A Fascinating Case Study of Jewish-Irish Literary Connections

Review of Dan O'Brien, *Fine Meshwork. Philip Roth, Edna O'Brien, and Jewish-Irish Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2020)

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The more than thirty volumes of the Jewish American writer, Philip Roth (1933–2018), who would have been ninety this year, have inspired an overwhelming quantity of various critical views from the derogatory to the appreciative or even rhapsodising since his debut with *Goodbye, Columbus!* in 1959. Among the recent studies, there is an increasing number of comparative works, conveying and reinforcing assumptions about Roth's cosmopolitanism and textual connections with other cultures and literatures. Dan O'Brien's monograph, *Fine Meshwork: Philip Roth, Edna O'Brien, and Jewish-Irish Literature* is unique in that it analyses several novels by Roth in comparison with selected works of the Irish Edna O'Brien (1930–), a literary friend of his for over four decades. In the introduction to *Fine Meshwork*, Dan O'Brien is eager to explain why, strange as it seems at first glance, the Jewish American male author and the London-based Irish Catholic female writer can be the joint subject of his book. One of the links binding them is that both partake of diasporic existence and—as Dan O'Brien argues—living in between cultures, they have developed a transnational approach to transmitting the human experience in fiction. Their writings, the critic continues, favour heterogeneity

at the expense of "concepts of purity: religious purity, nationalist purity, racial purity, historical purity, and literary purity" by means of allusions, borrowings, and intertextuality which defy barriers of time and space, thus challenging conventionally established principles of canon building (6–9).

Dan O'Brien introduces the two authors by placing them into relevant contexts, and provides informative examples of the ways in which they supported each other over the years of their friendship. When Edna O'Brien published a volume of her selected short fiction in 1984 under the Yeatsian title *A Fanatic Heart*, Roth wrote a preface to it and, in turn, another collection of short fiction of hers, *The Love Object* (2013), Edna O'Brien dedicated to Roth, who then recommended her novel *The Little Red Chairs* (2015) on its cover as her masterpiece (56–58, 61). The main title of Dan O'Brien's book, *Fine Meshwork*, is taken from Roth's talk with the Irish writer, originally published in *The New York Times* and later included in Roth's collected nonfiction: "I am struck, particularly in the stories of rural Ireland during the war years, by the vastness and precision of your recall. … The result is a fine piece of meshwork, a net of detail that enables you to contain all the longing and pain and remorse that surge through the fiction" (Roth, *Why Write?* 267). After Roth's death, Edna O'Brien published an obituary in *faber,* calling him a "great comic literary conquistador" whose works inspire the use of a multiplicity of attributes for their characterisation. Indeed, in most of his novels, the absurd and the grotesque accompany the tragic and distressing, so pervasive in one of Roth's awoved masters, Samuel Beckett. At the end of her obituary, Edna O'Brien recalls their final meeting and Roth's last words to her on taking farewell: "You're a valiant kid" ("The Great Comic Literary Conquistador"), which has certainly been true of both of them.

Chapters 2–6 in Dan O'Brien's book identify parallels between selected works of the two writers, beginning with the debuting ones published only a year apart, *Goodbye Columbus* (1959), a volume of a novella and short stories, and *The Country Girls* (1960), a trilogy. The critic dwells on the mixed reception these brave works met with at that time because of their sincere approach to taboo subjects such as the contradictory experiences of Jewishness and the barriers to the free expression of female sexuality. Edna O'Brien's trilogy, the critic contends, had many opponents, as it unmasks the "hypocrisy of the Irish state" and exposes "women's subordinate position in a patriarchal culture" (65, 68). In *Goodbye Columbus*, Dan O'Brien astutely pinpoints the scene in which the Jewish protagonist of the eponymous novella, Neil visits Saint Patrick Cathedral in New York and contemplates

his relationship with his girlfriend, Brenda as well as "his ambivalence toward the wealth and materiality of her family." For Dan O'Brien, "[it] is noteworthy that this moment occurs in an Irish Catholic space, perhaps an acknowledgment that the Jewish leap into American affluence mimicked prior assimilative success" (87). Roth's choice of the Irish name, Neil, cannot be accidental, either.

The third chapter of *Fine Meshwork* examines the two writers' use of the monologue form in their respective novels, *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) by Roth and *Night* (1972) by Edna O'Brien. Again, neither of the two works enjoyed a smooth enough reception, which Dan O'Brien attributes to the fact that most critics paid attention to the explicit sexual openness of the novels, ignoring their "implicit politics" (89). Sexually charged Portnoy rebels against his upbringing by traditionalist Jewish parents according to restrictive rules, but this is only the surface. Digging deeper, Dan O'Brien states that Portnoy does not suffer from threats of anti-Semitism to his individuality like the previous generation any more, much rather from the misplaced defensive view of Jews "as paragons" and superior to Christians (91). The monological narration in Edna O'Brien's *Night* is by the Irish Catholic Mary Hooligan, an ordinary middle-aged woman working in England, who calmly dwells on her transgressive sexual encounters and violations of conventional expectations of female behaviour. Comparably to what irritates Alex Portnoy, Mary recalls her childhood (in the poor post-independence Ireland of the 1930s) as an unpleasant time: "I don't know anyone who hasn't grown up in a madhouse, whose catechising hasn't been Do this, Do that, Don't do this, Do do it, I'll cut the tongue out of you, How bloody dare you, D'you hear?" (O'Brien, *Night* 38). Dan O'Brien emphasises that, through Mary's humiliating experiences, the novel offers a sharp critique of the dogmatic moral rigour of the Catholic Church which supported the exclusivist nationalist ideology of the new Irish state (105–107). As to their masters, both writers have been inspired by Joyce throughout their respective careers. Dan O'Brien thinks that "Roth draws on Leopold Bloom to confect Portnoy" and he finds Mary Hooligan's speech reminiscent of Molly Bloom's interior monologue (102–103). Part of this observation is questionable since Bloom and Portnoy differ quite a lot but Mary, raving in bed mainly about her sexual life at night, might be seen as modelled on Molly more convincingly.

In the fourth chapter, Edna O'Brien's early memoir, *Mother Ireland* (1976), and Roth's *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981) come under scrutiny. Although the latter is a novel, it is not too far from a memoir as its Jewish protagonist, Nathan Zuckerman,

the writer's alterego also keeps on inquiring into the forces that shape his own artistic identity. For Dan O'Brien, the Irish writer's influence on Roth is evidenced here by his construction of an Irish actress character called Caesara O'Shea, born in the picturesque West of Ireland like Edna O'Brien herself. Moreover, there is textual borrowing in Roth's novel from *Mother Ireland* in the use of a myth of origin about the Hebrew lady Caesara, who "set out with a flock of three men and fifty women, sailing through the Red Sea … to Ireland, Isle of Destiny, … Her people are the first to be interred there, the first in a long line of hardy Irish ghosts" (O'Brien, *Mother Ireland* 12). Dan O'Brien identifies Caesara under the name Cessair in Celtic mythology, granddaughter of Noah, and argues that this myth in a book about growing up in postcolonial Ireland underscores the heterogeneous sources of Irish culture due to various historical migrations, by which the writer challenges nationalist myths of Irishness as racially "monolithic" (117–118).

Roth's Caesara is built on the mythical figure in *Mother Ireland* and functions to address issues of race and ethnicity in 1970s America. The chapter considers parallels between Caesara and Alvin Pepler, a shadow figure of Zuckerman, who plagues him with questions and the story of his failed aspirations to become a writer. Pepler, Dan O'Brien contends, "is the embodiment of the white ethnic revival" and also its contradictory manifestations in the context of the "1970s fetishisation of ethnic identity" (124–125). Caesara plays leading roles in Hollywood-made films about the Irish, their sorrowful history and happier life in the New World, presenting a "studio-constructed identity" which ensures that "her appeal to American audiences appears to be as much ethnic as it is erotic" in Dan O'Brien's view, who adds that her "on-screen image symbolises how popular cultural products can manipulate history and cultivate myth" (127–128). Beside the figure of Caesara, *Zuckerman Unbound* abounds in references to Irish literature. A prominent example of this, Dan O'Brien notes, is Nathan and Caesara's discovery, on their first meeting, that both of them have read Richard Ellmann's monumental biography of James Joyce. The critic calls it "an unusual topic of flirtation" (121) but it may be seen as more than that: it suggests the absurdity of a close relationship between the ethnic groups the two characters represent, while also contributing to layers of the comic in Roth's novels. The impossibility of a lasting relationship between the two of them is intertextually underscored by Caesara quoting from Yeats's "Broken Dreams," a poem inspired by the poet's never consummated lifelong love for the actress-cum-revolutionary Maud Gonne, in her letter of farewell to Nathan. Dan O'Brien makes mention

of Roth's other intertextual or paratextual borrowings from the Irish treasury, for example the inclusion of the entire text of Yeats's poem "Meru" in *Sabbath's Theater* (1995) and evoking implicit details of Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in *The Humbling* (2009).

In the fifth chapter of his monograph, Dan O'Brien reads outstanding works by the two writers, fruits of their most productive years, the 1990s, which delve deeply into the entangled connections of historical events, complex social issues and personal lives. Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation* (1994) and Roth's *American Pastoral* (1997), grounded as they are in twentieth-century Irish and American contexts, show the shared influence of William Faulkner in terms of exploring "racial identity and hidden histories" (135), the critic claims. In *House of Splendid Isolation*, the setting is the Republic of Ireland where the past visiting on the present (the 1980s) appears in the form of illegal paramilitary activities in Northern Ireland, which remained part of the United Kingdom following the Treaty between Britain and Ireland in 1921. The female protagonist of the novel is Josie O'Meara, widow of an alcoholic farmer who abused her physically. Her memories of him attest the connection between patriarchal misuse of power and extreme republicanism; he was hiding weapons of the IRA which cost him his life. In the present, Josie discovers that a young IRA man, McGreevy, is hiding in her house from the authorities. Obviously a terrorist, yet he is portrayed as an intelligent man who serves the cause of certain principles taking their roots in the troubled history of the country. Dan O'Brien convincingly argues that in spite of the huge difference between them in terms of gender and politics, the two protagonists of *House of Splendid Isolation* learn to communicate with and become able to understand the "other" (147).

Roth's *American Pastoral* focuses on Seymour Levov, nicknamed "the Swede," the descendant of Jewish immigrants from Sweden. As a young man, he seemed to be the incarnation of the American Dream: he was a successful sportsman, assimilated to white American culture by becoming a prosperous factory owner, married a Christian woman, with whom he had a daughter he adored. However, his sudden death in his 60s shocks the writer Nathan Zuckermann, a one-time schoolmate, who tries to understand this catastrophe by investigating what transpired during the years which led to the Swede's divorce from his first wife and remarriage. The most important piece of information he gains is that the Swede's daughter, Merry (Meredith) became a terrorist while protesting against the American war in Vietnam and fled from her parents' home. Dan O'Brien argues that "[t]he entire

novel becomes a meditation on the possible causes of Merry's actions: her stutter, the incestous kiss [from her father in childhood], … her parents's intermarriage, her secret baptism, or simply a sign of history's inexplicability, a rejection of clear-cut cause and effect" (155). The novel closes without a solution to this conundrum. As in Faulkner, the root of the problems represented in the book, Dan O'Brien proposes, lies in the "racial and sexual tensions" that tore the fiction of "consensus America … asunder" (155).

The title of Edna O'Brien's novel, *House of Splendid Isolation*, is obviously ironical. "Splendid isolation" was the term used for the decision of nineteenth-century Britain not to make alliances with and isolate itself from other countries, while "house" often functioned as a metonymy of Ireland in literary texts. Josie's house and, by extension, the Republic of Ireland could never really separate itself from the Troubles in the North as shown by her fate of being shot dead by the authorities who mistook her for the IRA man in hiding. As Roth's novel progresses, the irony of the title, *American Pastoral*, gradually surfaces in its reference to an innocent land that America has never been, except in the mind of people such as the Swede, who tried to isolate themselves from the problematic undercurrents of their society. Here, Dan O'Brien finds a parallel to the house image referring to historical unrest in the Irish novel: with his first wife, Dawn, the Swede moved into a late-eighteenth-century big stone house, the foundations of which were probably built by slave labour (161). Concerning sexual tensions and gender, the critic pinpoints the Swede's failure to notice that his love of the old house was hardly shared by Dawn who felt it confining and decided to escape from both the house and her myopic husband, her "narrative … symbolising the growing consciousness of women in the 1960s and 1970s to the gendered societal structures previously so pervasive as to be near invisible" (163). Dawn's story, looked at through an outsider's lens warrants such a reading, in spite of the fact that Roth himself did not care about feminist approaches.

In the sixth and final chapter of his book, Dan O'Brien selects from the two authors' novels of the new century, aiming to show that, in these, both reinforce their earlier interest in racial and social traumas while extending them toward the expression of solidarity with those of other groups or nations. The respective plots of the books, Dan O'Brien continues, present "complex, unresolved parables of hospitality and hostility, concord and discord" (167–168). As a primary example, in *The Plot Against America* (2004) by Roth, the critic highlights the writer's sinister vision of an anti-Semitic government ruling America in the 1940s and its ambitions

to administer exclusion of and large-scale discrimination against minorities, which imagined politics turn ethnic groups into enemies of one another and instill divisive tensions into ordinary family lives as well. With some stretching of the theme, Dan O'Brien argues that the plight of the American Jews in the novel "brings a fresh perspective to the real predicament for African Americans living under southern segregation and northern bias" (172). Roth's last novel, *Nemesis* (2010), is also set in the years of Second World War, and its characters also experience fear and suffer from unpredictability; yet, the cause is different: an imagined, quickly spreading epidemic of polio. Regarding the theme, Dan O'Brien is right to say that *Nemesis* works as a "companion piece" to *The Plot Against America* (196), also because it represents ethnic tensions. Moreover, it reaches back, I suggest, to *American Pastoral* in that, just before the epidemic hits them, Jewish children and their teachers in a summer camp entertain themselves with the impersonation of Indians and the mimicry of their culture, which can be seen as another literary manifestation of hidden histories of and uncomfortable truths about American treatment of the natives.

By Edna O'Brien, *The Light of Evening* (2006) and *The Little Red Chairs* (2015) are discussed in the same chapter of *Fine Meshwork*. In both novels, solidarity with other peoples features on an international scale. The action of *The Little Red Chairs* is set in several locations, including Coonoila, a village in the west of Ireland, London, then Sarajevo, focal point of the 1992–1995 Bosnian War, and, finally, the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Like *The Plot Against America*, Dan O'Brien says, *The Little Red Chairs* dismantles "the boudaries between the political and the personal" (193–194) and also includes a historical character, in this case Radovan Karadžić, first president of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who was found guilty of multiple criminal acts and responsible for massive genocide. *The Little Red Chairs* introduces him as a fugitive arriving in Coonoila, then describes his arrest and finally his trial. However, the strongest emphasis is not on Karadžić but on a range of characters in search of a new home, because they had to leave their country of birth, escaping prosecution and violence. At the program, celebrating his 80th birthday in 2013, Roth gave a talk entitled "The Ruthless Intimacy of Fiction," which offers a kind of writer's creed: "… it is from the force of its uncompromising attentiveness, from its *physicalness*, that the realistic novel, the insatiable realistic novel with its multitude of realities, derives its ruthless intimacy" (Roth, *Why Write?* 393). Edna O'Brien's choice of title for *The Little Red Chairs,* written shortly after the above quoted speech, exemplifies the symbolic importance

of the physical: 11,541 red chairs, among them 643 small ones for children can be seen placed in the long main street of Sarajevo, in memory of those who died during the siege of the city.

All in all, one can agree with Dan O'Brien's conclusion that a basic similarity between the two writers can be grasped in their ambition to represent inner conflicts which function as prisms to show and interpret trends in the larger world through them. Like many other comparative studies, the author of *Fine Meshwork* selects from the writers' works for the purpose of elaborating on common points. As a result of this approach, major novels may have only a marginal presence in the analyses, as it happens, for instance, to *The Human Stain* (2000) in this study. A shortcoming of Dan O'Brien's book is that its focus remains chiefly thematic and character-centred, paying less attention to artistic strategies such as shifting viewpoints and manipulations of structure, with which Philip Roth and Edna O'Brien intertwine fact and fiction, the "real" and the imagined in their novels. Nevertheless, this monograph deserves praise for its range of new ideas in relation to the works it discusses as well as for the inspiration its readers can take from it to read about, or even pursue in new studies, other literary fruits of the "Jewish-Irish" consciousness and experience.

Works Cited

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A Tale of More than Two Cities

Review of Juhász, Tamás (ed.), *Art in Urban Space* (Budapest and Paris: Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary and Éditions L'Harmattan, 2021)

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Wittgenstein used a thought-provoking comparison to describe the structure of language: "Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses" (pt. 1, par. 18). This comparison can easily be reversed: a city can be viewed like a language, with its main and subordinate clauses, its images and metaphors, its subjective locations, and its vivid predicates. In short, you can read the city as a language and you can hear it like a talk or a speech. This is precisely what the authors of this book do. They, on their virtual excursions to old and new cities, choose very specific alleys, nooks and houses in order to read and hear how art has shaped these spaces. The authors do not want to see everything, but, like Clov in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, something special: "Any particular sector you fancy? Or merely the whole thing?" (73). They see the particular.

The editor of this remarkable book, Tamás Juhász, a literary and cultural scholar who was one of the organisers of an international conference, entitled "Arts and the City" (Budapest, 2019), has compiled the research-based and elaborated contributions of selected presenters into a reader that is not only worth reading for experts in urban studies but also offers interesting impulses for all those interested in art in urban space. It is to the editor's credit that the contributions of the participants

from various academic disciplines have been brought together to form a kaleidoscopic collection of texts, resulting in an original and important contribution to this much-discussed topic. His introductory chapter is a theoretically grounded essay on the complex field of the dialectical relationship between space and art. It shows how different strands of theory from Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin to Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Doreen Massey, and Edward Soja have fertilised theoretical thinking about the city, space, and art, and how numerous authors from Malcolm Miles to Cara Courage have focused the theoretical discourse on this research field.

"Disruption" is one of the key terms Juhász uses to reflect on the experience of art in urban space and to demonstrate the possibility of how art can develop a transformative power for inhabitants of a city: by seeing the very ordinary suddenly being transformed into a work of art. "Turning the ordinary into art challenges received notions about the distanced, possibly elitist nature of art and it can help ... narrow the gulf that modernity created between life and art" (Juhász 14).

This book, *Art in Urban Space*, has captivated me so those half-repressed and forgotten memories of my own experience with art in urban space are wrenched from my unconscious and determine my reflection on this book, whose primary aim is to examine art projects in urban space for their transformative power. My own ruminations on art in urban space have so far been rather disorganised primary experiences. The insights I owe to this book are all related to the unavoidable culture shock I experienced when I moved from the small medieval town of Hall in Tyrol to the centre of Vienna. That is the reason why I am writing first about those chapters that are related to this biographical "disruption." I do not want to imply any sort of evaluation, but only to make it comprehensible how I found my way into this book. I have learned to appreciate it as a valuable enrichment of my ability to perceive and interpret my experience with biographical key events.

As editor Tamás Juhász puts it in his introductory essay, art in space, the shaping of space through art, is "a domain politically demarcated, socially structured and culturally always recreated" (Juhász 14). This is true even for the small town of my childhood, even if it looks like a relic from the High Middle Ages. There happened and still happens what Erzsébet Stróbl reports about the great city of London in the time of Elizabeth I in her contribution to this volume, "The City as Stage: The Coronation Entry of Elizabeth I in 1559." The city is turned into a stage for a ritual of domination—and for a ritual of jubilant submission for the dominated.

In her text, Stróbl shows the late-medieval or rather early-modern city as the stage for a ceremony whose deeper purpose was to fix the status of rulers and the ruled, but at the same time, by allowing the ruled to present themselves as enthusiastically jubilant subjects in exuberant and costly productions, to convey the feeling that rulers and ruled belonged to the same family. The Corpus Christi processions in my small town were exactly the same, albeit not in the sixteenth but in the twentieth century, with the difference that the centre of the ritual was not an earthly queen but the heavenly king. All citizens were allowed to take part in the ritual and even felt it an honour to dress up in medieval costumes and take part in the staging of this religious event. The citizens of late medieval London and my late twentieth-century hometown were supposed to feel like part of a community thanks to such rituals. Ignazio Silone called this "the warmth of the sheepfold," the political goal of which is to make people forget the complexity of modern life in a mass society with a high division of labour. Other than the medieval community such a differentiated society based on the division of labour needs the cool "rational agreement by mutual consent" (Weber 212–213) instead of the warmth of community.

While Stróbl's description and analysis of Elizabeth I's Coronation Entry facilitated the understanding of my small-town experiences as a stage for the production of false consciousness and its political significance, Jasamin Kashanipour's text, "Narratives of Urban Life: An Anthropological Study of Artification as a Form of Critique," inspired me to analyse my culture shock in more detail. Referring to Richard Sennett, she draws a picture of the big city as an organon of diversity: there people "pray in churches, mosques, synagogues or temples, they stand or kneel with folded or crossed hands, sit or lie with arms raised to heaven, whisper and bend back and forth with heads covered ... The polyphony of numerous languages ... fills the streets, alleys, restaurants, houses, stations, and trams" (Kashanipour 168). The city is an intercultural mixing machine. I had reckoned with that in my head, but I had never taken part in such a machine. All of a sudden, I had to inscribe myself in this infinitely diverse life. And I began to suspect that it was actually this diversity of people who breathe life into the city of Vienna and relate in some way to its architecture, its streets, monuments, parks, shops, and sports fields that made Vienna more attractive to me than all the old palaces and monuments. I began realising that this diversity was the real work of art. But Kashanipour also opened my eyes to a scene whose existence I had hardly noticed before since it is more or less invisible to the average citizen. This submersed scene is committed to art,

in some way similar to Camus in *L'Homme révolté* (1951), as a revolt against the absurd life in neoliberal capitalism. With the help of two case stories, theoretically based on Adorno and Rancière, she shows how art-related engagement turns into resistance against a society that appears to be completely free, but is in fact ingeniously monitored and disciplined.

