover, it exhibits the monstrosity of the concept and offers new paths for its future interpretation.

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