These two texts by Stróbl and Kashanipour were my "open sesame" for the whole book. They really made me curious about the other articles. And there was still a lot to discover. The novelist Sarah Butler's subtly crafted text at the end of the book proved very helpful for my understanding of the city as language in the reversal of Wittgenstein's famous dictum of language as a city, quoted at the beginning of this article. At the same time, her text is an example of the role that literature can perform in composing a theoretical text. Her article might just as well have been at the beginning of the book because on the one hand, she discusses quite fundamental issues such as homes as shared spaces and power inequalities, and on the other hand, she sensitises the reader to a kind of writing that sounds like a program for narrative anthropology of the type Clifford Geertz describes in his book, *Works and Lives* (1988), on the anthropologist as novelist. She suggests not only considering physical actions for the creation of space: "we might also consider language and narrative—how we create homes ... Through the everyday conversations we have, with shopkeepers, neighbours, fellow dog-walkers or pram-pushers" (Butler 249). She refers to John Berger, who considers the creation of a mobile and symbolic home through language and culture. This recalls Michel de Certeau: "The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered" (de Certeau 97). Sarah Butler's text impresses because she relates critical reflection and literary writing so that they illuminate each other. She is a literary writer, but her way of combining knowledgeable theorising with literary writing in such a way that a textual fabric emerges from it seems to me particularly suited to preserving the particular rather than making it disappear into the general: something Theodor W. Adorno had pleaded for all his life.[1]

In the following, the individual contributions are discussed in the order chosen by the editor. The first section, "Public Art Considerations," begins with two texts on art forms that transcend the framework of the traditional understanding of art and intervene directly in the social life of a city. This is especially true of the Heidelberg Project, to which Holly Lynn Baumgartner devotes an essay that

1 Cf. Adorno, Theodor W. *Einführung in die Dialektik*. 1958. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2022.

is well worth reading. This project is a work in progress, in which a completely marginalised and run-down living environment in Heidelberg Street, Detroit, has been shaped by a resident artist, Tyree Guyton, over decades of hotly contested work into a much-regarded place and is still being further developed. It has become an internationally known and respected example of participatory street art and community art.

The second text, in which the author Gizela Horváth reports on street art, uses case histories to show how art cannot merely be marvelled at from pictures on the white walls of a museum, which she understands as the "banishment" of art: "art thus isolated is the privilege of the few, it has lost its connection to people and to life itself—which, after all, happens outside the museum walls" (42). With the example of Banksy's art as well as two case histories, one from the Romanian city of Sibiu, European Capital of Culture 2007, a second from Oradea, a quiet and picturesque city near the border with Hungary, Horváth clearly shows when and why some works of street art can become an integral part of the everyday life of an urban population so that it is in the interaction between street art and the inhabitants that the actual work of art emerges. For her, the famous Banksy is a kind of role model for the way street artwork. It is the product of an unauthorised artistic action that risks being stopped by the police. Therefore, it has to be done quickly. That is why Banksy invented the technique of working with stencils. His aim is to be noticed "in a world which is still, or even more than ever, a 'society of the spectacle,' (Debord 2010) where the spectacle functions according to the rules of economy" (Horváth 44).

In her theoretically well-founded text, Adrienne Gálosi shows that public interest, which is necessary for art in public space, is increasingly manipulated by authorities and powerful organisations. According to Gálosi, this leads to a normalisation of art. Her de Certeau-based critique of flagship architectural projects, which are often only "part of the array of lifestyle marketing," is particularly impressive. She criticises this aptly. In this way, she helps me to better understand my irritation and unease in the face of the colossal buildings by the architect Santiago Calatrava in Valencia, for example, in which one gets the impression as a human being that one is actually superfluous. This applies, as I have experienced myself, not only to the Ciudad de las Artes y de las Ciencias, but to similarly self-important buildings in many cities around the world. Such architecture does not want you to interact with it as a subject, because it is self-sufficient. With such monumental architecture, a city presents itself as a location competing for tourists in the age of globalisation:

"By erecting new museum buildings, a city can become part of the global art circuit" (Gálosi 65). I suggest calling such artificiality as opposed to art. To put it simply, it excludes while art includes.

The second section of the book, "War, Travel and Resistance," is devoted to texts that show the city as the site of an art that critically comments on social change. This is further accentuated in the commentaries of writers who comment on war-related decay and destruction. Ágnes Zsófia Kovács writes about travel literature: "Observing Ruskin's Venice: Edith Wharton's Journeys into Art History in Italian Backgrounds (1905) and Italian Villas." She shows in her text how American author Wharton characterised Italian villa art at the beginning of the twentieth century. Wharton referred in her first book to John Ruskin, the influential English universal artist and art critic who was close to the Pre-Raphaelites. In terms of content and form, she was influenced by his writing on art, especially his precise visual observation and his great respect for buildings of the Gothic and the early Renaissance. Later, however, Wharton distanced himself from Ruskin's views, especially his lack of appreciation of the Italian Baroque. At the same time, however, he remains her model for precise visual observation.

In her contribution to *Art in Urban Space*, Teodóra Dömötör looks beneath the surface of a short story by Ernest Hemingway, which he called "A Very Short Story." She shows how gender issues had a great influence on the perception of the city by US American authors in the 1920s, and how Hemingway's childhood experiences in particular are reflected in this text. This "very short" short story is a well-chosen example of how the deep structure of the text reveals Hemingway's rejection of the big city, where emancipated women dominate men. Below the story's surface one finds the resonating fear of Moloch city, of the city castrating men.

Finally, Michael Collins addresses two types of cities in his essay on cities in the Second World War: the city at peace and the anti-city, the city at war, which is eaten away by bloodthirsty propaganda and the consequences of war. He refers to texts by Walter Benjamin, Albert Einstein, Bernardine Evaristo, V. S. Naipaul, Komunyakaas, and others that reflect on the psychological, political, military, and economic consequences of the fall and rise of such anti-cities.

Jasamin Kashanipour's "Anthropological Study of Artification as a Form of Critique" is an anthropologist's view of art in urban space. Her ethnographic approach deals with the perspective of the people who are directly involved in the process of making art.

The book's third section, devoted to London, is all about the capital of the United Kingdom, formerly the capital of a vast world empire. It begins with Erzsébet Stróbl's deconstruction of a pompous ceremony at the beginning of modern times, the splendid show on the occasion of the coronation of Elizabeth I. In this section, Dóra Janczer Csikós writes about "The Bad Taste of Town." The subject of her interest is William Hogarth's print, "The Bad Taste of the Town" (1723/1724), a biting satire in the form of a picture about the cultural topography of London, and the "bad taste" of its inhabitants, which became visible in "the changing social activities and cultural practices of the early eighteenth century" (Janczer Csikós 214).

About a century later, as we learn in Éva Péteri's article, "More than a Cityscape: Ford Madox Brown's *Work*," Ford Madox Brown took up Hogarth's legacy as a critic of the society of his age, the Victorian era. Again, as with Hogarth, it is the city that he critically examines in his artworks. His paintings celebrate the industriousness and vigour of the canal workers, who are representative of the willingness of wage earners to perform demands by the just emerging capitalism of the industrial age. The members of the upper class, on the other hand, are presented as idlers whose greatest vice is social ignorance. Madox Brown draws a particularly interesting comparison between the class antagonisms of humans on the one hand and dogs on the other, who, according to Madox Brown, know no class consciousness and no exclusions.

The volume concludes with Sarah Butler's text, "The City as Home," an artful interweaving of personal observation, theoretical analysis, and literary writing. Particularly noteworthy is her reference to daily rituals with which people inscribe themselves in the urban fabric. They do this not only with physical activity but also through their everyday conversation. "Home can also be found in language and culture" (249), Butler notes.

This book is well-suited for readers who want to understand art in urban space not only from the perspective of a single discipline but also multi-dimensionally. Above all, it offers more than an introduction: it gives a deeper insight into urban research from the perspective of researchers who define art in the broader sense of the word. Anyone who wants to sharpen their view of their own city will definitely expand and deepen their perceptual grids by reading these texts written by experts in different cultural and social sciences. The book is a kaleidoscope of well-written and significant articles that enrich the current discourse on art in urban space.

A short critical epilogue: It might have done the book well, if more texts from the perspective of city dwellers had shown the reader how people, particularly inhabitants of the places described in the book, experience in their everyday life whatever the theoretical experts perceive from the outside. I also miss looking beyond the borders of the Western Hemisphere to get a perspective on cities in other regions of the world. For me, these were above all Iranian cities like Yazd or Kashan, where the artful connection of city, space, and everyday life is a cultural matter of course. On the other hand, by reading these texts, I have learned to discover new dimensions of living with art in space, not only in the small town of my own childhood and youth but in all the cities where I have lived for a longer period. For this, I am particularly grateful to the book.

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A Window into the World of Alice Dunbar Nelson

Review of Tara T. Green, *Love, Activism, and the Respectable Life of Alice Dunbar-Nelson* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022)

JAFAR BABA

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Love, Activism, and the Respectable Life of Alice Dunbar-Nelson, a captivating biography by Tara T. Green, is a thorough study of thirteen chapters that delves deeply into the personal and literary life of the pioneering African American activist, writer, suffragist, and journalist, Alice Dunbar-Nelson. The depth and particularisation of the study is foregrounded in Green's acknowledgement, in which she describes the effort of writing such a comprehensive biography as "a ten-year journey" (ix). Green's main purpose in this book is to bring to light the significance of a major figure in Black or African American women's history, as it is the first biography to portray Dunbar-Nelson's personal life and sexual tendencies as a Black feminist, social activist, and writer.

Green's literary biography approaches the life and legacy of Alice Dunbar-Nelson as a respectable activist who, within the confines of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century respectability politics, defined her sexual identity and autonomy while striving for gendered and racial rights. In her introductory chapter entitled "Introducing a Respectable Activist," Green sets the aim of her study as well as the gendered and racial orientation of the biography by asserting that "*Love, Activism, and the Respectable Life of Alice Dunbar-Nelson* allows for a sustained look into the private behaviour of one woman in a growing educated Black middle-class society that prescribed to respectability" (4).

Following a brief introductory chapter, Green describes how Dunbar-Nelson saw herself as different within the Black community due to her skin colour—as a "half white nigger"—and her sexual identity (1). In chapters one and two of the book, Green foregrounds the first twenty years of Dunbar-Nelson's life, demonstrating how a family secret—being born to an unknown White father—had a lasting impact on Dunbar-Nelson and largely dominated her early writings as well as her work as an activist intent on "protecting young Black women from sexual exploitation and social stigma" (13). Next to the influence of her personal background, the racial diversity in New Orleans functioned as the prime setting for much of her fiction. Dunbar-Nelson's vivid descriptions provide insight into the daily challenges faced by the working people in New Orleans as well as the small victories, grievances, and real hardships they endured. Green goes on to describe Dunbar-Nelson's early educational background; the schools she attended and the role that the teacher training program in Straight College played in giving her what she needed to provide a great "service" to her mother's Black race. In this chapter, Green illustrates how, during the late nineteenth century, Dunbar-Nelson developed a "distinct discourse of resistance, a feminist theology" by joining *Women's Era*, the first newspaper published and edited by African American women, and other women's clubs to elevate Black women, especially those of African descent (18). Green's discussion reflects the discourse of Black literary resistance that shaped the mentality of educated Blacks during the late nineteenth century, a period that almost marked a return to the Old South notion of White dominance and Black enslavement.

Turning to the literary realm, chapter two highlights the emergence of Dunbar-Nelson as a talented writer, which is manifested by the publication of *Violets and Other Tales* (1895), a collection of short fiction, sketches, and poems, in which her ability to navigate respectability politics and to define herself as a combination of the emerging New Negro and New Woman are of prominent concern. It is through her fiction, Green proposes, that "Alice's two selves merged . . . the young Black activist met the romantic writer" (27). The significance of Dunbar-Nelson's short-story tradition can be attributed to its revolutionary nature in respect to the late nineteenth-century Black readership, a group that has come to be understood along colonial and minstrel stereotypes. Arguably, Dunbar-Nelson was the first Black woman to write regional short stories, a genre much more prominent among White women in American literary scholarship. Ultimately, it is the strategy of avoiding stereotypes

and presenting more respectful creole sketches that has perhaps granted Dunbar-Nelson less critical attention in comparison to her literary peers.

Chapter three, "Activism, Love, and Pain," describes the turning point in Dunbar-Nelson's educational and personal life and highlights her correspondence with her first husband, poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. Through their correspondence, Green demonstrates how Dunbar-Nelson "navigated respectability politics . . . and how she defined her complex role as a writer, activist, and sexual being" (44). Additionally, while Green admits that Dunbar-Nelson's poetry and poetic style may in part reflect the Victorian preferences for the sentimental and refined, the chapter ultimately reveals that Dunbar-Nelson can be positioned closer to the racial protest literature and folk culture celebrations that were increasingly prevalent in the works of the Harlem Renaissance. This chapter also highlights a critical moment in Dunbar-Nelson's personal life by demonstrating how her marriage to Dunbar in 1898 was the result of despair and an anticipated rebirth from social death, as marrying him was her only choice after he had raped her.

Stressing the importance of her marriage to Paul Dunbar, Green dedicates chapter four, "Love and Writing," to documenting the effects this marriage had on Dunbar-Nelson's sexual, literary, and personal identity. The chapter reveals that Dunbar-Nelson suffered the maltreatment of her abusive husband during their marriage. Seeking adherence to respectability politics in the late-Victorian age, Dunbar-Nelson abandoned her husband several times before her final decision to leave him permanently. During all these separations and reunifications, however, Dunbar-Nelson never asked for a divorce, and they remained officially married until his death in 1906. Green shows that marriage, nevertheless, did allow Dunbar-Nelson time to dedicate to writing and to experiment with new forms and genres, culminating in the publication of two short-story collections, *The Goodness of St. Rocque and Other Stories* (1899), and *The Annals of 'Steenth Street* (1900–1901). The idleness of Dunbar-Nelson's marriage life was most apparent in her novella, *Confessions of a Lazy Woman* (1903), a work that remained unpublished. It features a middle-class, married, childless woman who spends her days reluctantly. This novella, Green argues, "works more as an allegory for Dunbar-Nelson's longing for a real and independent married life" (80). Furthermore, the author shows how respectability politics' intersection with a search for identity and wholeness continued to dominate Dunbar-Nelson's literature, where she used her writing talents to analyse gendered positions of power and the reality of race relations in America. At the same time,

Green alludes to the issue of regionalism in Dunbar-Nelson's writings, as the majority of her stories take place in New Orleans. Despite the fact that Dunbar-Nelson's writings may seem apolitical initially, she revises elements of regionalist texts to challenge social categories and societal norms, criticising the stance that many White authors had taken in their depictions of the South in general and New Orleans in particular. The book sheds light on how, in the face of a racist *modus operandi*, Dunbar Nelson's actions undermined her art, which she consciously employed as a protest against the White literary establishment at the turn of the century. In the context of African American literary history, Dunbar-Nelson's *oeuvre* exceeds social and literary expectations, as Black writers of the time had been restricted to certain stereotypical racial themes and dialect writing. Confronting the repressive, racist prescriptions of what Black artists should and should not do, Dunbar-Nelson envisioned art as a form of freedom from the narrow, confining dictums of a race-minded literary society. Dunbar-Nelson's *oeuvre* represents the mind of an author unbound by race, both thematically and linguistically.

The fifth chapter, "Loving Alice After Paul," examines Dunbar-Nelson's multiple relationships after the death of Paul Dunbar, especially her relationship with C. A. Fleetwood, during which Dunbar-Nelson failed to gain a marriage that would preserve her respectable position in society. Green also touches upon same-sex relationships evident in Dunbar-Nelson *oeuvre* including her short stories "Natalie" and "A Modern Undine," which combine issues relating to her sexual identity, her feminist leanings, her ties to New Orleans, her love of nature, her career, and her spiritual beliefs. The following chapter on "Love and Education" investigates the subject of homosexuality in Dunbar-Nelson's life in more detail as well as the queer community in her life, which Gloria Hull identifies as a "lesbian network" within the club work (qtd. in Green 113). Green clearly indicates that Dunbar-Nelson's work at the women's club allowed her to explore the discreet intimacies between women. Green further explores how, in her marriage to Henry Callis (a younger Black student), Dunbar-Nelson met the standards of respectability and simultaneously defied them, considering the fact that having a younger husband was deemed scandalous at the time. In other words, Green manifests how Dunbar-Nelson tested the boundaries and expectations of respectability politics in early twentieth-century America to pursue her individual desire.

Chapter seven, "Ms. Dunbar and Politics (of Love)," introduces Dunbar-Nelson's marriage to Robert Nelson in 1916, who was also interested in uplifting

the race through publishing and politics. Therefore, Green argues, her marriage to him allowed her to return to her activist roots, as she continued to explore new forms of writing. The two worked together on a collection of essays, *Master of Eloquence*, published in 1914. Together, they attempted to bring a voice and political empowerment to African Americans in the northeast. For Dunbar-Nelson, the significance of this marriage was that she "fulfilled her desire as a woman to enjoy a relationship with a New Negro Man—one who did not attempt to limit her social activities based on societal gender expectations" (132). Additionally, Green reveals how the intersection between respectability and politics emerged as Dunbar-Nelson used her identity as Dunbar's widow to advance women's political rights. The chapter attempts to identify and localise Dunbar-Nelson's transitional position and literary orientation. Dunbar-Nelson's literary, social, and political activity acutely places her on the margins of Victorian Womanhood as well as the emerging era of New Women. Her marginal position also represents the mentality of the New Negro Woman—the role that she assumed by producing sentimental domestic fiction intent on projecting African Americans as good citizens capable of reaching the White-defined threshold of American civilisation. Exploring her suffragist work, Green also lists many suffragist clubs and organisations that Dunbar-Nelson joined, including National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA), The Equal Suffrage Study Club, and The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

In chapter eight, "New Negro Woman's Love and Activism," Green further examines the concept of newness in the term New Negro, which, among the twentieth-century generation of Black people, meant receiving respect for their humanity and participating fully in US society. These activities extended beyond class lines and permeated the modern art and performance of the New Negro Renaissance (HR) of the late 1910s through the 1930s. Green argues that Dunbar-Nelson's *oeuvre* encapsulates the transformation of the New Negro from a political into a cultural movement. Through her writings, Dunbar-Nelson devoted herself to a didacticism-free form of art, which mainly performed as a sort of counter-discourse against the Western representations of the Black folk or rural literary tradition. Moreover, Green delineates Dunbar-Nelson's role as an activist during the First World War, where she joined the Circle for Negro War Relief, Inc. She also protested the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a White supremacist, right-wing terrorist and hate group. Another important contribution by Dunbar-Nelson during this period was her one-act play, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* (1918), which brings together

the ethnic groups that had been segregated and isolated in the US, specifically African Americans, Jews, and Irish people.

Chapters nine and ten are dedicated to highlighting Dunbar-Nelson's interest in the film industry, her emergence as a respectable journalist, and the important role she played during the HR. The chapter, "For the Love of Family, Film, and the Paper," examines how Dunbar-Nelson attempted to market film scripts, scenarios, and melodramas, including the ones she offered for Realart Pictures Corporation, "Nine-Nineteen-Nine: A Motion Picture Play in Eleven Episodes," and a more developed screenplay, "The American Crime." The latter is about the lynching of a Black man, written in response to *Birth of a Nation* (1915), a film that justifies lynching to protect White women from Black men. Green further explores how Dunbar-Nelson, during her work as a journalist, attempted to advance the race by showing the African American middle-class in the best light, as well as writing about the emerging work being produced by Black writers and performers. The next chapter, "The Respectable Activist's Love for the Harlem Renaissance," further inspects how Dunbar-Nelson shaped readers' perspectives of the HR era as a columnist, and how she heightened her activism to reach a wider audience. Besides, Green illustrates that, between 1926 and 1929, Dunbar-Nelson wrote several pieces in which she covered various topics that targeted the interests of her Black audience, including racial violence and African American plays, films, and novel reviews. The chapter offers a better understanding of the Black women's literary tradition, and how it has been created. Green observes that "as a creative writer-activist [Dunbar-Nelson] fashioned herself as the journalistic voice of the New Negro social and political movement and the artistic Harlem Renaissance" (186).

Chapter eleven, "Love, Desire, and Writing**,**" features Dunbar-Nelson's activist work where she served as the executive secretary of the American Interracial Peace Committee (AIPC) during the late 1920s and early 1930s. As the representative of an organisation dedicated to peace, Green observes, Dunbar-Nelson "moved away from encouraging support of wars, instead discouraging Black people and others from participating in them" (213). The chapter also stresses the importance of diary writing in Dunbar-Nelson's life, an activity that had provided her with a kind of freedom that defied the restrictions of respectability, or redefined the restrictions of respectability associated with middle-class social expectations—especially as Dunbar-Nelson documented her romances with women in her diaries, in particular with Fay Jackson. Thus, Green concludes, "Recordings of this period of her

life show how she tested the boundaries of respectability by enjoying romances with women while married" (215). The last chapter sheds light on the final years of Dunbar-Nelson's life, and how her husband's position as the boxing commissioner at the State Athletic Commission brought recognition and financial stability for the couple. It is through this period that Dunbar-Nelson found the autonomy of her identity as "she was no longer identified as the widow of Paul Laurence Dunbar, Alice was Mrs. Alice Dunbar Nelson, wife of Robert J. Nelson" (227).

Although it would have been a welcome addition if further literary analyses had been included by Green to strengthen the thematic and biographical investigation of Dunbar-Nelson's *oeuvre*, *Love, Activism, and the Respectable Life of Alice Dunbar-Nelson* serves as an invaluable source for academics interested in Black feminism, African American literature, and queer studies. Green takes up the role of a literary detective in the first book-length study dedicated to deciphering the private and public life of an author often mentioned but rarely investigated in American literary discourse. The book also serves as a remarkable reference for researchers working in the field of African American politics, Black journalism, and the history of Black anti-racism discourse in American literary and social spheres.

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Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*

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Abstract: The historical romance of Kenilworth *(1821) by Sir Walter Scott redefined, for his own generation, the cultic image of Queen Elizabeth I of the previous centuries. The Scottish author moulded the famous Virgin Queen of English history into a British icon by referencing the common English-language literary heritage shared by all subjects living on the British Isles. Scott based his plot upon the contemporary antiquarian accounts of the 1575 Kenilworth visit of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Leicester. While he handled historical chronology in a rather loose manner, in his descriptions of detail, he followed the sixteenth-century sources about the events that were collected and published by John Nichols between 1788 and 1821. Utilising the Romantic interest in such antiquarian reports, Scott filled up the gaps of grand history about the private life of the Queen by quoting exact details from these contemporary documents. Scott's writing in the new genre of the historical novel was persuasive through its material authenticity, which justified the fictitious elements that explored the feminine aspects of the Queen's personality. Scott also utilised the Romantic interest of his age in the picturesque countryside through which he depicted Queen Elizabeth's character, both as a public monarch and a private woman. Furthermore, by choosing a peaceful reception rather than a military victory, Scott could promote a new and modern understanding of monarchy. For him, royal festivity bridged the differences between national groups that lived on a common land inherited by all layers of society. Thus,* Kenilworth *established a new interpretation of the cultic figure of Queen Elizabeth that rested on the glories of the English past but catered for the needs of a newly formed United Kingdom of the nineteenth century.*

Sir Walter Scott's novel *Kenilworth* (1821) created for his generation one of the most compelling images about Queen Elizabeth I and her age. Issued anonymously

as another work of the "author of *Waverly* and *Ivanhoe*," it became one of Scott's most successful novels with 10,000 copies selling within the first week of its publication, and with a second edition six weeks later (Arata 99).[1] Its format—published as a small sextodecimo (10x17 cm) edition in three volumes—with its price determined at 10s. 6d. per volume, set a standard for popular novels both in form and in price for the rest of the century (Mays 16). It belonged to the new genre of the historical novel, and it was highly regarded on the Continent by fellow authors such as Balzac, who called it "the grandest, most complete, most extraordinary of all; the book is a masterpiece" (373). Although *Kenilworth* receives less critical attention today, it offers an important insight about the Romantic depiction of "Elizabethan England," a phrase coined by the early nineteenth century to denote the time of Shakespeare, and a new reappraisal of its Queen, Elizabeth Tudor.

Coleridge mirrored the sentiments of his age when in his lecture delivered in 1818, he described the reign of Elizabeth as "interesting on many accounts … because it furnished circumstances so favourable to the existence, and to the full development of the powers of Shakespeare" (Coleridge 408). In his lecture on Milton, he underlined the unique splendour of the court of Elizabeth as a meeting place of the best wits of its day:

> … the constellation at the court of Elizabeth … can only be paralleled by Greece in her brightest moment, when the titles of the poet, the philosopher, the historian, the statesman, and the general not seldom formed a garland round the same head, as in the instances of our Sidneys and Raleighs. (Coleridge 281)

In Scott's novel, Queen Elizabeth is surrounded by a similar group of great statesmen and men of letters, illuminating not the military achievements of the last Tudor monarch, but her court's intellectual accomplishments. The choice of the topic for the book reflects Scott's shift of emphasis. Against the explicit request of his publisher, Archibald Constable, to use the theme of the victory over the Spanish Armada

1 It was also published in the same year in the US and Paris, catering for an international audience and spreading the fame of its author and the interest in the new genre of the historical novel. Ample evidence of the popularity of Scott within Europe is provided by the copy printed in Paris—now part of the collection of the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, Budapest—purchased by István Károlyi, diplomat of the Habsburg Monarchy in Paris who retired from active service and returned to his country house at Fót in 1821.

for his new work, Scott's plot is placed against the backdrop of an Elizabethan courtly entertainment, the Princely Pleasures at Kenilworth Castle (Henderson 91). Chronologically, *Kenilworth* follows Scott's previous work *The Abbot* (1820), which is set just six years earlier in Scotland and ends on the note of Mary, Queen of Scots, fleeing to England with words trusting her "sister's [Queen Elizabeth's] good faith" and hospitality (Scott ch. 38). Yet Scott avoided discussing how Elizabeth's court thwarted the hope of Mary, as it was an instance of English history that could have pitted the Scottish sentiments against the English. Instead, the novel focuses on Queen Elizabeth's court as a place where the people of different national origin and social standing come together to celebrate their monarch, and where poets and artists are mutually admired by all political factions. For Scott, the gesture of ceremony became a new mode that could forge national unity. At a time when the country was looking forward to the lavish coronation of a new king, George IV—scheduled for the summer of 1821—Scott's choice of subject matter highlighted his interpretation of a royal festivity as an occasion of bringing people together. His belief that modern monarchs should be the central figures of national celebration influenced his choice to mastermind and organise the ceremonies during the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822 (McCracken-Flesher 83–84).[2] Francis Jeffery's review of Scott's *Kenilworth* highlighted this particular aspect of the novel, claiming that "the great charm and glory of the piece … consists in the magnificence and vivacity of the description … and we have at this moment as lively and distinct an impression of the whole scene, as we shall have in a few weeks of a similar Joyous Entry" (Jeffrey 92, vol. 3).

The plot of *Kenilworth* is based on historical events; yet, the novel captivates the reader not with its accuracy of historical chronology and facts—which are very loosely handled—but with its description of an England both romanticised with its rustic detail and particularised by the strict adherence to antiquarian sources. This mixed handling of history creates a vision about a past that is rooted in history yet embellished with fiction. It constructs a myth that, on the one hand, draws upon the antiquarian method of cataloguing accurate details, and, on the other hand, is inspired by the Romantic interest in the picturesque countryside with its memorials and relics of bygone eras. By selecting the Castle of Kenilworth as the backdrop to characterise Elizabeth's reign, Walter Scott updated the figure of Queen

2 Having been regent for nearly nine years, George IV became king on 29 January 1820 and was crowned at Westminster Abbey on 19 July 1821.

Elizabeth for his age. As an iconic ruler, she assimilated the glories of the English past with the needs of the newly formed United Kingdom where a shared countryside, a common intellectual heritage, and the occasions of popular celebration united its various subjects.

Remembering the Queen and Kenilworth through Centuries

The plot of the novel culminates in the description of Queen Elizabeth's entertainment at Kenilworth in 1575. Scott based his story about the royal visit on sixteenth-century accounts reprinted by John Nichols in 1788. Entitled *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth,* Nichols's collection was the first modern edition of the texts about the Queen's travels, public and private entertainments, and intimate records of her life. They allowed a broad readership for the first time to enjoy an abundance of colourful information about the iconic Virgin Queen of English history. In many memorable scenes of his book, Scott closely followed the details printed in Nichols's edition with regard to locations, furnishings, and pageants, which served also as an inspiration for the author to comment and characterise the Queen.

In 1575, Queen Elizabeth I paid the grandest visit to a private home in her 45-year reign. Although, as a Queen, she visited four hundred private hosts and civic communities during her customary summer progresses, her stay at the home of her favourite courtier, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, between 9 and 27 of July was the most sumptuous and expensive ever witnessed. The occasion was remarkable also with regard to the diversity of entertainments staged. It brought together pageantry and shows featuring the rustic mirth of the countryside, the traditions of the Morris dance and hobbyhorse, the refined taste of poetic entertainments, popular stories about King Arthur, gods and goddesses of antique mythology, and the elements of medieval civic drama in the form of Coventry's traditional Hock Tuesday play. Furthermore, it was the first private entertainment published in three different contemporary accounts, making the occasion widely known and immensely popular in the sixteenth century.

The memory of the occasion was most probably fresh even twenty years after the visit, as William Shakespeare referred to it in his play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. References to the exquisite fireworks, to the performance of a singer seated on a floating dolphin in the middle of the lake, and to the maiden Queen refusing the courtship

of his favourite were all images that alluded to the Kenilworth entertainments in the lines of Oberon to Puck:

> … Thou rememberest
> Since once I sat upon a promontory
> And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the seamaid's music? …
> That very time I saw …
> …
> Cupid all armed: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the west,
> …
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon;
> And the imperial votress passed on
> In maiden meditation, fancy-free. (2.1.148–155, 157–158, 161–164)

The Shakespearean passage illustrates that the cult formation of the Queen had already started during her lifetime and that the events at Kenilworth served as a focal point in this development. Furthermore—though marriage negotiations were still going on in 1575—the occasion was perceived—as Shakespeare's lines bear witness to it—as a turning point leading to her veneration as a Virgin Queen in the last two decades of her reign.

Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603 did not mean the end of her celebration, as—within ten years—her memory was revived and used as a political stance in opposing the autocratic rule of the new Stuart dynasty. By the late seventeenth century, the Queen emerged as the symbol of the Protestant cause within the national struggles against foreign Catholic influence. Her Accession Day (17 November) and her statue at Ludgate became the focus of anti-Popish demonstrations well into the reign of George I (Thornbury). Starting during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679–1681, mock processions of priest, friars, bishops carried the figure of the Pope on this day to Ludgate, where amid singing and cheering the effigy of the Pope was hurled

into a bonfire. During the occasion, the statue of the Queen "was Adorned with a Crown of Gilded Laurel, in Her hand a Golden Shield, with this Motto Inscribed, *THE PROTESTANT RELIGION, MAGNA CHARTA*" (*The Solemn Mock Procession*). By the late seventeenth century, Queen Elizabeth was remembered as the protector of the ancient privileges of the English people and was conflated with the liberal principles of the rights of citizens within a Europe of autocratic monarchs.

As popular movements exploited Queen Elizabeth's historical authority for direct political aims, the details of her private life as a woman served as a rich source for the sensational stage of the Restoration period, and later for the sentimental theatre of the eighteenth century. Whereas in her formal official role she became an "honorary man" and a static icon, the plays relished in stories and gossip of dubious origin to explore her "affective femininity" that contemporary curiosity so much valued (Dobson and Watson 79–115). This paradoxical treatment of the memory of the Queen became, for instance, the butt of the pen of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed* (1779), where an amateur playwright's work about the Spanish Armada exposed the shallowness of the bombastic phrases of patriotism and the melodramatic love plot connected to Queen Elizabeth.

Publishing his novel more than forty years later, Sir Walter Scott chose a line from Sheridan's play to serve as the motto of his work. "No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope?" appears on the front page under the title of the book, pointing to Scott's similarly critical view of the eighteenth-century reception of the Queen's cult (Sheridan 48). However, this reference to Sheridan's play also signals his agreement with the playwright about the mode of adapting history to the stage or page. In Sheridan's work, the character of the playwright, Mr. Puff explains how grand history needs to be complemented by fictitious details:

> … when history, and particularly the history of our
> own country, furnishes any thing like a case in
> point, to the time in which an author writes, if
> he knows his own interest, he will take advantage
> of it; …
> … where history
> gives you a good heroic out-line for a play, you
> may fill up with a little love at your own discretion;
> in doing which, nine times out of ten,

> you only make up a deficiency in the private
> history of the times. (2.1.5–9, 17–22)

Mr. Puff underlines two important further aspects of creating a plot featuring Queen Elizabeth: the storyline's patriotic overtone, and its interest in "private history" that is always connected with female characters. Scott's novel ventures to depict both themes but, as opposed to Sheridan's play, it rejects engagement with the heroic discourse of a military victory, and so it refashions the idea of patriotism as a peaceful and inclusive phenomenon.

To construct the "private history" of the Elizabethan court, Scott relied on documentary sources published within the antiquarian tradition. By the early eighteenth century, a notable distinction emerged between the antiquarian and the academic approach to history. While the former sought to collect surviving evidence of the past, the latter carefully selected its sources and constructed comprehensive narratives (Sweet, *Antiquaries* 8–15). The superiority of this latter approach was emphasised by Francis Bacon in his essay, "The Advancement of Learning," already in 1605. According to Bacon, this type of inquiry was "Perfect History" that extracted from historical events "estimation and glory," "profit and use," and "verity and sincerity" (Bacon 41). In contrast, Bacon regarded "Antiquities" as "imperfect" or "defaced History," representing only "some remnants of history which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time" (Bacon 41). However, by the end of the eighteenth century, antiquarianism became a scholarly pursuit with rigorous standards, systematically collecting and ordering materials for a wide readership. Meticulous attention to accuracy and exact detail became the most important measure of the trade, and Richard Gough, the most prominent antiquary of the late eighteenth century, vehemently defended the importance of antiquarianism in enhancing historical knowledge (Sweet, "Antiquaries and Antiquities" 183–189). While historians emphasised comprehensiveness and reasoning to draw conclusions for the present, antiquarians focused on the specificity of surviving fragments of the past. Consequently, antiquarian collections were often accompanied by extensive footnotes, in contrast to historical works that contained very little or none. This aspect of the antiquarian movement set a new precedent by the early nineteenth century, which led to the development of the systematic study especially of local history and archaeology. Scott's novel also followed this trend, not only by focusing on localities and local histories, but by extensively drawing on such antiquarian materials.

In the late 1770s, people's curiosity about the relics of the past was widely recognised by publishers, such as John Nichols, a friend of Gough and editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine.* Nichols became the centre of a network of correspondence that provided him with privately owned documents from the past, as well as the works of intellectuals seeking help to publish their own compilations (Sweet, *Antiquaries* 63–64). This "social milieu" enabled Nichols to compile and edit two volumes about Queen Elizabeth's progresses around England in 1788 (Goldring ed., *John Nichols's The Progresses 9, vol. 1).* The first book of *The Progresses, and Public Processions, of Queen Elizabeth* published two accounts of the visit to Kenilworth. One was the compilation by the court poet George Gascoigne, which exclusively comprised his own devices and texts specifically prepared for the occasion. The other account was a letter written by a London mercer named Robert Laneham—or Langham, according to recent research—addressed to a fellow merchant. Laneham's letter covers a wide array of topics, exhibiting his enthusiastic effort to please his reader (Goldring, "'A mercer ye wot az we be'" 245–269). In Nichols's collection, these accounts of the Kenilworth visit of the Queen were the longest, and—with regard to the range of programs—the most exuberant.

In the introduction to the *Progresses,* Nichols explains that the aim of his enterprise is to provide information about the "manners" of the Elizabethans that was missing from official history, in order to give "a view into the interior of the noble families, display their state in house-keeping, and other articles, and set before our eyes their magnificent mansions long since gone to decay" (*xxiv, vol. 1).* Nichols argued that the varied nature of the collected material could enrich the understanding of history; as he stated, "some are of a graver, some of a looser kind; some odd or humorous, some learned, witty or instructive; all marking a period" ("Progresses" 133). During the seventeen-year hiatus between the publication of the first two and the third volume of the *Progresses,* Nichols printed a further foray into the details of the life of past centuries, the *Illustrations of the Manners and Expenses of Ancient Times in England* (1797). In 1805, the third volume of the *Progresses* came out with newly obtained material and the results of fresh archival research. In its preface, Nichols used for the first time the phrase "Elizabethan æra," which Coleridge still found so bizarre in his notes to his lectures from the years 1808–1819: "Elizabetho-Jacobæan age— (Mercy on me! what a phrase for 'the writers during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I!')" (Nichols vii, vol. 3; Coleridge 200).

Scott made use of Nichols's three volumes for the purpose of getting a more detailed vision about the Elizabethan Age, especially about the more intimate aspects of the private life of the Queen. By 10 September 1820, he was close reading Nichols's volumes—making "progress" in acquainting himself with the age—and demanding further resources from his publisher, Archibald Constable. His letter is worth quoting at length, as it also attests to the contemporary renown of the 1575 Kenilworth visit of the Queen, as Scott is anxious to warn Constable not to give away the title of his new book:

> The Progresses are doing me yeoman's service, for I am in progress myself. I have a question to ask you, which pray answer as soon as you can. What was the name of Dudley Earl of Leicester's first wife, whom he was supposed to have murdered at Cumnor Hall in Berkshire? I know it occurs in the Sidney Papers, and probably in the common genealogies, but I have no book here which contains the information. In Lyson's Magna Britannia, or some such name, there is something about this same Cumnor Hall. I wish you would have it copied out for me, and should like indeed to know anything that occurs to you about the village of Cumnor, its situation, etc. I like to be as minutely local as I can. Please not to say a word about Kenilworth. The very name explains so much, that some knowing fellow might anticipate the subject. (Grierson ed. 265–266, vol. 4).

Scott's antiquarian predilection for the treatment of history is an important addition to the nineteenth-century image of the Queen. Several direct references to the accounts of the *Progresses* form the basis of the novel's third part which is set in Kenilworth, and which contains most of the scenes with the Queen. He even used footnotes to explain certain events or characters within the novel, and so followed the technique of antiquarian history writing. Furthermore, to enhance the accuracy of historical detail, in the Magnum Opus edition of the novel in 1831, he appended some further historical notes and published the Kenilworth inventory of 1584 that he acquired in the meantime, which contained a list of furniture, hangings, tapestries, and other fittings of the castle.

However, the above letter also shows that four months before finishing his novel, Scott was not even familiar with the name of Leicester's wife, Amy Robsart,

the hero of the book. For Scott, the material details carried the real significance, the colours, lines, shades, and accidents of life in Elizabethan England, rather than the bare facts about the year 1575. For his adaptation of history, these small incidents mattered more in recreating the "spirit of the age"—another term gaining popularity in the era—than the chronology of military or political events.[3] This resulted in an achronological treatment of the historical facts within the novel, which earned him criticism. While truthful to the material culture of the Elizabethan Age, Scott took huge liberties with history, among which the most notable touched upon the main plot, Amy Robsart's death, which happened fifteen years before the Queen's visit to Kenilworth Castle.

The last volume of Nichols's *Progresses* appeared on 14 February 1821, just a month after the publication of Scott's *Kenilworth* on 13 January, and it seems to have been a direct reaction to Scott's novel. Compared to the thickness of the first three volumes, it was a mere booklet, and it contained very little new material. However, it reprinted a selection of previously published material on the Queen's various visits to Kenilworth, and a list of New Year's Gifts to the Queen by Leicester, demonstrating the enhanced interest in her figure sparked by the novel.[4] Nichols even alludes to Scott's work in his foreword and claims that some less well-known details are reissued as "public attention having lately been re-called to the 'Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth,' by Miss Aikin's entertaining 'Annals of Queen Elizabeth;' and again, more forcibly, by the necromantic pen of Sir Walter Scott, in the popular Romance of 'Kenilworth'" (52, vol. 4). Although Nichols's remark about Scott's work is slightly degrading, his lines draw attention to the huge influence exerted by the novel. Certainly, it was not Lucy Aikin's *Memoirs of the Court of Elizabeth* (1818) that popularised the Kenilworth visit with its matter-of-fact manner of listing the programs and dedicating a mere page-and-a-half to its description within a work of more than a thousand pages. Yet, it was Aikin's version that Nichols praised as "entertaining" as opposed to Scott's treatment of the sources, which he deemed "necromantic." Nichols's discontent with Scott's way of handling history signals that a new

3 See William Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age* portraying famous people of his generation in his essays of 1824–1825, and the growing influence after the French Revolution of the immediacy of the concept of Hegel's "Zeitgeist."

4 In previous volumes, the lists for New Year's Gifts were published according to their original format, that is, it was arranged by year. A cross section of these gift rolls featuring only the Earl of Leicester's presents indicate the special effort of the editor to cater for the public interest in the figure of Leicester.

era of imaging Queen Elizabeth was born, in which Scott's novel provided a new prototype for the interpretation of the last Tudor monarch.

The Celebration of Queen Elizabeth in Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*

The shift between the understanding of the Elizabethan Age by John Nichols and Miss Aikin, on the one hand, and Coleridge and Scott, on the other, can be best seen by looking at their divergent opinions about the Elizabethan Age in general, and about the Queen and her court in particular. For Nichols, the Elizabethan Age was a period when "men were emerging from the barbarity and ignorance wherein they had long been held," claiming that "they had not at that time passed far beyond the dawnings of real knowledge and science" (v, vol. 3). Miss Aikin's view is rather disparaging as well, as she speaks about the taste of the Kenilworth revels:

> The "princely pleasures of Kennelworth," were famed in their day as the quintessence of all courtly delight, and very long and very pompous descriptions of these festive devices have come down to our times. They were conducted on a scale of grandeur and expense which may still surprise; but taste as yet was in its infancy, and the whole was characterised by the unmerciful tediousness, the ludicrous incongruities, and the operose pedantry of a semi-barbarous age. (Aikin 44–45, vol. 2)

However, Scott's *Kenilworth* conveys exactly the opposite sentiments, and it highlights culture, learning, discernment, and elegance, aspects for which Coleridge also praised Elizabeth's court. Yet, for Coleridge the Queen's celebrations—and with it her progress narratives—were vulgar, and the direct association between the literary achievements of the late sixteenth century and the monarch was odious. While admiring the intellects, he condemned the monarch:

> The difference between the state of mind in the reign of Elizabeth, and in that of Charles I is astonishing. In the former period there was an amazing development of power, but all connected with prudential purposes—an attempt to reconcile the moral feeling with the full exercise of the powers of the mind, and the accomplishment of certain

> practical ends. Then lived Bacon, Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, and a galaxy of great men, statesmen, lawyers, politicians, philosophers, and poets; and it is lamentable that they should have degraded their mighty powers to such base designs and purposes, dissolving the rich pearls of their great faculties in a worthless acid, to be drunken by a harlot. What was seeking the favour of the Queen, to a man like Bacon, but the mere courtship of harlotry? (Coleridge 408–409)

The words of Coleridge are profoundly disparaging of Queen Elizabeth with their biblical allusion to casting "pearls before swine" (KJV Matthew 7:6). While Coleridge duly acknowledges the excellence of great men within the Queen's court, he criticises both the increase of royal power in her realm stemming from the "transference of the papal authority to the crown," and the Queen's personal character, the "unfixed state of Elizabeth's own opinions, whose inclinations were as popish as her interests were protestant" (Coleridge 281). His words echo historical misogynist rhetoric concerning the feebleness and capriciousness of women, and their societal stigmatisation as "harlots" when ascending into positions of power surpassing those held by men.

In the face of such views, Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* introduced a new interpretation of Queen Elizabeth, representing her as the focal point in a mythical Golden Age and portraying her as a Virgin Queen. Scott mitigated the notions of the "semi-barbarity" of the epoch by depicting the court as a meeting place of the best minds of the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, regardless of their actual age and position during the year 1575. In the first scene set in the court of the Queen, every character is directly connected to poetic achievements, thereby highlighting the intellectual brilliance of the period. The rival factions of the court, represented by the Earls of Sussex and Leicester, are united in admiring the same literary talents and offering them their patronage. In the home of Sussex, the reader is introduced to Sir Walter Raleigh, who quotes from Edmund Spenser's *Mutability Cantos* to console his friend Tressilian, the former lover of Amy Robsart (Scott, *Kenilworth* 28, vol. 2). Nevertheless, the Earl of Leicester also recognises Spenser's muse. He personally addresses him and invites him to his lodging to discuss a petition about Ireland (Scott, *Kenilworth* 114, vol. 2). Furthermore, Leicester is associated with Philip Sidney, his nephew, and William Shakespeare, whose *Venus and Adonis* supposedly inspired

Sidney's works. Consequently, a mutual admiration for literary genius supresses the rivalry and political tensions at court: an aspect that the early nineteenth-century audience could readily identify with.

Posterity often criticised Scott's twisting of history. Spenser's *Mutability Cantos* were not written for another two decades, Shakespeare was a child of eleven in 1575, and his narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis*, was published seven years after Sidney's death in 1586. These misrepresentations of facts by Scott were meant to substantiate the author's vision of the Elizabethans as unique, and to create a common cultural denominator for all English-speaking peoples. Shakespeare's cult as a genius of English literature gained wide ceremonial acknowledgement with the first Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769, and Scott also utilised it to enhance the reputation of Queen Elizabeth. The novel's scene about the meeting of Leicester and the playwright, the powerful Earl and the simple "player," underlines this vision: "The *player* bowed, and the Earl nodded and passed on—so that age would have told the tale; in ours, perhaps, we might say the immortal had done homage to the mortal" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 114, vol. 2). Shakespeare's presence within the plot identifies the age as magnificent, and while censuring the "mortal" peculiarities of the story, it also highlights its "immortal" character.

Furthermore, within the novel, the English literary canon bridges the gap between the different English-speaking nations, whose understanding of their national past was otherwise conflicting. Scott references this issue in his preface to the Magnum Opus edition of *Kenilworth* that starts with his open declaration of the discrepancy between his Scottish identity and the novel's English plotline. Scott confesses that, while working on his novel, he "felt the prejudices with which a Scottishman is tempted to regard the subject" about the "sister" and "foe" of Mary Queen of Scots ("Introduction," 1831 edition). However, portraying Queen Elizabeth as the patron of the best representatives of the writers in English provided a sufficient excuse to celebrate her as the British Queen of all speakers of English.

Scott not only characterises the circle of courtiers with linking them to Shakespeare, but the Queen herself is also shown quoting lines from him as she complains about his "toys" that "come into [her] head when [she] should think of other matters" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 101, vol. 2). The Queen also seemingly becomes responsible for the flourishing of late sixteenth century drama when she makes the far-sighted decision to protect the rights of the newly established playhouses on the Bankside in face of the complaint voiced by the bear-gardens. Scott even lets

the Queen become the mouthpiece for his own views about the merits of historical fiction when she praises Shakespeare for his "new undertaking of his Chronicles" which "may entertain, with honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 132, vol. 2; McGann 122).

While describing the outstanding representatives of literary achievement as the associates of the court of Elizabeth, Scott is cautious to distance the Queen and her circle from the mediocrity of the age with which his contemporaries associated the texts of the *Progresses.* He introduces Master Robert Laneham, the writer of the more copious description about the Kenilworth entertainment within Nichols's *Progresses,* as a member of the crowd surrounding the Queen, and he is depicted in sharp contrast to Raleigh, Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare. Laneham is characterised by his appearance—his "enormous ruff; stiffened to the extremity of the absurd taste of the times"—which stands as a symbol of the self-importance of a small office holder (Scott, *Kenilworth* 115, vol. 2). Scott inserts notes of mockery about Laneham and his style of "intolerable affectation, both in point of composition and orthography"; however, he is conspicuously not using the alternative text of George Gascoigne written with literary aspirations (Note 7, 1831 edition). For Scott, Laneham's accounts of all the programs renders a more rounded and picturesque image of the Elizabethan court, through which he could emphasise the diversity and inclusiveness of its nature, where people from all walks of life participated in honouring their monarch. Laneham's account of the Kenilworth entertainment contains not only those speeches and songs which were written by men of letters, but also those performed by the common people. A case in point is the account of the traditional Hock Tuesday Play of the people of Coventry, in which they tell the story of the local women who defended their town against the invading Danes. While Gascoigne ignored this enterprise as unworthy of mention, Laneham provided a full and detailed account of it seemingly enjoying the description of the "great throng and vnruliness of the peopl" of the players and their leader, the elderly mason Captain Cox (Goldring ed., *John Nichols's The Progresses 259, vol. 2).*

Scott's novel presents the show as a burlesque: a bridge collapses into the pond, and the disillusioned actors are picked up by a nearby boat; however, he also relishes every minute of the performance in spite of the following apology to his readers:

> These rough, rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy, and whose court, governed by a female whose sense of propriety was equal to her strength of mind, was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement than her councils for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough, masculine spirit, which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain the Queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque, of chivalry which was presented in the Coventry play. (Scott, *Kenilworth* 278, vol. 2)

Scott's explanation transforms the vulgar event into a humorous and innocent episode that the reader is also invited to share in. He praises Elizabeth's rare political instinct to engage with her simple subjects, an issue highly topical in the aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 and the ever more prominent campaign for the broadening of voting rights in the 1820s. In this context, Elizabeth becomes the monarch of all her people, embracing the best wits as well as the simplest subjects of her kingdom.

To enhance the inclusive nature of Queen Elizabeth's court, Scott adds an extra pageant to the Kenilworth shows. He picks up a reference in Nichols's *Progresses* to a further masque and invents its details to celebrate the ethnic diversity of the subjects of a monarch. As a high point of the revels at Kenilworth, Scott describes four groups of maskers entering the hall dressed up as Celtic Britons, Romans, Saxons, and Normans, "each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 236, vol. 3). The terminology is significant, as the four bands are defined as people who at one time in history shared the same geography. It is locality that joins these "various nations which had anciently inhabited Britain," positing the ideal of a country shared by different nations (Scott, *Kenilworth* 239, vol. 3). When at the end of the show Merlin asks the Queen to choose which group represents the most pre-eminent stock among them, she declines to comply. She claims, "no single one of these celebrated nations could claim pre-eminence over the others, as having most contributed to form the Englishman of her own time, who unquestionably derived from each of them some worthy attribute of his character" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 241, vol. 3). Thus, Scott

invests the concept of the nation with the idea of ethnic diversity and associates it with the shared space that encompasses all those groups (Craig 25). Queen Elizabeth, by embracing all of them and acknowledging their individual traits, becomes a fitting ancestor to the newly created United Kingdom.

Kenilworth as a Backdrop for the Queen

The choice of the location—the castle of Kenilworth—is itself an important comment by Sir Walter Scott on Queen Elizabeth. In spite of the novel's title, only the third book is set at Kenilworth; however, the story progresses towards the place where all characters arrive and plotlines meet. Conspicuously, it is not London or Westminster—the political, cultural, and economic centre of England by the sixteenth century—that serve to characterise the Queen, but Leicester's country house set in the Midlands, the geographical centre of the country.

Kenilworth was part of a region that represented for early nineteenth-century visitors a cluster of destinations with strong cultural overtones, incorporating—among others—the medieval castle of Warwick situated only five miles away and Stratford-upon-Avon only twelve miles away. The painter Charles Robert Leslie described this part of the country in his memoirs as a "classic neighbourhood" where he and his friends "loitered some days … visiting Kenilworth and Warwick" and "Shakespeare's house to scribble their names … on its walls," a custom in which even Scott participated (Leslie 44). Drawing on this fashion of visiting famous sights of the past, Scott used location to depict two aspects of the Queen's character: her public and official royal image, and her private, feminine persona. Kenilworth became the site of ceremony as well as love, the first expressed by the stately structure of the castle and the spectacles staged there, and the latter by the intimate space of an Italianate garden, where—in the novel—Leicester comes closest to proposing to the Queen.

For Scott, scenery was an integral part of identity that could display the aspirations and deeply-held beliefs of an individual. He also created for himself such a scenic home, Abbotsford, which epitomised the relationship between his historical fiction and private life (Malley 236). At Abbotsford, he surrounded himself with the period look and props that he also incorporated into his writing, and which lent his novels a visual vividness admired by his contemporaries. In 1821, J. L. Adolphus praised Scott's "energy of painting" in describing locations together

with his superior style: a "picturesque mode of narrative, which impresses an event or situation on the fancy by a vivid representation of all the outward circumstances as they unitedly offer themselves to the sense" (Adolphus 206).

Charles Robert Leslie's account also highlights the strong connection between character and landscape that distinguishes Scott's writing. Leslie visited the writer in his home to paint his portrait and was led to a beautiful but remote spot which was to serve as the background. In his account, he notes Scott's ability to talk about landscape as a painter would:

> While strolling with Sir Walter … he would frequently stop and point out exactly that object or effect that would strike the eye of a painter. He said he always liked to have a dog with him in his walks, if for nothing else but to furnish a living object in the *foreground of the picture;* and he noticed to me, when we were among the hills, how much interest was given to the scene by the occasional appearance of his black greyhound, Hamlet, at unexpected points. He talked of scenery as he wrote of it—like a painter. (Leslie 62)

Scott's choice to set his plot about Queen Elizabeth amid the ruins of the once majestic Kenilworth enabled him to easily mingle the factual evidence of the crumbling walls with the fictitious details of his imagination. His novel became a landscape of the Elizabethan Age with the well-known figures of history in the foreground and the mysteries of the irregular ruins as a backdrop.

The mode of constructing this picture followed the aesthetic principles of William Gilpin, who expands on the importance of dramatic tension expressed by the picturesque:

> … the *smoothness* of the whole, though right and as it should be in nature, offends the picture. Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground; plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs; break the edges of the walk; give it the rudeness of a road; mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones and brushwood; in a word, instead of making the whole *smooth,* make it *rough;* and you make it also *picturesque.* (Gilpin 8)

The plot of the third book presents Kenilworth in these rough colours and textures, placing amid its walls mighty spectacle next to dark conspiracy, innocence next to malice, and virtue next to hypocrisy.

Used as a tool of characterisation, the castle reveals the tension between the Queen's private feelings for the Earl of Leicester and her public role as the focus of the attention of her people. While for contemporaries the Queen appeared as a "marvellous combination of the male and female dispositions, in those points in which they seem most incompatible," Scott fuses these two natures (Senior 250). He describes her character as "strangely compounded of the strongest masculine sense, with those foibles which are chiefly supposed proper to the female sex," and underlines that her virtues "far predominated over her weaknesses" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 219, vol. 2). Scott shows the Queen at moments of emotional crisis and at the height of absolute authority, but ultimately in both cases he provides a positive portrait.

The public spaces of Kenilworth—the entrance, the lake, the courtyard and hall—served to present the magnificence of the Queen, and their description minutely followed Scott's archaeological sources. However, her private self, the woman in love, is characterised by the intimate space of the Italianate garden, delineated only in a private letter by Laneham. This latter image was expressly feminine in nature, as enclosed gardens (*hortus conclusus*) were traditionally associated with female sexuality and with the Virgin Mary in medieval iconography. Thus, the garden contained none of the scandalous references of late eighteenth-century stage productions about the Queen's private life. In the novel, this is the scene where the Queen comes closest to feminine desire, and when her dignity seems to "soften away" into "indecision and tenderness" under Leicester's advances. Yet, she does not lose her command: "'No, Dudley,' said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents—'no, I must be the mother of my people.' … 'Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—but no—no; Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone'" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 154–155, vol. 3). Fusing womanhood with queenship, Elizabeth supplants her role as a lover with another feminised role, that of the mother of her nation. The scene of the Italianate garden, with its symbolic allusion to the Virgin Mary, ultimately confirms that she is a virgin mother.

To make the image even more emphatic, Scott depicts Elizabeth as part of the ancient British landscape of pre-historic stone monuments, which lend her a dignity far beyond the sentimental descriptions of the previous century:

> The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient Druidical monuments called Rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion; but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. (Scott, *Kenilworth* 155–156, vol. 3)

Scott uses "balance" as an epithet for Elizabeth's character on the first occasion he introduces her to the readers by praising her ability to balance the factions of the court and to control their "two opposing interests" (Scott, *Kenilworth* 21, vol. 2). Departing from the eighteenth-century representations of the Queen in terms of extremes—such as anger, vanity and jealousy—Scott utilises "balance" within her character to transform Elizabeth's image into a more humane personality, allowing her to display passions, anger, and vanity, but also magnanimity of mind and wisdom in judgement. By associating her with the "ancient Druidical monuments" of the land, Scott elevates the figure of the Queen into a symbol of the land, blending her story into the mythic history of the country.

The novel transforms the landscape of Kenilworth into a shrine of the cult of Queen Elizabeth for the nineteenth century. Situated in close proximity to a similar centre of worship at Stratford, Kenilworth Castle had attracted a lot of visitors even before Scott's novel who went there for "its gothic glories" and "the vacant scene" that imagination crowds "with glimm'ring ghosts, that haunt the dreary shade," as it is expressed in Mary Darwall's *Elegy on the Ruins of Kenilworth Castle*, published in 1794 (6). However, by the mid-1820s it changed from a scene of gothic horror into a national heritage site, where a special issue of the two sixteenth-century accounts of the Queen's visit with the title *Kenilworth Festivities* (1825) could be purchased (Townshend). From the forlorn ruins of forgotten times standing as a *memento mori* to earthly splendour, the place was changed within a decade to accommodate tourists visiting it to encounter the landscape of Scott's novel. Scott noted this alteration in a letter of 7 April 1827:

> … we visited Kenilworth. The relentless rain only allowed us a glimpse of these memorable ruins. Well! the last time I was here in 1815 these trophies of time were quite neglected. Now they approach so much

> nearer the splendour of Thunder ten-tronck as to have a door at least if not windows. They are in short preserved and protected. So much for the Novels. (Anderson ed.)

The castle became also a point of interest for the new genre of landscape painting in the Romantic Age, and artists in their collections of iconic scenes of Britain started to include sketches about Kenilworth too. For instance, William Turner's watercolour, *Kenilworth Castle* (1830), completed on a trip to the Midlands and turned into an engraved plate for his series *Picturesque Views in England and Wales* (1832), displayed with topographical accuracy the walls of the ruined castle. However, Turner's rendering is picturesque in nature, as he contrasts the white outlines of the fairy-tale like Mortimer Tower and the darker tones of the ominous-looking Leicester building added for the Queen's visit.[5] In the foreground of the composition, the idyllic scene of milkmaids and the cows reflected in the motionless surface of the water conjure up a timeless image for the Castle of Kenilworth and the hazy moonlight that illuminates the landscape reflects "the chaste beams of the watery moon" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.162) of Shakespeare's recollection of the place.

The novel also inspired painters to depict the Elizabethan Age in terms of genre or anecdotal narrative painting filled with colourful period detail. One of the first canvases directly influenced by Scott was *May Day in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1821) by Leslie, who wrote passionately about the author's visit to his studio in 1821 and his suggestions for improvements to the composition (Leslie 234). Leslie's painting represented an *al fresco* entertainment combined with rustic anecdotal detail as well as elegantly dressed women of the court in order to deliver a panoramic view of the Elizabethans, similarly to what Scott achieved in his novel. However, the idea of the composition predates the publication of the novel, as, in a letter of 1820, Leslie already provides a description about its probable theme to his sister:

> I am just commencing a picture of the May-day revels in the time of Queen Elizabeth, which will contain a great many figures, and will be an attempt to give the costume and something of the manners of all classes in that age, from the nobility down

5 Turner's *Kenilworth Castle* (1830) is now in the possession of Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, while a copy of *Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire* engraved by T. Jeavons from the *Picturesque Views in England and Wales* (1832) is held by Tate Britain.

> to the peasantry. … I am in hopes it will be popular, as it is a period that Englishmen are fond of recurring to, as one of the most brilliant in the history of their country. They are also more generally acquainted with the manners of that time than any other, on account of the greater popularity of Shakespeare than any other English writer whatever. (Leslie 219)

The letter shows how the veneration of Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth were connected, and what extensive interest the subject matter aroused about the Age of Elizabeth. The public welcomed Leslie's painting: it was chosen as the Painting of the Year, and earned its painter an Associate Membership at the Royal Academy. Nevertheless, Leslie deemed Scott an authority on the topic, and Scott's influence was prevalent also in the naming of the parts of the ruined place, to be adopted by the archaeological texts about the castle (Handa 41).

In Scott's novel, Kenilworth Castle serves as a symbol for Queen Elizabeth and her age, emphasising the inclusiveness of an idealised past where polite and popular entertainment still shared the same stage, and people of all walks of life came together to celebrate. Kenilworth became synonymous with the Queen's visit and transformed the location into a site of cultural pilgrimage. It became one of the first "heritage sites" of the country that brought together historical memories with local peculiarities, creating a souvenir for mass consumption (Lincoln 80–85).

Conclusion

Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* became a bestseller, and his contemporaries praised the work by comparing it to the history plays of Shakespeare:

> The *Novels* of Sir Walter Scott are, beyond all question, the most remarkable productions of the present age; and have made a sensation, and have produced an effect, all over Europe … in our own country, they have attained a place, inferior only to that which must be filled for ever by the unapproachable glory of Shakespeare. (Jeffrey 2, vol. 3)

The novel's success rested, in part, on Scott's skilful mixing of details from antiquarian sources and archaeological evidence with a fictional storyline that humanised historical characters and placed them within a landscape accessible to all. While the novel's subtitle, "A Romance," indicates that Scott was not writing history "proper," his endeavour to use historical evidence and transform it into entertainment proved a decisive step in opening up history for the general public and thus moulding the cultural memory of its readers. Although the inaccuracies about the Earl of Leicester plot earned him sharp criticism, the depiction of the Queen as a flesh and blood woman of brilliant intellect remained sealed in the imagination of nineteenth-century Britain. For Thomas Hardy, Scott's characterisation rendered one of the most rounded images of her: "No historian's Queen Elizabeth was ever so perfectly a woman as the fictitious Elizabeth of *Kenilworth*" (qtd. in Alexander xv). For the next generation, the Queen's image as the equal of the best writers of English literature and the "Mother" of her nation became a deep-rooted maxim.

Scott's novel placed Queen Elizabeth within the context of ceremony, a stance that foreshadowed expectations about modern monarchs in the next two centuries. At a time of industrial change and social unrest, when members of Parliament rather than the king influenced political decisions, Scott's depiction of Elizabeth contended that the ritual of royalty was one of the most significant aspects that could unite a land of many nations. Queen Elizabeth is represented as a ruler who can mitigate the differences between her various subjects by her royal presence at festive national occasions and local celebrations. Scott's *Kenilworth* is, therefore, an early attempt to fashion the Virgin Queen of English history as a common British cultural denominator, standing for the general excellence of all English-speaking peoples inhabiting the British Isles.

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The Brier-Patch in the Kailyard

Realism versus Sentimentality in Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Irish, Scottish, and American Fiction

TOM HUBBARD

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Abstract: At the turn of the nineteenth century, conservatively sentimental fictions, often religious and/or provincial in context, were answered by other works based on a realist and/or modernist aesthetic. In two novels by Canon Patrick Sheehan, Geoffrey Austin, Student *(1895) and its sequel,* The Triumph of Failure *(1899), the central character moves from religious scepticism through secular philosophies to a rediscovery of faith. Whatever the failings of its human adherents, religious faith—and its institutions—are seen as benign. Novels which challenge this include Gerard O'Donovan's* Father Ralph *(1913), the autobiographical work of a former priest who exposes what he considers the conformist mediocrity of actually-existing Catholicism, and Brinsley MacNamara's* The Valley of the Squinting Windows *(1918), a controversial study of small-town narrow-mindedness and religiosity. Such works are comparable to the better-known critiques of James Joyce and George Moore.*

Sheehan's "A Spoiled Priest" (1905) finds a Scottish Presbyterian counterpart in S. R. Crockett's "The Stickit Minister" (1893). In both these short stories, the aspiring clergyman's failure is a personal one, and the respective religious cultures remain unquestioned. Crockett and Ian Maclaren, the author of the short-story collection, Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush *(1894), belong to the so-called "Kailyard" (cabbage-patch) school of Scottish writers who presented an idealised picture of small-town life. An unrelentingly dark riposte to the Kailyard, however, is supplied by George Douglas Brown's* The House with the Green Shutters *(1901); this novel is a Scottish equivalent of* The Valley of the Squinting Windows.

In the US, certain Southern white writers maintained that the wrong side won the Civil War, and that slavery was not inhumane. Such attempts to legitimise racism were exposed by African-American writers, notably Charles Chesnutt in works such as "The Goophered Grapevine" (1887). However, the stories of Joel Chandler Harris—a white Southerner—are not as cosy as they might at first appear: in his Uncle Remus books (1880, 1883), Brer Rabbit can be seen as the black trickster who can outwit his oppressor, Brer Fox (= the slave-owner / overseer), as in the tale of Brer Rabbit, the Tar-Baby and the Brier-patch. As we would expect, there are vast differences in the historical and ideological contexts of these Irish, Scottish, and American works, but the patterns of force and counterforce are remarkably similar.

"There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all" (vi). That is one of Ireland's best-known writers, Oscar Wilde, in his typically provocative preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* of 1891. The writers to be considered in this paper play a large part in the debate which Wilde outlines so starkly if simplistically. Simplistically—for I want to demonstrate just how complex and nuanced that debate can be when you get behind the snappy Wildean aphorisms. Moreover, while my main emphasis is necessarily upon Irish writers, I find structural similarities in the forces and counterforces evident in Scottish and American fiction of the period, a period running roughly from 1880 up to the years of the First World War and its immediate aftermath.

On the one hand, we have a number of writers in these three countries—Ireland, Scotland, and the United States—who have agendas extraneous to artistic criteria and whose fictions grow from these agendas, which are characterised by provincialism, conservatism, and are usually underpinned by religious beliefs (or if not religious beliefs as such, then social conventions and conformities which seek legitimacy in religious institutions). The three countries are all of course English-speaking, and may be said to form a large part of the Anglo-Saxon world—despite Ireland's Celtic connections—whose dominant collective culture has tended to advance the moralistic over the aesthetic. French culture, by contrast, has tended to highlight the aesthetic over the moral—though, again, we must be on our guard against oversimplifications.

So, to recap, on the one hand, we have a group of conventionally moralistic writers. On the other hand, we have writers in these three countries who challenge the moralistic agendas, and who are concerned, variously, to expose the contradictions, often sinister contradictions, in their societies, or to prefer aesthetic considerations in their writing to anything overtly moralistic. Note these words "variously"

and "or": this challenging group is not a cohesive one, and I am not sure that we should really call it a group, as if it were a monolith. Let us think rather of two sub-groups. The first of these is composed of writers who take a critical look at society, and could be broadly identified with realism—and we could well argue that this sub-group's mission is as moralistic in its way as the kind of writing which it challenges. How different these "realists" are from their fellow-rebels who constitute our second sub-group, and who at the turn of the nineteenth century could be described as belonging to Symbolism and even modernism—modernism having at least part of its origins in the Symbolist movement—and here, the demands of art are uppermost. Here, there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book, though there might be a mischievous frisson to be had from deliberately setting out to be *im*moral, to *épater le bourgeois*, to mock the hypocrisies of a complacent dominant social class.

Of these two sub-groups challenging the status quo, the realists invoke French novelists such as Balzac, Flaubert, and Zola. The symbolists and modernists also invoke the French, but their heroes are rather the poets Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé, and those assorted writers associated with decadence and *fin-de-siècle* sensibility, as well as the novelist, Edouard Dujardin, pioneer of stream-of-consciousness in fiction. In Ireland, the novelist George Moore identified with the first sub-group, the realists, then became increasingly drawn to the second, the Symbolists/modernists, as in his novel, *The Lake* of 1905, which depicts a troubled priest's questioning of his earlier dogmatism.

By way of bringing all this into sharper focus, let me back-track a little by taking a brief look at one of the most notoriously moralistic writers of the nineteenth century, the great art critic, John Ruskin. He grew up in a strict Protestant, evangelical family, and his prose style owes an enormous debt to the cadences of the King James version of the Bible. Ruskin was disturbed by the growing aestheticism of the latter part of his century, because he was an advocate (like Schiller and the early Karl Marx) of the Romantic idea of "the whole man"—man who fused the moral, religious, economic, political, and aesthetic dimensions of his being, not allowing one to dominate to the exclusion of the others. But for that very reason he grew also to question whatever was overtly moralistic and religious (or conventionally religious) to the exclusion of the other dimensions.

Accordingly, Ruskin, a writer from an intensely Protestant culture, attacked what he felt was a narrow-minded Protestant attitude to art. He had heard, in Alpine Europe, a preacher of the Waldensian sect, and was not impressed. That Sunday

morning, he writes in 1858, he had been listening to this preacher "expounding Nothing with a twang" (Ruskin xli, vol. 7). Was this man, Ruskin asks, really a servant of God? Surely, God had made the human body beautiful, had made all things beautiful, not in order to lead people away from Him. Ruskin continues: surely, a great artist like Paolo Veronese, in the "magnificent Animality" of his art, was not a servant of the devil? Ruskin had come to feel that his own Protestant upbringing had not prepared him for art.

Indeed, Ruskin could go as far as to claim that intensely religious people were ill-equipped to appreciate great art. If they were affected by any kind of artistic production, Ruskin suggested in 1853 that "very often it is by a theatrical commonplace, more frequently still by false sentiment." (125, vol. 10). In other words, according to Ruskin, religious folk preferred kitsch. We could argue that this tendency exists among Catholics as much as among Protestants: in Catholic Ireland you can encounter innumerable examples of statues of Our Lady in the worst possible taste. Contrast this with the notion, towards the end of the century, that Catholicism could be a close relative of aestheticism. Wilde's Dorian Gray, connoisseur-like, is attracted to Catholic ritual, albeit he soon proceeds to a very different dalliance with Darwinism. Wilde himself, Protestant-born, made a deathbed conversion to Catholicism, that last-chance saloon for many an 1890s decadent. James Joyce, bred a Catholic, rejected the faith even as he retained a preoccupation with its doctrines and culture. In *Stephen Hero* (composed 1904–1907, first published 1944), his Stephen Dedalus considers the proposition that "[t]he Puritan, the Calvinist, the Lutheran were inimical to art and to exuberant beauty: the Catholic was the friend of him who professed to interpret or divulge the beautiful" (183). A few pages later, however, Stephen invokes his concept of epiphany, "a sudden spiritual manifestation" (188), as pertaining not to religion but to art, despite its origins in religious discourse, specifically that of Aquinas.

To return to Ruskin: he never abandoned his Bible-based Christianity, and always insisted on a moral dimension in art. In no other art critic is that insistence so strong. But he does not demand that the artist have an overt, simplistic moral intention in his art. Here is how he suggests a great painter should go about his work: "Does a man die at your feet—your business is not to help him, but to note the colour of his lips; does a woman embrace her destruction before you, your business is not to save her, but to watch how she bends her arms. Not a specially religious or spiritual business this, it might appear" (388–389, vol. 4).

That demand—not to help the dying man, but to note the colour of his lips, not to save the woman but to note how she bends her arms—would, in effect, be endorsed by the realist writer in his quest for objectivity without any subjective moralising; it would also be endorsed by the Symbolist/modernist writer concerned with aesthetic rather than moralistic criteria. How odd it seems that Ruskin, otherwise well-known for his passionate denunciation of social and economic injustice, has in that last passage so much in common with his leading adversary in the aesthetic movement, the painter James Whistler, who disdained social comment and professed interest only in the composition of colours and shapes.

I would suggest, however, that the real polarity is not really that of art versus religion/morality. Ruskin had invoked Veronese as a great artist, and Veronese like so many of the Renaissance painters took his subject matter from the Bible and from Christianity. Ruskin also praised Michelangelo and Rubens, whose works are located in ecclesiastical buildings. Surely, there is much great art which has grown out of religious faith. Take music—the chorales and oratorios of Bach, the masses of Bruckner. (Though one might add that some of the finest church music has been composed by non-believers, for example, Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams.)

No—surely, the problem is not religion/morality as such; the problem is rather *piety*. Piety stems from a vulgarisation of religious faith or moral commitment; piety is characterised by a dangerous sense of certainty, admitting no doubt, no struggle, a one-dimensionality that can lead to self-righteousness and intolerance of anyone who deviates even slightly from one's own sense of absolute correctness. Piety is a feature not only of religious behaviour, but also of secular belief-systems. Most European countries knew only too well how secular faiths manifested themselves during the twentieth century, as witness Nazi-promoted art, and the so-called "socialist realism" of the Soviet bloc, which proved to be later examples of the pious kitsch which Ruskin noted as being favoured by the narrowly religious.

The intellectual basis of piety is certainty; the emotional basis of piety is sentimentality. The pious sentimentalist confuses the world as he thinks it should be with the world as it actually is. That is a recipe for no end of disasters—including bad art.

So let us apply this to Ireland. Patrick Sheehan, who lived from 1852 to 1913, was both a Roman Catholic priest and a novelist, a Canon of the church, educated at the seminary of Maynooth. In his clerical role, he is best-known as the long-serving parish priest of Doneraile in Co. Cork. In an essay, Benedict Kiely describes him as a "reluctant novelist" (Kiely, passim). Indeed, there is a character in one

of Sheehan's novels who grumpily complains that too many novels focus on human misery—is not there enough misery in real life? Mainstream Irish Catholic nationalist culture was hostile to influences from outside Ireland—Rome, of course, excepted. English culture was the culture of the oppressor, and France was a seething pit of immorality, a country which produced all these dirty books by the likes of Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant. As any student of Irish fiction knows well, French and other continental cultures were to writers like James Joyce and George Moore enormously liberating.

Canon Sheehan wrote novels that were extremely popular in Ireland and also within the Irish diaspora in America and Britain. He gave pleasure to a lot of people. (I would not be surprised if my own ancestors, Catholics from the south of Ireland, had read and enjoyed his work.) "Reluctant" novelist? Well, he found that the literary form called the novel, often reckoned to be dubious, could actually be used as a vehicle for propaganda. Sheehan was a man with a mission, and his mission was to defend traditional Irish Catholic values against the materialism of the outside world. But it is not just the outside world that is corrupt: Dublin has become a centre for sinful conduct that you would not get away with in a small provincial town or village (as witness George Moore's rebellious Julia Cahill in one of his short stories [*The Untilled Field* 203]). An elderly priest in Sheehan's novel, *Geoffrey Austin, Student* (1895) denounces what he calls "the contamination of city life" (5). Such proud provincialism would feed into Eamon De Valera's vision of an Ireland loyal to the old values, agrarian, anti-industrial, a country where, in the seriously travestied version of his famous radio address of 1943, "comely maidens" would be "dancing at the crossroads." (He actually said "happy maidens" and there is no mention of the open-air performance!)(92–95).

In today's Ireland, De Valera's misquoted speech attracts cheap laughs. A possible defence, however, of Sheehan's novels would be that they posit kindness and compassion, especially towards the poor and rejected, against the cold ambition of the late nineteenth-century commercial and industrial world. A counter to that could be that Christian charity is all very well, but social and economic structures need to change. For Sheehan, though, socialism (seen as godless) is not the answer, and the threat comes from any brand of materialism, be that capitalistic or socialistic. There had, after all, been a recent Papal encyclical outlining Catholic social teaching as a means of averting a challenge from socialism.

So, from Sheehan's point of view, there are threats to traditional Irish Catholicism that are both metropolitan and cosmopolitan. James Joyce and George Moore, who were raised as Catholics, take an opposing view. To them, Ireland is priest-ridden: the clerics are petty tyrants who prevent their flock—especially in the rural areas—from enjoying dancing and sex, and from reading books which might excite their loins but which might instead expand their minds. Moore leaves Ireland to live in London; Joyce finds his way to wicked Paris where he secures the publication of *Ulysses*. Far, far from Canon Sheehan's parochial concerns down there in County Cork, Joyce establishes himself as a supreme novelist of the city on a par with the great realist novelists, though Joyce's bearings are modernist rather than realist, more akin to Proust than to Zola.

That said, Canon Sheehan's fiction does not avoid city life, and of course, he would have his reasons for representing Dublin as a heartless, alienating place—ironically comparable to the dingy paralysis that pervades the stories in Joyce's *Dubliners*. Let me focus on two novels by Sheehan, *Geoffrey Austin, Student* of 1895 and its sequel, *The Triumph of Failure* of 1899. These two books together form a kind of Bildungsroman, where we follow the chequered career of Geoffrey Austin, a somewhat severe young man who discovers the delights of intellectual pursuits at his school but fails an exam to enter the Civil Service and goes on to lead a rather desultory, shabby-genteel existence in Dublin, where, however, he falls in with congenial company, above all when he comes under the spell of a friend who is a charismatic Catholic evangelist and social worker among the lower classes. Geoffrey renounces the worldliness of human intellect, renounces corrupt secular values as he sees them, and becomes a monk.

To the extent that these novels by Sheehan inhabit the genre of Bildungsroman, they have much merit. Comparison and contrast with Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* and its earlier draft, *Stephen Hero*, would—I believe—yield much, but that would amount to a whole paper in itself. Anyway, if you place Sheehan beside his diametrical opposite, Joyce, ironies abound: in Sheehan, you have Geoffrey Austin, the religious prig, and in Joyce you have Stephen Dedalus, the artist/intellectual prig, and you might be forgiven for thinking that there is not much to choose between them.

No-one could accuse Canon Sheehan—a man of considerable political courage—of offering up pretty-pretty rural idylls. He was not the kind of writer to evade at least some of the sordid realities of urban life in favour of a never-never land where priest and people got on harmoniously in a small parish—though no doubt, as priest

at Doneraile, he would aspire to just that. If, through his character of Geoffrey Austin, he was to denounce the inadequacy (as he saw it) of worldly learning, Sheehan was no provincial ignoramus: he was extremely well-read in German literature and philosophy (Hennig 352ff.), even if he viewed German culture as a corrective to French fin-de-siècle decadence. (In Sheehan's fiction, unsurprisingly, the phrase, *"fin-de-siècle,"* is used to describe attitudes of which he and his pious characters disapprove.)

Where it all goes wrong, artistically, is at the points where Sheehan gets carried away by his own propaganda, or rather by the unquestioning piety which propels that propaganda. He can write with narrative verve—one can, therefore, understand his popularity—then, alas, you get pages and pages of breathless rhetoric. He is in the pulpit, banging away, and we readers can feel patronised, irritated if not downright bored. Geoffrey witnesses the untimely death of his hero, the charismatic Catholic preacher Charles Travers, and as Travers has had so many admirers among both Dublin's uptight bourgeoisie and its grateful proletariat, there are enough tears shed to flood the river Liffey. The lachrymosity of this chapter of *The Triumph of Failure* shows Sheehan at his worst—in a book where often we have read him at his best. Piety produces bad art. A comparable case is that of another late-Victorian writer-cleric, Lewis Carroll (a Protestant this time), who ruined his *Sylvie and Bruno* books of 1889 and 1893, allowing po-faced sermons to get in the way of the zany hilarity of the more imaginative chapters.

One of Sheehan's best short stories is the title story of his 1905 collection *A Spoiled Priest*. Kevin O'Donnell is a bright young student at Maynooth, but is rejected for the priesthood. It is a devastating blow to him and to those close to him (not least his mother) but, his bitterness overcome and having become a successful medical doctor abroad, he returns to Ireland and (albeit later in the day) is ordained a priest after all. Now, Sheehan never regarded Maynooth as a place of total cosiness between spirited young fellas and the grave clerical professors, but this writer does not seriously question the position of the Church and its institutions in Ireland: far from it. To that extent he could be regarded as seriously evasive—especially (and perhaps unfairly) in the light of hindsight and the manifold sexual abuse scandals that have battered the Church's authority in our own time.

There is something poignant in the fact that it was in the year of Sheehan's death, 1913, that there appeared a novel which unflinchingly dealt with the hypocrisy and corruption of actually-existing Catholicism in Ireland. Moreover, this was a novel by a priest—or more to the point, a *former* priest who had gone on to marry and

father children. Gerald O'Donovan, who lived from 1871 to 1942, published in 1913 the semi-autobiographical novel, *Father Ralph*. Young Ralph O'Brien is pushed by a domineering mother into the priesthood but when he is appointed to a parish, he finds that his independence of mind is up against a powerful alliance of the local gombeen men—small-town exploitative businessmen—and the Church authorities. Ralph wants to involve himself in the co-operative movement and to assist working-class people in improving their lives. This attempt to practise Christian compassion is of course branded as dangerously socialistic by his clerical and lay enemies, and he finds a particularly nasty adversary in his immediate boss, the vulgar, boorish Father Molloy. Ralph is summoned before his bishop (as was O'Donovan in real life), and is instructed to cease his activities. He refuses, and leaves the priesthood.

The first chapter of *Father Ralph* presents us with the innocent scene of its protagonist, as a baby, being wheeled in his pram through St Stephen's Green in Dublin. Interestingly, in a novel published the previous year (1912), *The Charwoman's Daughter* by James Stephens, there is also an early chapter depicting a quiet scene in St. Stephen's Green. It is as if the Green is a place of serene beauty for the young and the innocent before the uglier sides of Irish life take over. To the north you have Protestant Trinity College, to the south you have Catholic University College. In between, St. Stephen's Green feels like a neutral space.

Canon Sheehan was bold in his advocacy of political overtures to Ireland's Protestants, north and south, in the face of sectarian intransigence from his own side. And he recorded his admiration for the work of many non-Catholic writers. But it is O'Donovan in *Father Ralph* who puts his finger on the cultural intolerance of mainstream Catholic Ireland, its savage embrace of philistine mediocrity. Let me quote another point early in the book, where Ralph naïvely wonders why Protestants are regarded as all bad, but Catholics are all good:

> Ralph thought it was a pity that many of the writers of books that he liked were Protestants. He prayed often that they might become Catholics or that Catholics might write books like *Treasure Island*, and *Quentin Durward*, and *David Copperfield*. He asked Ann [a woman who looks after him] why there were no Catholic books so good as these. She was horrified. "Why, they're nothing but a pack of lies. None of them things ever happened," she said. "Catholics write true stories about

> Lourdes and St. Aloysius and the like. I misdoubt me but a lot of them Protestant stories were invented by the devil." (O'Donovan 27–28)

Canon Sheehan and his more intellectual characters can only too often trash their hard-won knowledge in order to adopt an ingratiatingly anti-intellectual stance: this may help them accommodate to their less-educated parishioners and to Church orthodoxy, but it can also seem like a betrayal of the Enlightenment cultures from which they have personally benefited. It comes across as a *trahison des clercs*—"clercs" that is, the old French term which refers now more to scholars than to clerics—a sell-out of intellectual culture by intellectuals anxious to pander to the philistines. O'Donovan's Ralph, newly arrived at Maynooth, finds that the College's resources are ill-equipped to nurture in its young men a love of "the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake" (to use a famous phrase of Cardinal Newman): "During the few free days before the arrival of the general body of students Ralph … explored the College: the poky, ill-supplied divisional libraries, without catalogue, order or classification, or any book that one wanted to read; the rather fine College library … but still pitifully unrepresentative of any general culture" (O'Donovan 160). Happily, I can tell you that having worked in Maynooth as a researcher, I could not recognise such inadequacies in the excellent John Paul II Library of today, a library which is well-stocked across the disciplines, and catalogued to modern international standards.

Our second novelist for what I would describe as the "realist" response to Catholic pious sentimentality is Brinsley MacNamara, whose dates are 1890 to 1963. That is a pseudonym: his real name was John Weldon. His best-known—indeed his most notorious novel—is *The Valley of the Squinting Windows*, published in 1918. It caused a furore. In MacNamara's home village, Delvin in County Westmeath, the book was publicly burnt as it was felt that the fictional town of Garradrimna was based on Delvin.

Again, we have a young man whose mother—feeling intense guilt at her sinful sexual past—pressurises him to become a priest. Unfortunately, young John's half-brother, Ulick, exerts a less than holy influence, steering him into the pubs and generally taking advantage of the naïve John's impressionability. A new school-teacher, Rebecca Kerr, arrives in town. As she's bright and pretty, the wagging tongues of the village indulge in crescendos of malevolence: why, she must be a slut, unfit to teach the children of the parish. Squinting windows in the title? This refers to the local gossips, the petty bigots of whom Ireland is full and who can be even

more censorious than the priests, to those people who are always standing at their windows, ready to squint out at any behaviour which seems to diverge from the norm. Well, Rebecca has an affair with Ulick, and is, of course, driven out of the village. John, the young would-be priest, is in love with Rebecca, and crazed by jealousy and revenge, he attacks and kills Ulick.

As in *Father Ralph*, there is an older priest, Father O'Keeffe, well-established in the village, who is in cahoots with gombeenism—indeed, he is both priest and gombeen man in himself. There is no hope for spiritual guidance from that quarter—it is all a long way from Sheehan's saintly Charles Travers. Moreover, the woman who runs the village post office has no qualms about steaming open letters—especially love-letters, which will not reach their destination—and she thereby frustrates natural human desire even as she nourishes the self-righteous tittle-tattle of the village.

Unlike George Moore, whose own exposés of Irish degradation were influenced by the fiction of Zola and Turgenev (the latter in the case of the stories in his collection, *The Untilled Field*), neither Gerald O'Donovan or Brinsley MacNamara paraded any lessons learned from French and continental models. It would appear that their brands of realism were of a native Irish origin, and provoked by conspiracies of silence concerning the unpleasant realities of Irish life. They broke that silence.

It should come as no surprise, by the way, that George Moore was an ardent admirer of Gerald O'Donovan's work.

And now, what of those strange expressions in my title—the *brier patch*; the *kailyard*?

That which sentimentalists see as consolation, realists see as illusion. In the course of a conversation, Flaubert said that most writers of his time wanted to make their readers feel good, feel optimistic—they wanted to do this, he said, making a gesture of raising his hands, the fingers together and pointing upwards. What I want to do, he said, is this—and he lowered his hands, parting the fingers, as if to dump all illusions in the garbage (Deffoux and Zavie 125). Another Frenchman—and we recall that Canon Sheehan did not care much for the French—was the realist painter, Courbet, who when asked by a priest to paint angels in his church, challenged the priest, saying, "[s]how me an angel, and I'll paint one" (qtd. in Lewis and Lewis 34).

While we must remember Balzac's Catholicism and Dostoevsky's Orthodox faith, we can say that, generally, realism in the arts has tended towards the sceptical and the secular. Likewise, modernism, which is predicated on uncertainty, may well exclude firm religious faith: Nietzsche had proclaimed that God was dead. The big

exception to this is Kierkegaard, whose Christian existentialism is based on uncertainty, doubt, struggle, and who would find more of a following in the twentieth century than in his own early nineteenth century.

In Scotland, at the end of the nineteenth century, there emerged a popular group of writers who specialised in stories of small-town life—rural idylls in which everyone was nice to everyone else, the local church minister and schoolteacher were highly respected as leaders of the community, a bright young lad from the village went to university, where he won prizes and everyone in his home town was proud of him, not only his parents. The landowner in the big house was paternalistic, moderately benevolent: everyone knew his or her place. There was no doubt, no contradiction, no struggle (though there were significant exceptions to this, to which I will come). Collectively this group was known as the "Kailyard" school of writers—"kailyard" being a Scots word meaning "cabbage-patch."

A Presbyterian minister, the Rev. John Watson, wrote under the name of Ian Maclaren, and one of his short story collections is called *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (1894). It takes its title from a sentimental Scots song—"There grows a bonnie brier bush in our kailyard / And white are the blossoms on't in our kailyard." Brier-bush: briers are sharp, they can scratch you, make you bleed—but that is not emphasised: we are to accept only that the brier-bush is bonnie—beautiful—as are its white blossoms. Maclaren was an ultra-sentimentalist and deplored realism: "There are such things as drains, and sometimes they may have to be opened, but one would not for choice have one opened in his library" (Maclaren, "Ugliness in Fiction" 80–81).

Another "kailyard" writer was S. R. Crockett, who wrote a story called "The Stickit Minister" (1893)—"stickit" means "failed": a young man has had the ambition to be ordained as a Presbyterian (Protestant) minister, and has not made it. So, there *is* a sense of struggle here—to continue the brier-bush metaphor, a man can get seriously scratched. But Crockett goes out of his way to extract floods of tears from his readers: the "stickit" minister is suffering from a fatal illness. It is curious that "stickit minister" is close to "spoiled priest"—the title of Canon Sheehan's best-known story. A stickit minister is the Protestant equivalent of a spoiled priest. Conversely, we could argue that Canon Sheehan was writing an Irish Catholic equivalent of kailyard fiction—though it should be clear by now that there was a great deal more to him than that, and I have been at pains to emphasise the strengths as well as the weaknesses of Sheehan's fiction.

A third kailyard writer is J. M. Barrie, best-known for *Peter Pan*. He is the best of the three kailyarders and, indeed, he would depart from a kailyard phase and go on to produce work of far better quality. Barrie's sentimentality, while still pervasive during his kailyard period, is offset by his portrayal of petty but bitter rivalries between small towns in Scotland, narrow-minded sectarianism in religion, the limited intellectual and cultural horizons of the people in these small towns, but there is no critical focus on why that should be so—it is simply accepted and served up to a mass readership, in Britain and America, which liked to see Scots folk portrayed as cute and eccentric. Realism aimed to be both objective and critical—and you could say there is a contradiction in trying to be both objective and critical. Be that as it may, other Scottish writers came along who challenged the kailyarders, and who looked to European novelists for alternative models.

George Douglas Brown was a young Scottish writer who looked to Balzac, and in his novel, *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901), he gave us a picture of a Scottish small town which was anything but cosy—there was ruthless business competition, extreme psychological and even extreme physical violence, the local church minister was a pompous idiot; sure, the bright boy went to university, even won a prize, but then he turned to drink, was expelled from university, and the townsfolk hugely enjoyed the Schadenfreude they felt at his downfall. There is a line in the novel—"A pretty hell-broth was brewing in the town" (Brown 104). Brown's novel is the Scottish equivalent of MacNamara's *Valley of the Squinting Windows*.

A second *anti*-kailyard writer is John MacDougall Hay, who produced an even more powerful novel called *Gillespie*, named after its principal character, a totally unscrupulous small-town businessman, and appearing in 1914. Again, there is an atmosphere of unrelenting economic struggle, vicious gossip in the main street, extreme violence—there is an awful lot of blood in this book: if sentimentalists splash among tears, realists splash in blood. Hay was strongly influenced by Dostoevsky—but also by a native Calvinism and its theology of doom. Hay was actually a Protestant minister whose faith and art possess respective qualities of existentialism and expressionism; altogether, he presents a deeply thoughtful and imaginative contrast to his fellow-minister Ian Maclaren's comfortable evasiveness.

During our period, in the Southern states of the USA, writers represented in varying ways the phenomenon of slavery, its abolition following the Civil War, and the problems of black people adjusting to the far from absolute "freedom" of the years of Reconstruction. Thomas Nelson Page, according to our model,

would be the American equivalent of an extreme Kailyarder, writing stories of how happy the blacks were before the war, if they had a kind master and knew their place as members of the "inferior" race. This is a world of cute, loyal darkies, Southern belles and gallant Confederate officers—it would be the stuff of *Gone with the Wind*. Page was writing during the 1880s—but it was this decade that saw the emergence of another Southern white writer, Joel Chandler Harris, author of the Uncle Remus stories.

On the face of it, these tales seem to depart little from Thomas Nelson Page's formula of the charming old black fellow who can spin a yarn—in this case telling animal fables to an audience of white kids. But beneath these stories of animal predators like Brer Fox and potential animal prey such as Brer Rabbit, there is a not very sub subtext of sadistic slave-owner/overseer threatening extreme violence to the slaves whom he controls. Brer Fox captures Brer Rabbit and wants to torture him before he kills him. Brer Rabbit says to Brer Fox—do anything you want to me, scratch out my eyeballs, tear out my ears by the roots, and cut off my legs, but please, Brer Fox, whatever you do, do not throw me into that brier-patch over there. Brer Fox thinks: the brier-patch is obviously the worst torture for Brer Rabbit, the briers will rip his flesh slowly and painfully (just like the slave-owner whipping a slave to death), so that is the torture Brer Fox will choose for his victim—and he throws the rabbit into the brier-patch. The rabbit starts laughing, and hops out free—he taunts the fox by telling him that the brier-patch did not hurt him at all, as he, Brer Rabbit, had been born and brought up in a brier-patch.

So—what we might think of being a cute tale told by a cute black guy about cute animals turns out to be a disturbing tale of the threat of extreme cruelty, though the rabbit turns out to be "cute" in a different sense of that word, i.e. smart rather than sentimentally pretty, the prey/slave tricking his predator/master, challenging a rigidly conservative hierarchy.

Also, during the 1880s there appeared our third writer of the American South—this time a black man, actually of mixed race, Charles Chesnutt, generally considered the first important African-American writer of fiction. His short story, "The Goophered Grapevine" (1887), follows the usual formula of old black man telling a story to a white audience, but as with the Uncle Remus tales, the apparent sentimentality is stealthily subverted. It is another "trickster" tale, the cunning blacks outmanoeuvring the oppressive whites, as Brer Rabbit tricked Brer Fox—only this time, the author is a black man writing from *within* African-American culture

as distinct from a sympathetic white man like Joel Chandler Harris adopting a culture which is not, after all, his own.

Could we call this anti-sentimental strain in Southern writing "realist"? Well, yes, to the extent that it grapples with the realities of race relations in the South, and challenges the myths and wishful thinking of the dominant race (and the whites were still dominant after the war). But unlike the Irish and Scottish writers, these Americans are not following European models—no Balzac or Flaubert or Zola here—and they are constructing their narratives instead on the basis of traditional African-American and even American Indian folklore, on fables and (in Chesnutt's case) tales of magic and the supernatural.

Finally, in all three cases—Irish, Scottish, and American South—although the historical and ideological contexts of the respective fictions are widely different, there are structural similarities (as I proposed at the beginning) in the force and counterforce of sentimental myth and critical challenge, call that challenge realist, Symbolist/modernist, or folklore-based. We have works at the extremes of these polarities—the Scot Maclaren and the American Page as the extreme sentimentalists; O'Donovan, McNamara, George Douglas Brown, John MacDougall Hay, and Charles Chesnutt as the challengers on the other side. It is not always so polarised: there are, as it were, what I would call "intermediary" writers—the Scot Barrie shows the jagged briers in the kailyard, Harris in the Uncle Remus stories demonstrates that a white Southern writer can be critical of a racist society. In Ireland, Canon Sheehan can be said to be his own intermediary: he does not seriously question the values of the dominant Catholic culture, but at the same time he does not flinch from representing the far-from-cosy nature of Dublin city life—its poverty, its squalor. It is even possible to conclude that, for all his limitations and for all the very different representations of Ireland offered by Joyce and his fellow-transgressives, Canon Sheehan did succeed in steering fiction into what Joyce jestingly called "the Hibernian metropolis"—more generally, the urban spaces that were the loci of the nineteenth century realists and twentieth century modernists. It remains to add that, given that we have also been talking of small-town and rural life, twentieth-century Irish literature would also, in due course, get to grips with that as well as with the city. W. B. Yeats's late-romantic illusions about rural Ireland would be answered in Patrick Kavanagh's *The Great Hunger* and his address to the "stoney grey soil" (Kavanagh 73) of his native Monaghan.

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The Enigma Code of "The Secret Sharer"

GEORGE KUTASH

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Abstract: While most commentary on Joseph Conrad's short story, "The Secret Sharer," focuses on the loneliness of the Narrator-Captain and on his perception of the fugitive Leggatt as his "double," this article shifts the attention away from these issues, and onto some other noteworthy aspects of the story. Conrad's piece of fiction is connected to a historical event which took place on board HMS Cutty Sark in 1880. There, Captain James Wallace committed suicide under the weight of responsibility he felt for a crime that had taken place on his clipper, and for his decision to allow the murder-accused to quietly slip away, thus perverting the course of justice. As an analysis of hints given in the story as to the protagonists' age and personal circumstances reveals, Conrad's Narrator-Captain is, in fact, James Wallace's fictional reincarnation, for whom Conrad rewrites history and provides him with a triumphant denouement. Conrad, thus, gives a different finale to the real-life saga and rescues young Captain James Wallace form an ignominious suicidal end. Conrad is motivated in this both by personal sympathy, and by social-class solidarity felt for Captain James Wallace. Further, the article contains a discussion of the structure of the narrative, which shows that the first half of the text is crafted in the form of a "tale of assembly," and an examination of the naming convention, which reveals that Conrad's practice of naming or leaving a person un-named in the story marks position in social hierarchy, and is a deliberate device.

Introduction

It was a childhood friend of mine who first drew my attention to "The Secret Sharer" (1910). He said that, at the time, he felt the same way as the captain

in Joseph Conrad's brief masterpiece: diffident, full of self-doubt, and surrounded by strangers whom he could not share his thoughts with. Rather than loneliness, isolation, or self-doubt, however, to me, the piece read more as a narrative about antagonism across social class boundaries, and about an idealisation of class-solidarity among "gentlemen." Having then studied the historical background to the story, and having contrasted characters and key aspects of the real-life events with the way Conrad had refashioned them in his fictional account, I came to the realisation that it must have been the fate of Captain James Wallace of the *Cutty Sark* with whom Conrad had sympathised greatly, and which weighed heavily on the author's mind, and that, in his novella, he decided to put right in fiction what had gone tragically wrong in real-life thirty years earlier on the *Cutty Sark*'s fateful voyage from London to Anjer in 1880.

Historical Background

In his Author's Note to *'Twixt Land and Sea*, Conrad provides a brief explanation of the connection between "The Secret Sharer" and the historical incident on board the Cutty Sark:

> Notwithstanding their autobiographical form the above two stories [i.e. A Smile of Fortune and The Secret Sharer] are not the record of personal experience. ... The basic fact of the tale I had in my possession for a good many years. It was in truth the common possession of the whole fleet of merchant ships ... The fact itself happened on board a very distinguished member of [John Willis' merchant fleet], Cutty Sark by name ... (6)

The "fact" in this passage refers to an event which took place in August of 1880 while the *Cutty Sark* was sailing from London to Anjer in present day Indonesia under the command of James Smith Wallace (1853–1880). The ship was short staffed and had several seamen on board who were not fully competent. One of these was a black man by the name of John Francis.

The first mate of the ship was Sydney Smith. On the 9th or 10th of August, Smith was in command of the watch. In the course of hauling a sail around, he gave a command which Francis, being a rather incompetent sailor, was not able to carry out

properly. An exchange of harsh words ensued, during which Smith hurled racial slurs at Francis. Francis retorted and dared the first mate to follow up on his various threats. Francis also threatened to hit Smith with a capstan bar if he did. A physical altercation followed, during which Smith hit Francis on the head with a capstan bar. Having sustained a fatal injury, Francis never regained consciousness and died three days later (Sankey).

Following the incident, the *Cutty Sark* proceeded to its destination. Charles Sankey, who was an "apprentice," i.e. a trainee officer on the ship, describes the mood on the ship as follows: "After this the mate kept to his cabin. The ship suddenly became quiet, the men going about their work in sullen silence with bitterness in their hearts ... Though Francis was far from being popular among us, the mate was openly despised ... Captain Wallace took over the mate's watch till we arrived at Anjer, from which we were about ten days sail." Defying the crew's expectation, however, in Anjer, instead of facing the law, Smith was allowed to escape from the ship:

> One night a number of bumboats came alongside to starboard to sell bananas, pineapples, bunches of small onions and packets of jaggery. Captain Wallace supplied the hands with money and soon we were carrying on a noisy brisk bargaining with the gesticulating natives. But on the port quarter a different scene was being enacted. The mate had evidently persuaded the captain to help him escape. Arrangements had been made with the captain of an American ship, the Colorado, which had just arrived from Hamburg, to take the bucko mate on board. Under cover of the excitement to starboard, the mate sneaked up on deck, dropped into a boat sent from the Colorado and was off. The steward reported him missing when he went to fix up his berth at 9 p.m. (Sankey)

The crew of the *Cutty Sark* were angry at the first mate's escape of justice and declared that they would not work until Smith was found.

Sankey reports that "[t]he captain, to pacify them, took a number of men ashore to see the authorities. They sent out some native police to search the ships and made a big investigation, but really did nothing. They would not let one of our crew go with them to help in the hunt, knowing full well that it would be no trouble for sailors to rout him out of a ship."

The closing chapter of the tragic saga was played out on the *Cutty Sark*'s forward journey to Yokohama. Sankey reports:

> Captain Wallace had no sooner helped the mate to escape when he realised the position he had placed himself in. He knew there would be an official investigation when he got to Yokohama and with little doubt he would be held responsible for the mate's escape. The least he could expect would be to lose his certificate. He had an old mother and a young wife dependent on him in Scotland and the outlook was indeed very black. I don't think the captain took any sleep from the time we left Anjer. With bowed head he walked the poop night and day or stood gazing unseeing over the water.

Then, on the fourth day after leaving Anjer, Captain Wallace buckled under all the pressure, and committed suicide: he stepped over the taffrail at the stern of the ship, into shark infested waters, and either drowned or was mauled to death by sharks. He was only twenty-seven at the time, and the *Cutty Sark* was his first command as captain. Sankey recalls Wallace as a "splendid seaman, kindly and interested in the apprentices, with always a friendly word to any of our crowd that happened to go aft or at the wheel."

Sydney Smith did not escape justice, however: in 1882, he was arrested in London and faced the Central Criminal Court on 3 August 1882. At the court hearing, after being informed of the facts of the case, Mr. Justice Stephen concurred with the defence in that Smith should not be charged with murder, but rather with manslaughter.

Since both the arguments on part of the defence and the concluding remarks of the judge are summarised very succinctly in "The Crime which Suggested *The Secret Sharer,*" a newspaper article published in *The Times* about the court case on 4 August 1882, I shall copy them below, in full:

> The learned counsel addressed the court in mitigation of punishment, pointing out that the vessel was under-manned, and at the time in question the accused had had an important manoeuvre to perform with respect to the sail. The deceased behaved in an insolent and "lubberly" manner, and it was absolutely necessary that the prisoner

> should assert his authority. Numerous witnesses were then called on the part of the defence to show that the prisoner bore an excellent character and was a man whose disposition was humane and kindly. The jury, by his Lordship's direction, then returned a verdict of manslaughter against the accused. Mr. Justice Stephen, in passing sentence, told the prisoner he had considered the case with anxious attention and with very great pain, because the evidence which had been given showed that he was a man of good character generally speaking and of humane disposition. He was happy to be able to give full weight to the evidence given in his favour. The deceased had certainly acted in a manner which was calculated to make the prisoner very angry, but it must be clearly understood that the taking of human life by brutal violence, whether on sea or on land, whether the life be that of a black or white man, was a dreadful crime, and deserving of exemplary punishment. He sentenced the prisoner to seven years' penal servitude. (qtd. in Walker 204–205)

Discussion

When protagonists of the real-life event concerning the *Cutty Sark* are correlated with the fictional characters of "The Secret Sharer," one can draw up the correspondence seen in Table 1. On a closer examination of the characters, however, and quite to the contrary of the factual correlations, a striking similarity becomes apparent between the captain of the ship where the incident took place, i.e. James Wallace, and the Narrator-Captain of the ship where the accused sought shelter (see Table 2).

Wallace was a twenty-seven-year-old captain on his very first command in charge of a ship when he had to deal with the calamity on board the *Cutty Sark,* and so was the Narrator-Captain when he had to decide what to do with the fictional equivalent of Sydney Smith on his ship, i.e. with Leggatt. Although the Narrator-Captain's age is not stated explicitly in the text, it is given there in code: Leggatt is described as a "well-knit young fellow of twenty-five at most" (88), and the captain as "being a couple of years older" (88). That coded agreement of ages between Wallace and the fictional captain cannot possibly be a sheer coincidence, and it must have been set up that way by Conrad, with a purpose in mind.

A further similarity is that the cause of Wallace's downfall was the hostility of his crew who refused to accept his judgment regarding Smith's fate. The Narrator-Captain of the fictional version also fears the reaction of his crew and anticipates hostility, which is why he plays an elaborate game of hide-and-seek on board his ship in a desperate attempt to keep Leggatt's presence a secret. When considering the similarities listed above, one must conclude that although the factual parallel lies between Wallace and Archbold, i.e. between the two captains on whose ship the murder took place, the moral and dramaturgically valid correspondence cuts across this factual line and lies between Wallace and the Narrator-Captain.

There is no record, of course, of how Sydney Smith negotiated his escape with James Wallace on board the *Cutty Sark*, but we do have a record of how Conrad imagined the matching conversation to have taken place between Leggatt and Archbold on board the *Sephora*:

> When we sighted Java Head I had had time to think all those matters out several times over. I had six weeks of doing nothing else and with only an hour or so every evening for a tramp on the quarter-deck ... I reckoned it would be dark before we closed with the land ... So I asked to speak to the old man. He always looked damnably sick when he came to see me—as if he could not look me in the face. You know that foresail saved the ship. She was too deep to have run long under bare poles. And it was I that managed to set it for him. Anyway he came. When I had him in my cabin (he stood by the door looking at me as if I had the halter round my neck already) I asked him right away to leave my cabin door unlocked at night while the ship was going through Sunda Straits. There would be the Java coast within two or three miles, off Angier Point. I wanted nothing more. I've had a prize for swimming my second year in the Conway ... He refused, looking more sick than ever. He was afraid of the men, and also of that old second mate of his who had been sailing with him for years ... Anyhow he wouldn't. "This thing must take its course. I represent the law here." He was shaking like a leaf. "So you won't?"—"No!"—"Then I hope you will be able to sleep on that," I said, and turned my back on him. "I wonder that you can," cries he, and locks the door. (91–93)

In short, Leggatt requested in the story what Smith is likely to have requested in real life: the turning of a blind eye while he slips away. Captain Wallace on the *Cutty Sark* had said "yes," and cooperated in the implementation of Smith's escape. Captain Archbold, on the other hand, said "no."

Here, Conrad reveals where his personal sympathies lie. Not only does he accept and approve of Captain Wallace's course of action by having his fictional character follow Wallace's example, but he gives the real-life saga an altogether different ending, whereby the fictional captain manages to outsmart all his distractors and lets Leggatt escape without suffering the disastrous consequences which awaited Wallace. Conrad's fictional character, therefore, succeeds where Wallace had failed and sails away triumphantly. It needs to be pointed out also that, while Conrad did indeed retain by and large "the basic fact of the tale" in his fictional rendition, he altered several details in a tendentious way in order to allow sympathies to shift towards Leggatt and the Narrator-Captain. Readers pity John Francis in the real-life incident who was a coloured man suffering racial slurs, and who, while admittedly not terribly capable, was not deserving to be killed. In Conrad's story, on the other hand, we barrack for Leggatt and for the Narrator-Captain, and we feel relieved when Leggatt finally lowers himself into the water near to shore. He is now a "free man striking out for a new destiny," and the Narrator-Captain assumes his rightful command on the bridge "amidst cheery cries" (119). This shift of sympathies is achieved by altering in a tendentious way the personality traits of the above two fictional protagonists away from the "potentially reproachable" and towards the "morally correct and gentlemanly," and by adding, on the other hand, a caricature-like touch to those characters who are an obstacle to the plan hatched by the Narrator-Captain.

Starting with an analysis of the shift in the characterisation of the accused manslaughterers: both Sydney Smith and Leggatt are officers who have treated an uncooperative seaman harshly. Subsequently, they both had to face the consequences of their actions which had gone too far. Smith is, however, described from the outset as a negative character, a bully, and a slave driver. Leggatt's harshness towards the unnamed deckhand, on the other hand, is toned down. Leggatt is described to us as "perfectly self-controlled, more than calm—almost invulnerable" (107), someone who the Narrator-Captain "knew well enough ... was no homicidal ruffian" (89).

The two victims, from the real-life John Francis to the unnamed fictional sailor on the *Sephora*, also undergo a significant recasting by Conrad in order to help

underscore his intended message. Although Francis of the *Cutty Sark*, "resisted the First Mate's authority and disobeyed an order" (Thorne), he was by no means an "ill-conditioned snarling cur," nor "one of those creatures that are just simmering all the time with a silly sort of wickedness" (88), which is how the fictional version's unnamed sailor, whom Leggatt had strangled to death on the *Sephora,* is described to us.

In order to lighten the readers' conscience in accepting the Narrator-Captain's decision and to help the reader feel at ease with barracking for the murder-accused Leggatt, Conrad also introduced into his fictional account two significant points about Leggatt's character which were not present in the attributes of real-life Sydney Smith.

Firstly, he casts Leggatt as less of a culprit and more of a victim of accidental circumstances. He ascribes certain acts and circumstances to *happenstance* which then lightens the responsibility of those who are party to them. As we recall, the trigger of the conflict in both the real-life incident and in Conrad's story is the act of the first mate killing a sailor. Thus, in both cases the *actus reus*, i.e. the "guilty act," is identical. The *mens rea*, i.e. the "guilty mind," however, which is crucial in establishing criminal liability, is of a different kind for Smith and for Leggatt.

Smith was found guilty of manslaughter of the "voluntary" kind. The key factor there is that his act was judged deliberate. Let us revisit the court report in this regard:

> ... the prisoner exclaimed, "I will come on the forecastle and heave you overboard, you nigger." The deceased replied, "If you come up here I have got the capstan bar waiting for you." The prisoner then went on to the forecastle and was seen to raise the capstan bar, with which he struck the deceased on the head. The blow knocked the man over the forecastle and over the deck, and he never spoke again. The prisoner said to the watch, "Did you see that nigger lift the capstan bar to me," but the men replied that they did not. The prisoner said, "He will lift no more capstan bar to me, for I have knocked him down," and he added "I have knocked him down like a bullock; he never gave a kick." (qtd. in Walker 204)

In short, Smith knocked Francis on the head with a capstan bar: he knew what he was doing, and he must have been aware that a very serious—potentially fatal—injury might result from his action.

Let us now check the nature of Leggatt's confrontation with the unnamed seaman during the deadly storm:

> He gave me some of his cursed insolence at the sheet ... That was no time for gentlemanly reproof, so I turned round and felled him like an ox. He up and at me. We closed just as an awful sea made for the ship. All hands saw it and took to the rigging. I had him by the throat, and went on shaking him like a rat, the men above us yelling, "Look out! Look out!" … *It's clear* that I meant business because I was holding him by the throat still. … They had rather a job to separate us *I've been told* … The first thing I heard *when I came to myself* was the maddening howling of that endless gale and on that the voice of the old man. He was hanging on to my bunk, staring into my face out of his sou'wester. "Mr. Leggatt, you have killed a man. You can act no longer as chief mate of this ship." (89–90, emphases added)

Here, Leggatt hit the man, but the man got up and charged against Leggatt, i.e. he was not seriously injured by Leggatt's hit. Next, the two of them "closed," and Leggatt grabbed the man by the throat and shook him like a rat. From there on, however, the elements took over: a huge wave knocked Leggatt unconscious and the next thing Leggatt remembered was that members of the crew picked the two of them up, with Leggatt still holding the man by the throat.

Yes, Leggatt did hit the man, and yes, after the man retaliated and the two of them "closed," he did grab the man by the throat and shook him. But those actions do not normally result in death. As the italicised words in the text above suggest, the attack turned deadly while Leggatt was not in conscious control of his action. And that is very important, because by adjusting that particular detail in Leggatt's favour, Conrad, in his fictional account, changed the nature of the *mens rea* from *voluntary* to *involuntary* manslaughter, and by doing so, he shaved off a significant layer of guilt from Leggatt's crime, in comparison with what Sydney Smith was found guilty of.

Secondly, by going to pains in his fictional account to persuade readers that Leggatt is a considerate man who is careful to avoid harm to others, Conrad implies that letting him go would pose no threat to society. This assurance is delivered

in two instances in the text, firstly, when Leggatt tells the Narrator-Captain about his confinement on the *Sephora* after the fatal incident, and next, when he relates his thoughts about getting captured on one of the small islands *en route* on his swim from the *Sephora* to the Narrator-Captain's ship:

> God only knows why they locked me in every night. To see some of their faces you'd have thought they were afraid I'd go about at night strangling people. Am I a murdering brute? Do I look it? By Jove if I had been he wouldn't have trusted himself like that into my room. You'll *say I might have chucked him aside and bolted out* there and then—it was dark already. Well, no. And for the same reason *I wouldn't think of trying to smash the door.* There would have been a rush to stop me at the noise and I did not mean to get into a confounded scrimmage. *Somebody else might have got killed*—for I would not have broken out only to get chucked back—and I did not want any more of that work. …
>
> Do you see me being hauled back stark naked off one of these little islands, by the scruff of the neck and fighting like a wild beast. *Somebody would have got killed for certain, and I did not want any of that.* (92–94, emphases added)

Our possible anxiety about letting a murder-accused avoid facing a judge and jury is soothed further by Conrad assuring us that after he "lower[s] himself into the water and strike[s] out for a new destiny" (119), Leggatt will not enter cheerfully the first pub on shore and celebrate his freedom with a good laugh and a pint of beer. Rather, he will "take his punishment" (119), the nature of which Leggatt himself had foreshadowed in a Biblical reference when he recounted to the Narrator-Captain his failed plea for freedom with Archbold: "I was ready enough to go off wandering on the face of the earth—and that was price enough to pay for an Abel of that sort" (93).

Thus, once nasty Sydney Smith is replaced with reassuring Leggatt, and poor racial-slur victim John Francis is replaced with an "ill-conditioned snarling cur," our sympathies shift, and we feel quite comfortable with the Narrator-Captain's decision to allow the accused manslaughterer to avoid justice.

Structure of the Narrative

It is noteworthy that "The Secret Sharer" is divided into two chapters. Whether acted out or narrated, events presented in the first chapter mirror those on board the *Cutty Sark*, except for the point where, in response to a request by the murder-accused to let him slip away, real-life Wallace says "yes" whereas fictional Archbold says "no."

The real sequence of events involving the *Cutty Sark* had its own internal logic, and it concluded at Sydney Smith's trial in London. The fictional account, however, had to move forward to a triumphant end for the Narrator-Captain and required a climactic point to mark the juncture at which fiction parts from reality. That juncture is the "facing-off scene" in the story, taking place in the salon of the unnamed ship.

In order to drive the storyline towards such a climax, Conrad uses a technique in the first half of the story which I shall refer to as a "tale of assembly." By this term, I mean a detailed account within a story which tells how the various protagonists become drawn into a conflict and how they then converge at a location to grapple with the conflict which awaits resolution. A film-example of a "tale of assembly" would be the "Seven Samurai," and its western version, "The Magnificent Seven," where a lengthy leadup to the actual showdown describes how seven uniquely skilled warriors get drawn together for a confrontation with bandits who have been tormenting impoverished villagers in the mountains. Some readers may recall the scene in "The Magnificent Seven" where the bandits' leader, Calvera, pulls up his horse in the middle of the village-square and casts his nervous eyes around, while the Magnificent Seven look calmly at him from their various vantage points. That shot captures perfectly the concept of the "assembly" in the sense I use this word in this article: the moment when all the protagonists gather at a designated spot for the confrontation which is at the core of the story.

Conrad needs to assemble only three protagonists, the Narrator-Captain, Leggatt, and Archbold. Accordingly, the venue to draw them to is also much smaller than a village square: it is the narrow salon of a merchant ship anchored in the Gulf of Siam. The first to arrive at the designated spot is the Narrator-Captain, having "been appointed to take charge while [he] least expected anything of the sort, not quite a fortnight ago" (95). Second on the scene is Leggatt: late at night he swims to the side of the Narrator-Captain's ship, having made his escape from the *Sephora*. With the help of the captain he clambers on board, hides in the captain's cabin, and tells the captain his story. The assembly is complete when the next morning

the boat of the third protagonist, Captain Archbold of the *Sephora*, pulls up at the side of the Narrator-Captain's ship, having come to enquire whether Leggatt had been seen nearby (and suspecting that Leggatt is, in fact, hiding on the ship). Captain Archbold and the Narrator-Captain, then, take a seat at the table inside the salon, with Leggatt hiding nearby. The Narrator-Captain informs us exactly where Leggatt is "seated" for the occasion, though: "There he was on the other side of the bulkhead, four or five feet from us, no more, as we sat in the saloon" (100).

The moment of Archbold's arrival marks the end of Chapter One in editions which divide the story into two chapters. In the Cambridge Edition, which does not mark chapters, that spot is at the end of the sentence, "[f]inally I went on deck" (99). With the end of Chapter One we move away from the facts derived from the events associated with the *Cutty Sark* and enter the world of fantasy where Conrad rewrites history.

Let us now inspect, from a dramaturgical point of view, who the two characters facing off across the table in the small salon, in fact, are. If we recall the table in which parallels were drawn between the real-life characters on the *Cutty Sark* and their counterparts in "The Secret Sharer," we see that Archbold corresponds to Wallace: they are the captains of the ships where the crime took place and from where the accused escapes. However, while factually speaking the Narrator-Captain of the unnamed ship corresponds to the captain of the Colorado in that they are the captains of the ships where the culprit seeks shelter, we have established before that morally and dramaturgically speaking, the Narrator-Captain of the unnamed ship is, in fact, a fictional representation of Captain Wallace: they are of the same age and in the same situation of being on first command in charge of a ship. This leads to the rather startling conclusion that since Archbold corresponds to Wallace (captains of the ships where the crime was committed), and Wallace corresponds to the Narrator-Captain (same age, same situation), then Archbold must also correspond to the Narrator-Captain.

Put in plain English, the two individuals whom we see facing each other across the table are two alternative fictional representations of the one and the same Captain James Wallace: Archbold, on the one hand, being the "un-gentlemanly" version whom real-life Wallace had refused to become and met a tragic end as a result, and the Narrator-Captain, on the other hand, who is the "triumphant-gentleman" version of Wallace, reincarnated by Conrad and remoulded into a hero who pulls off

successfully the feat which real-life Wallace had tragically failed at, and who then sails away victoriously, admired by his crew.

In short, it is Wallace vs. Wallace, an ungentlemanly, smallminded, and disapproved version of him facing off across the table with a gentlemanly-honourable high-class version, while the third protagonist, the murder-accused, is eagerly eavesdropping on their conversation to hear what his fate will be this *fictional* time around.

Naming Convention

Conrad's intention to underscore social-class distinctions in his novella can be detected also in the peculiar naming convention used in "The Secret Sharer." The only person in the story who is named unequivocally is Leggatt. He is presented to us as a fine gentleman cast into humiliating circumstances by an unfortunate chain of events which is described by Conrad emphatically as being beyond Leggatt's control. Even Leggatt, however, is mentioned by name only twice, first, when he introduces himself while still in the water, and second, when Archbold addresses him in relation to the incident on the *Sephora*: "Mr. Leggatt, you have killed a man. You can act no longer as chief mate of this ship" (90).

For the rest of the text, Leggatt is referred to either by personal pronouns or by a variety of appellations, many of which mirror the Narrator-Captain's perception that Leggatt is his "double," in that they are of a similar age, of a similar background, and that under similar circumstances he, the Narrator-Captain, might have acted the same way as Leggatt. Those appellations include *my double* (87–90, 94, 97–99, 103–104, 109, 114, 117), *my other self* (96, 108), *my second self* (99, 109, 117), and *the double captain* (91, 115). Conrad, however, has the Narrator-Captain make it state explicitly that the "doubleness" is purely imaginary: "He was not a bit like me, really; yet, as we stood leaning over my bed place, whispering side by side, with our dark heads together and our backs to the door, anybody bold enough to open it stealthily would have been treated to the uncanny sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self" (91).

There are other appellations used for Leggatt, as well, such as *mysterious arrival* (91), *unsuspected sharer of my cabin* (100), *secret sharer of my cabin* (101), *secret stranger* (118), all of which serve—in my view—primarily a grammatical and stylistic purpose, that of getting around referring to Leggatt by name. In fact, I have checked all the twenty-four instances where one of the above-mentioned appellations was used,

and they were all of the kind where a personal pronoun would not do, and the sentence itself required either a name, or an appellation.

Next, Archbold, the captain of the *Sephora* is also named, but only reluctantly and somewhat ambiguously: "… gave his name (it was something like Archbold—but at this distance of years I hardly am sure) …" (99), and "I looked politely at Captain Archbold (if that was his name) …" (100). Conrad undoubtedly had the option of either naming the *Sephora*'s captain unequivocally or letting his name remain in oblivion altogether because of the *distance of years*. Instead, however, he chooses to place the *Sephora*'s captain's name somewhere half-way: in limbo.

My interpretation of the above is that in Conrad's text, naming, or leaving a person un-named, marks position, and is a deliberate device. Starting with Leggatt, he is named unequivocally, as he is the causal agent of the conflict at the centre of the story and is cast in the light of an unfortunate but essentially positive character. It is his controversial action over which a judgment must be passed, which judgment in turn becomes the litmus test of moral fibre that sets Archbold and the Narrator-Captain apart.

In contrast, by naming Archbold somewhat grudgingly, Conrad places him one step down in the hierarchy of the protagonists. This accords with Archbold's moral position, his judgement vis-a-vis Leggatt having been judged as smallminded. His inferior status is then further underscored by questions raised about his leadership qualities, by doubt cast over his integrity and even by his physical appearance being depicted as grotesque.

Starting with his appearance, this is what the Narrator-Captain tells us about Captain Archbold:

> The skipper of the Sephora had a thin red whisker all round his face and the sort of complexion that goes with hair of that colour; also the particular, rather smeary shade of blue in the eyes. He was not exactly a showy figure; his shoulders were high, his stature but middling—one leg slightly more bandy than the other ... A spiritless tenacity was his main characteristic I judged. (99)

Later, the Narrator-Captain stops pulling punches altogether and states his impression of Archbold unambiguously: "He nodded keeping his smeary, blue, *unintelligent* eyes fastened upon me" (99, emphasis added). It is, however, not Archbold's pathetic

appearance that marks him primarily as unequal to the two gentlemen "Conway boys," i.e. Leggatt and the Narrator-Captain himself (Conway boys being graduates of HMS *Conway* training school for officers of the merchant navy). He is presented to us as unworthy of the command of a ship, altogether, as even after "seven and thirty virtuous years at sea of which over twenty of immaculate command, and the last fifteen in the Sephora" (101), he still had proven himself inadequate during the storm at the East Coast of Africa. It was Leggatt who had to step into the breach and save the ship by clever and decisive action. And, if that were not enough to demonstrate Archbold's inferiority, we find out also that he lacks credibility: he claims credit for the decisive action mentioned above, when in fact, it was Leggatt who made the crucial call in Archbold's place:

> "That reefed foresail saved you," I threw in.
> "Under God—it did," he exclaimed fervently. "It's by a special mercy I firmly believe that it stood some of these hurricane squalls."
> "It was the setting of it ..." I began.
> "God's own hand in it," he interrupted me. "Nothing less could have done it. I don't mind telling you that I hardly dared give the order." (101)

Later, however, Leggatt explains to the Narrator-Captain that Archbold's account of the events is false:

> "The man told you he hardly dared to give the order."
> I understood the reference to be to that saving foresail.
> "Yes. He was afraid of its being lost in the setting."
> "I assure you he never gave the order. He may think he did, but he never gave it. He stood there with me on the break of the poop, after the main topsail blew away, and whimpered about our last hope—positively whimpered about it and nothing else—and the night coming on. To hear your skipper go on like that in such weather was enough to drive any fellow out of his mind." (105)

In summary, a ship captain though Archbold may be, he is presented to us as anything but a *gentleman*.

Other instances of Conrad's peculiar naming convention also point to position in a hierarchy. The two officers of the unnamed ship, for instance, are not given names at all. They are referred to only by their position. Their personality is described also in unflattering terms, being depicted invariably as somehow lowly, odd-looking, dull-witted, and uncouth. The first mate, for instance, had a "simple face overcharged by a terrible growth of whisker" (82). He is later referred to by the captain as "that absurdly whiskered mate" (85), "that imbecile mate of mine" (85), and as "my absurd mate with his terrific whiskers and the 'Bless my soul—you don't say so' type of intellect" (88). The second mate is "a round-cheeked, silent young man, grave beyond his years" (82). In subsequent passages he is called a cub with a variety of epithets added to grace the key noun: sneering young cub (97), confounded cub (108), intolerable cub (111), and unplayful cub (113). These two officers—and also the steward, to some extent—are, nevertheless, at least given a "face." The rest of the crew, far removed from the class of *gentlemen*, are, however, all faceless extras and nameless "jacks."

Conclusion

There are two rescue-fantasies played out in "The Secret Sharer," one which is quite apparent and another which is somewhat obscure. The apparent one involves the Narrator-Captain who rescues Leggatt from legal punishment for an unfortunate and tragic act for which he has already accepted self-punishment. This rescue is a part of the chain of events which mirrors those having taken place on the *Cutty Sark*, except that this time the fictional captain succeeds where the real-life captain had failed. There is, however, an aspect to this rescue which was completely missing when Wallace had consented to save Smith from the law and assisted him with slipping away unnoticed. That missing aspect is *admiration* for the target of the rescue. The rescue which the Narrator-Captain carries out shows all the hallmarks of the "delivering someone admired from difficult circumstances" rescue-variety, often encountered in romantic fiction. With a woman at the centre, the genre is referred to as *damsel-in-distress*. There are, however, numerous *fellow-in-distress* stories, as well, such as Robin Hood's fellow-outlaws rescuing Robin from the gallows, Robin then rescuing Richard the Lionheart, and the three musketeers' sticking to their motto of "One for all, all for one."

Rescuing someone is a potent gesture of admiration, especially when it involves danger or self-sacrifice on the part of the rescuer. That is, of course, the case with the Narrator-Captain's rescuing Leggatt, for he was fully aware "that all [his] future, the only future for which [he] was fit, would perhaps go irretrievably to pieces in any mishap to [his] first command" (113).

One does not need to search hard to find indications of the Narrator-Captain's admiration for Leggatt: "He whispered, his arms folded on the side of my bed place, staring through the open port. And I could imagine perfectly the manner of this thinking out—a stubborn if not a steadfast operation—*something of which I should have been perfectly incapable*" (92, emphasis added).

Leggatt is described at every turn in glowing terms:

> He had rather regular features, a good mouth, light eyes under somewhat heavy dark eyebrows, a smooth, square forehead, no growth on his cheeks, a small brown moustache, and a well-shaped round chin. His expression was concentrated, meditative under the inspecting light of the lamp I held up to his face; such as a man thinking hard in solitude might wear. My sleeping suit was just right for his size. A well-knit young fellow of twenty-five at most. He caught his lower lip with the edge of white, even teeth. (87–88)

Leggatt's voice is described as "calm and resolute. A good voice" (87), and as a person, he "looked always perfectly self-controlled, more than calm—almost invulnerable" (107). He could be marvelled at for "that something unyielding in his character which was carrying him through so finely" (110). In short, Leggatt is a remarkable specimen of a fine young gentleman and merchant-navy officer. Adding to that the element of old-school-tie solidarity, Leggatt becomes the ideal object of a rescue, if someone—like the Narrator-Captain—wishes to assert through such an action his view as to what he considers "proper," and where his sympathies lie.

At a different and perhaps more obscure level, however, the story is also a "rescue-fantasy" on Joseph Conrad's part, whereby he gives a different finale to the real-life saga on board the *Cutty Sark* and *rescues* young Captain James Wallace form an ignominious suicidal end. That rescue-fantasy is motivated by personal sympathy felt by Conrad for Captain Wallace who was a mere four years Conrad's senior and was only twenty-seven when he was driven to suicide, two years after Conrad

himself had attempted suicide by shooting himself in the chest, in Marseille, albeit under very different circumstances.

Conrad's suicide attempt is examined in great detail in C. B. Cox's "Joseph Conrad and the Question of Suicide" (1973). According to Cox, "[a]fter the attempted suicide in Marseilles, Conrad suffered from fits of depression and nervous breakdowns, of varying importance, for the rest of his life" (286). Further, Cox explains that

> At the core of [Conrad's] psychological disturbances there seems a basic uncertainty about his own identity. In many of his stories a kind of dismemberment of personality takes place. Just as Virginia Woolf divided herself up into six characters in *The Waves*, so Conrad is repeatedly concerned with two characters who reflect the composite nature of a contradictory identity. The best-known example is "The Secret Sharer," where Leggatt is an alter ego, an unrealised potentiality in the character of the captain-narrator ... This uncertainty about identity is endemic in modern literature, of course, and in this way Conrad reflects the malaise of the contemporary disintegrating personality. His own jumps from Poland to France to England, from aristocrat to seaman to novelist, made him a living embodiment of this breakdown. His life and art testify to a continual, by and large unsuccessful search for a stable identity. (291)

Following from the observations by Cox, we can surmise that Conrad, throughout his life away from his native Poland, must have had to deal with the vexing issue of not being fully accepted and understood by those around him. He must have sympathised deeply, therefore, with the emotional vacuum and lack of supportive companionship which young Captain Wallace had found himself in, on his ship. That vacuum is, of course, of the same kind as the fictional Narrator-Captain of "The Secret Sharer" had to operate in, and in which Conrad must have found himself frequently, during his various travails while "jump[ing] from Poland to France to England, from aristocrat to seaman to novelist."

Conrad's aloofness, bordering on the disdainful for those whom he did not consider his social equals, is well documented in an eyewitness account of his mien as captain of the *Otago*:

> Apart from his distinguished manners, the most striking thing about the captain of the Otago was the contrast between him and other skippers. … Now, those shipmasters generally dressed in ducks, with caps or straw hats on their heads, their faces and hands tanned by sun and saltwater, their nails black with the tell-tale tar of their profession, their language forceful and often coarse, were not models of taste and refinement. Unlike his colleagues, Captain Korzeniowski [Conrad's Polish surname] was always dressed like a dandy. I can still see him (and just because of the contrast with the other sailors my memory is precise) arriving in my office almost every day dressed in a black or dark coat, a vest that was usually light in colour, and fancy trousers; everything well cut and very stylish; on his head a black or grey bowler tilted slightly to one side. He invariably wore gloves and carried a cane with a gold knob. From this description you can judge for yourself the contrast he made to the other captains, with whom, by the way, he was on strictly formal terms, generally not going beyond a greeting. He was not, of course, very popular with his colleagues, who ironically called him "the Russian Count" ... (Najder 129–130)

As we gather from the above account, Conrad insisted on his elevated social status, which he needed to assert quite forcefully by way of his strict dress code and by comporting himself conspicuously as a *gentleman* in an environment where neither his Polish noble ancestry nor his cultivated ways drew the recognition and respect that he had expected. When considering his sense of frustration and resentment towards those elements in society whom he regarded as socially inferior and whom he perceived as potentially hostile towards those higher up in the pecking order, it is easy to see how he had taken umbrage, in a vicarious way, at the attitude of the crew towards Captain Wallace on the *Cutty Sark* and how replicated those disagreeable attitudes to surround his fictional character, the Narrator-Captain. When contemplating what he himself might have done in Wallace's place, Conrad must have had a *"There, but for the grace of God, go I"* moment, and in 1910, thirty years after the historic event, he resolved his frustration by writing "The Secret Sharer" in which he revisited the events of 1880, and "rescued" Wallace's memory from

an ignominious end, to see his fictional counterpart triumph over his *un-gentlemanly* distractors, and sail away victoriously.

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Tables

	in real-life	in "The Secret Sharer"
accused	Sydney Smith, first mate of the *Cutty Sark*	Leggatt, first mate of the *Sephora*
victim	John Francis, a sailor on the *Cutty Sark*	an unnamed "miserable devil," a sailor on the *Sephora*
captain of the ship where the incident took place	Captain James Wallace of the *Cutty Sark*	Captain Archbold of the *Sephora*
captain of the ship where the accused sought shelter	unnamed captain of the *Colorado*	Narrator-Captain of the ship anchored in the Gulf of Siam

Table 1.

	in real-life	in "The Secret Sharer"
captain of the ship where the incident took place	Captain James Wallace of the *Cutty Sark*	
captain of the ship where the accused sought shelter		Narrator-Captain of the ship anchored in the Gulf of Siam

Table 2.

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Constructing Black Subjectivity

Trauma and Recovery in Toni Morrison's Novels

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Abstract: Trauma and recovery are the two ends of the process that Toni Morrison's novels are centred around. Characters carry either transgenerational traumas or they experience them in early childhood. Once they are traumatised, they are much more likely to receive several layers of wounds in the future. This essay explores the different types and sources of trauma, as well as ways of recovery, in five of Toni Morrison's novels: The Bluest Eye, Beloved, Home, A Mercy, *and* God Help the Child. *It concludes that all the main characters suffer from being neglected and refused as children; some of them were said to be ugly and/or used as bodies (objects) by their parents. Social acceptance and forgiveness are identified as the main sources of the healing process as storytelling starts with the creation of a listener (often on another communicational level: the trauma victim narrates the story to the reader of the novel), thereby establishing a relationship between the trauma victim and the community.*

Trauma has many definitions and types; however, some symptoms are considered representative for all kinds. In *Unclaimed Experience,* Cathy Caruth emphasises the feeling of being unprepared (62). This means that the individual does not understand what is happening: either they are not prepared emotionally or intellectually, or they do not have any information about it. Thus, they cannot interpret the event, which means that it cannot be experienced when it happens, only belatedly (62), as experience "is already an interpretation of the past and of our place in a culturally and historically specific present" (Smith and Watson 31). Most people are not prepared for witnessing death or life-threatening events, whereas there

are events which might be traumatic for some but not for others. Traumatic events cannot be told or spoken about; thus, they cannot be integrated in the narrative self, that is, they do not have a place in the chronological life story. "Obsessional memory" (Smith and Watson 28) and the continuous presence and intrusion of the traumatic scenes (Herman 37) result from the unintegratable experience, creating a kind of parallel time. This way trauma disrupts the sense of time: "it is in fact a break in the mind's experience of time" (Caruth 61). The person becomes isolated as a result of the weight of unshareable experience; social relationships are also destroyed, or at least questioned; "[t]he traumatic event thus destroys the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others" (Herman 53). Moreover, it is not only the social embeddedness of the subject that is lost; the self is also deprived of their own body, thereby experiencing the loss of home on two levels: societal and individual (physical). The body is no longer one's own domain; "[c]ontrol over bodily functions is often lost" (Herman 53). As Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber puts it, "the body becomes a placeholder for memory and trauma" (1): the body is distorted or at least affected by trauma physically, often visibly. As a result of the loss of an intersubjective, embodied, narrative self, the traumatised person is deprived of agency and subjectivity and, furthermore, of any kind of control over one's relationships, body and stories; the person cannot speak or act as an acknowledged member of society. Therefore, we can conclude that trauma is the destruction of the subject.

Toni Morrison narrates the unspeakable experience of trauma victims, thereby creating subjectivity for them, giving back their stories and their place in the community (or home in Schreiber's words). The novels narrate "the black struggle for subjectivity" (Schreiber 1), showing us various ways to recover, in order to participate in life as full members again. Furthermore, these stories do not narrate only individual traumas but also share fragments of the collective memory of the black community; by narrating these black selves, the novels create black subjecthood on a community level. According to Schreiber, "coping with trauma involves a reconstitution of the self" (32). Community (its acceptance and forgiveness), regaining ownership of the body and the narration of the traumatic experience are the most important components of recovery from trauma and of regaining agency and subjectivity. However, there is one element that is usually not mentioned, probably the most complex and most difficult one, and that is the forgiveness of the traumatised party (being either an individual or a community). Trauma victims need to forgive both themselves and society for letting the events happen: this way they

can accept their reintegration in the community and their (sometimes new) social roles as well. A new level of the healing process can be reached when the victim can forgive the abuser.

This essay analyses the process of regaining agency in five of Toni Morrison's novels. All of these novels show characters suffering from childhood trauma, being victims of some form of child abuse. *The Bluest Eye* is the author's first novel, published in 1970. This is the darkest and most pessimistic of these works. The central character, who gets "the bluest eyes" in her imaginary world, suffers several layers of trauma as a child, and, without social support, remains totally alone. Moreover, she experiences very closely the death of an innocent baby, as she is the one who gives birth to it. In the end, she remains a bird wanting to fly away, or just a movement unable to reach its aim. *Beloved* was first published in 1987. The title character, Beloved, represents multiple layers of the traumatic memories of the black community. Moreover, it shows how traumas of this communal past can absorb the survivors and the next generations. Sethe, the main character, starts to realise her self and her own separate existence in the last pages of the novel. *A Mercy, Home* and *God Help the Child* were written much later; they are much less tragic than the first two novels. *A Mercy,* first published in 2008*,* is similar to *Beloved* in many respects. Both narrate the separation of mother and daughter as a result of the decision of the former, with this being traumatic for the latter. Both end with the mother's words: Sethe realising her own self, and *A Mercy* with Florens' mother talking to her daughter, asking for forgiveness. However, in many respects, *A Mercy* is not as loaded as *Beloved*, although it is written from the daughter's perspective mostly. *Home* (2012) also ends with the main characters starting to be integrated into society again, after telling their trauma narratives. This novel is different from the other four as the central trauma is not connected to mother-daughter relationships. *God Help the Child* (2015) is Toni Morrison's last novel. This one ends with the mother talking to her daughter, asking for forgiveness (in her own special way), just like in *A Mercy*. Nevertheless, Bride, the daughter in *God Help the Child*, lives a happy and successful life, could become independent of her mother, and could finally become a subject, processing all past traumas, in contrast with Florens, who desperately keeps writing her memories and reflections on the walls in the final pages of the novel.

The main characters in these novels need to reclaim ownership over their bodies and their voices first, so that they can narrate their stories, thereby creating an experience out of trauma. Oftentimes, the individual is unable to take this step

alone, and it is the community, or someone from the community, that helps them find their voices and, therefore, their own existence. They become subjects through their stories, which are heard by an empathetic listener. Some of these texts invite the reader to participate in the healing process and become the one who listens and so helps the narratives to be integrated in the collective memory of a community.

In my essay, I treat remembering as an intersubjective act, interpreting the past by evoking, narrating, and therefore owning it, creating memory. "Memory is a means of 'passing on,' of sharing a social past that may have been obscured, thereby activating its potential for reshaping the future of and for other subjects" (Smith and Watson 26). Remembering can empower individuals, giving them some kind of agency, creating subjects. Collective remembering and shared memories can also create communities: thus, Morrison creates a collective memory for black subjecthood. I use the term "collective memory" as opposed to "personal memory," partly because it is embedded in culture (stories, art in general, rites), as in Jan Assmann's "cultural memory," but also partly because it is present in transgenerational patterns and so embodied, referring to the more recent past, which Assmann names "communicative memory." Toni Morrison's stories contain memories of the more recent past (and so its context and social setting), but sometimes they date back to the peak or even the origin of slavery. Consequently, I use the expression "collective memory" entailing both communicative and cultural memory in Assmann's terminology; however, I suppose these texts will result in being integrated into cultural memory, a narrative space where myth (fiction) and history blends.

Sethe in *Beloved*

Sethe is traumatised on several levels. Besides the childhood trauma of the loss of her mother, she is registered as half-animal, milked like a cow, deprived of her breast milk, then beaten severely, so that an open wound remains on her back, resembling a tree. After nearly dying when escaping from slavery pregnant and even giving birth on the way, she finds her mother-in-law and her children. When her former owners appear to catch her and her children, she kills one of them in delirium. The last one is the most serious trauma of all, which she covers by the others throughout the novel. Moreover, the last three are, in fact, consequences of one other.

The origin of her trauma is the lack of ownership over her own body, and even her own skin. She was noted in an exercise book like a studied object, her milk was taken, her skin was destroyed: white male superiority engraved itself on her. Later, she realises that even her children are the slave owner's property:

> I couldn't get out of my head the thing that woke me up: "While the boys is small." That's what he said and it snapped me awake. They tagged after me the whole day weeding, milking, getting firewood. For now. For now. ... No notebook for my babies and no measuring string neither. What I had to get through later I got through because of you. (232–233)

She could overcome her first trauma by talking to an empathetic listener, Mrs. Garner. Sethe remembers: "Last time I saw her she couldn't do nothing but cry, and I couldn't do a thing for her but wipe her face when I told her what they had done to me. Somebody had to know it. Hear it" (*Beloved* 238). By telling Mrs. Garner the story, Sethe both narrated her trauma and became connected to another person, a listener. Later it was her mother-in-law who gave her body back to her when Sethe arrived at 124. Baby Suggs "bathed her in sections, wrapped her womb, combed her hair, oiled her nipples, stitched her clothes, cleaned her feet, greased her back and dropped just about anything they were doing to massage Sethe's nape when memories overwhelmed her" (Schreiber 44). Both women appear as mother figures to Sethe.

Through pregnancy, the original sense of wholeness is re-established, and intersubjectivity becomes embodied in the positive gaze of the child. For Sethe, motherhood was probably the only possibility to become a subject, gaining acceptance and agency from her children and her husband. According to Smith and Watson, experience "is the very process through which a person becomes a certain kind of subject" (31). As it is maternity that provides Sethe with the possibility of an embodied, intersubjective and narrative self, she grabs this identity.

When the schoolteacher finds her, it is the lack of support from the community and the helplessness resulting from the loss of control over her and her children's bodies that change her state of mind. She desperately wants to hold and handle the bodies herself; she wants to become an agent in her life.

As she can never speak about the death of her child, and no one else does either, it does not become a memory, nor an experience or a narrative. Consequently, this

event remains a trauma continuously disrupting the present without being integrated: a timeless presence visiting the world of the living. When Paul D arrives, he expels the ghost, and starts a healing process with Sethe: they give back their bodies to each other by touching and kissing every part, even the scars, and they narrate the so-far unspeakable stories that can become memories and owned experience for them. There is only one exception: the death of Beloved, her murdered daughter. Therefore, Sethe remains traumatised and continuously haunted by the event.

Trauma is literal and physical, as Jean Wyatt explored it in her article. It is so close to Sethe that it becomes a corporeal being which intertwines with her body, wants to become one with it, inhabit and own it. Then her trauma grows as a pregnant woman, two bodies in one (including Sethe's and Beloved's trauma), bigger and bigger, while the body that was once called Sethe shrinks. Beloved is eating life out of her mother's body, devouring her. Without the intervention of the community, Sethe would have been annihilated by her trauma. Although it is Paul D who tries to lead her back to social life, he is devastated when he learns about the murder of Beloved. He demands an explanation; he wants to make Sethe understand that what she has done is wrong. He wants a rational resolution; the empathy he has provided her before does not work without limits. Moreover, he does not realise that Sethe is still possessed by her trauma. It is only the community of the women who can provide that support, acceptance, and forgiveness. It is society that helps her and gives her authority to forgive herself as well as the community:

> A woman dropped to her knees. Half of the others did likewise. Denver saw lowered heads, but could not hear the lead prayer– only the earnest syllables of agreement that backed it: Yes, yes, yes, oh yes. Hear me. Hear me. Do it, Maker, do it. Yes. (304)

> Building voice upon voice until they found it, and when they did it was a wave of sound wide enough to sound deep water and knock the pods off chestnut trees. It broke over Sethe and she trembled like the baptized in its wash. (308)

As Schreiber claims, the women of the community "howl to verbalise their shared pain and trauma" because they want to redefine themselves, free themselves "of generational patterns and embodied trauma" (51). They both forgive Sethe and

ask her to forgive them for leaving her alone. By owning and experiencing their narratives, they place it in their life stories, in chronology. By inserting narratives in their rightful place, they can reach "an imagined wholeness" (Schreiber 42). Through social support, "forgiveness and assistance," "connection and communal rememory" (Schreiber 42), Sethe will be able to regain her subjectivity. Moreover, this happens on a communal level as well: the women forgive themselves, that is, the black community for not helping everyone in need, and also those black women who hurt their children (or others) resulting from the traumas of slavery, thereby recreating black collective memory and subjecthood.

At the end of the novel, Sethe says, "[s]he was my best thing" (Morrison, *Beloved* 321) reflecting on Beloved's disappearance; however, Paul D makes her realise and recognise her own existence by saying: "You your best thing, Sethe, You are" (322). The last words of the novel, except for a very last chapter including the comments of the narrator, are "Me? Me?" (322). It is the moment when Sethe recognises her separate but intersubjective self.

Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*

The core of Pecola's trauma in *The Bluest Eye* is transgenerational. Pecola's father, Cholly, was left by his mother, and twice by his father. "When his father rejects him, he experiences a traumatic bodily response, crying and losing control of his bowels" (Schreiber 76); the lost control over the body and its physical reactions result from trauma. Cholly's body is used as a sight during his first sexual intercourse, as he is raped in a way: his body is objectified and exploited by white males. This event strengthens his self-hatred and feelings about being unlovable and unable to manage his own life, as he is unable to defend the girl and himself. Moreover, he cannot be angry at the aggressors, because they are too powerful to be angry at:

> Never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him. They were big, white, armed men. He was small, black, helpless. ... For now, he hated the one who had created the situation, the one who bore witness to his failure, his impotence. (118)

Mrs. Breedlove or Pauline, Pecola's mother, experienced certain wounds and losses in her body, which resulted in her feeling ugly: a nail pierced one of her feet in her childhood, which made her limp, and she lost one front tooth, which made her unable to look like movie stars, which she wanted very much. Morrison explains: "Her general feelings of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot"; consequently, her isolation begins as a bodily injury (*The Bluest Eye* 86). She gains agency only as a perfect maid, as she receives the positive gaze from a white family. Outside that position she is no more than an empty name, Mrs. Breedlove, even for her children. She cannot be called "mum," has no nickname, which she has always wanted, has no friends; however, as a maid she is Polly (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 99). "Her imaginary self cannot exist in her own home" (Schreiber 78), as it is restricted to her role in a white family, and it is strictly connected to the possibilities offered by white supremacy. This imaginary self is a fixed role and only gives a very restricted agency to Polly.

Her whole family is seen as ugly; therefore, she identifies herself with this quality. Schreiber suggests that Mrs. Breedlove "passes this legacy" of being ugly "on to Sammy and Pecola" (Schreiber 78). Pecola inherits all the traumas of her family: being an outcast, at the fringe of society, being hurt by everyone, living without social support and supportive relationships. Her body is used by her father and by Soaphead Church as well, who uses her (body) to kill a hated dog. When she tells her mother that she has been raped, her words are discredited. Her narrative is treated as non-existent without an empathetic listener. Thus, she is left without an intersubjective, embodied, narrative self. Without support she cannot forgive and cannot be forgiven: "her mother's rejection and the community's blame and desertion leave Pecola totally defenceless" (Schreiber 80).

There are two groups that provide support for Pecola in the first part of the novel: the prostitutes and the MacTeer girls. Nonetheless, after she is raped and realises that she is pregnant, she does not dare visit the women or meet the girls. Still, Claudia remains a central figure in the text as she is one of the narrators, the only one who is part of the story, as the other narrator is an objective omniscient one. She, who is also a black girl and thereby shares some of her experience, narrates Pecola's story instead of her, because Pecola will never have the possibility to regain her self, her voice; and that is what makes this text one of Morrison's most tragic novels. Even the possibility of recovery is eliminated, there is no hope in the end.

Florens in *A Mercy*

Florens, in *A Mercy*, has one core trauma that affects her whole life: her mother tells Vaark, a new landlord and slave owner coming to the house of their owner for his money, to take her daughter as a compensation for the debt, instead of herself, in order to save the girl from the assaults of their present owner. "Florens experiences erasure when her mother, while holding on to her nursing son, offers" her to Vaark (Schreiber 167). She feels that she is refused by her mother, and her body is given away. As Schreiber states: "Florens is not a human but rather goods to be traded" (166), which is a common experience of slaves. Thereby her body is used, traded by others. She feels that it is not owned and controlled by herself; she is disembodied. She also feels that she is not lovable; she is refused by society, as it is the mother that models relationships with society for babies and small children. Moreover, she does not understand what her mother is saying, and so she cannot react, answer or ask for an explanation. If the minha mae had told her stories about their past and her bad experience with the slave owner, D'Ortega, she might have understood her reasons. However, she has not; thereby she remains, just as Pecola Breedlove and Beloved, without a narrative, without an intersubjective, embodied and narrative self. She is obsessed by this vision of her mother talking to her while she does not understand a word. She cannot forgive her mother and herself for the uncommitted sin, which "must be inside her and this evil may explain her mother's abandonment" (Schreiber 168). She does not know or understand why she was offered to Vaark.

Florens' love affair with the blacksmith gives her back her body: he "gives Florens a mirrored self she does not get from her mother or her culture" (Schreiber 168), just like Paul D or Baby Suggs gave back hers to Sethe. However, she wants to become one with him, as she says: "I can never not have you have me" (Morrison, *A Mercy* 135), "I don't want to be free of you because I am live only with you" (68), "You are my shaper and my world as well. It is done. No need to choose" (69), and "You alone own me" (139). This resembles Beloved's striving to unite with Sethe: the desire for this original sense of wholeness is stronger than the need to become an agent, a subject controlling one's own body, relationships and stories. Moreover, the same is true for Sethe, as the parallel sentences of the Other (Paul D in *Beloved* and the Blacksmith in *A Mercy*), the reactions of a supporting male figure, show: "You your best thing, Sethe" (Morrison, *Beloved* 322) and "Own yourself, woman" (Morrison, *A Mercy* 139).

These male characters want their partners to be agents, to control their lives, and to be aware of and responsible for their actions. However, these imperative words are not enough, and these traumatised women cannot cope with their lives alone at this stage. Florens remains without social connections and a disembodied self. Her dream reflects the vacuum she represents:

> I notice I am at the edge of a lake. The blue of it is more than sky, more than any blue I know. ... I am loving it so, I can't stop. I want to put my face deep there. I want to. What is making me hesitate, making me not get the beautiful blue of what I want? ... I take fright when I see my face is not there. Where my face should be is nothing. I put a finger in and watch the water circle. I put my mouth close enough to drink or kiss but I am not even a shadow there. Where is it hiding? Why is it? Soon Daughter Jane is kneeling next to me. ... Oh, Precious, don't fret, she is saying, you will find it.

Besides trying to find a body for herself, Florens is also in search of a narrative and a listener. Storytelling is spatialised as she writes her letters to the blacksmith on the walls and the floor of Vaark's unused and uninhabited house. Notwithstanding, without a listener, in an empty house, words are not heard. By her narrative, Florens is asking for forgiveness and also trying to forgive and understand her mother, the minha mae who is talking to her, moving her lips, but she cannot grasp the message. Therefore, Florens repeats this traumatic scene by her own verbalisation and explanation of her past: she tells everything, but nothing is heard by the beloved one—this can be interpreted as a transgenerational pattern.

The novel ends with her mother's monologue explaining her reasons for offering her daughter to a slave owner. Although her words are not understood by the addressee, her daughter, she is listened to and forgiven by the reader. Consequently, her trauma is processed on another level as well: not as a personal experience but as a collective narrative. Florens's story is a narrative that is reintegrated into black history by double narration: she keeps writing her own story (resembling a letter) on the walls, addressing the Blacksmith, while the readers of the novel become listeners to her, her mother's, and the other (omniscient) narrator's interconnected story. This way black collective memory and black subjecthood are reconstructed; her written history does not remain on an individual level.

Frank in *Home*

Frank has several layers of trauma covering each other. The novel takes the readers through a spiral revealing these different levels and stories, leading to mutual understanding and forgiveness. The first layer is a childhood trauma of witnessing fighting horses and the burial of a man. The vision of the horses has covered the latter: "I really forgot about the burial. I only remembered the horses" (Morrison, *Home* 5). The burial was so traumatic because he saw it with his younger sister; they were children and were watching it while hiding in the grass. Moreover, they could not exactly understand what was happening, so the event remained unprocessed and unintegrated in their narrative:

> I grabbed her arm and put a finger to my lips. Never lifting our heads, just peeping through the grass, we saw them pull a body from a wheelbarrow and throw it into a hole already waiting. One foot stuck up over the edge and quivered, as though it could get out, as though with a little effort it could break through the dirt being shovelled in. We could not see the faces of the men doing the burying, only their trousers; but we saw the edge of a spade drive the jerking foot down to join the rest of itself. When she saw that black foot with that creamy pink and mud-streaked sole being whacked into the grave, her whole body began to shake. I hugged her shoulders tight and tried to pull her trembling into my own bones because, as a brother four years older, I thought I could handle it. (4)

Later he learns that the man died in a fight he was forced to participate in with his own son: white people told them that either they kill both of them or they fight for life. The man begged his son to kill him. Although Frank did not know this when he was a little boy, it remained a trauma: an unchanged and intact scene, covered by other memories, waiting to be discovered.

Another layer of his trauma is connected to his participation in war. As a soldier, he experiences that bodies are vulnerable physical realities, can be destroyed very easily: "he saw a boy pushing his entrails back in, holding them in his palms ... or he heard a boy with only the bottom half of his face intact, the lips calling mama" (Morrison, *Home* 20). Among these, the vision of a little girl comes to haunt Frank:

he killed her because she raised his sexual desires and he used her as a body to satisfy himself. Through his narration of the novel, first he states that it was another soldier who did it, but nearing the end of the book he discovers: "I lied to you and I lied to me, I hid it from you because I hid it from me. ... I shot the Korean girl in the face" (Morrison, *Home* 133). He lost control over his body, and he could not integrate these events into his narrative self: "How could I let her live after she took me down to a place I didn't know was in me? How could I like myself, even be myself if I surrendered to that place where I unzip my fly and let her taste me right then and there?" (Morrison, *Home* 134). He does not feel at home in his body: "Say, who owns this house? / It's not mine. ... Say, tell me, why does its lock fit my key?" (Morrison, *Home*, beginning, unnumbered page).

Whenever he starts a new relationship with a woman, his traumas come haunting and disrupting normal life after a while: "the mare always showed up at night" (Morrison, *Home* 33), but during the day often his girlfriend "came home from work and saw him sitting on the sofa staring at the floor. One sock on, the other in his hand. Neither calling his name nor leaning towards his face moved him" (Morrison, *Home* 75). He is unable to speak about it, and sometimes even his body becomes uncontrollable. His behaviour makes him isolated from social life.

It is Cee, his sister, whose immediate need for help changes him: "Only my sister in trouble could force me to even think about going in that direction" (*Home* 84). Here Frank refers to their hometown; however, travelling back there means remembering, by which he starts the process of interpreting and understanding fragments of memories from the past. His connection to Cee seems to be the core of his identity, something without which he cannot really exist. The first reason why his treatment of the little "slant-eyed" girl, and not the losing of comrades, is the most traumatic event of his life is that his core identity is based on being the protective older brother: his relationship with his sister is the most important for him, and he can hardly stop this kind of caring behaviour. The abused child was similar to Cee, a small girl needing protection, and yet his body used her as a female body, furthermore, an object. The second reason is that it was his own deeds that traumatised him, the abusive force did not come from outside, and so he needs to forgive himself to be able to start the recovery process. Although without the context (of the war) this would not have happened, still, he became an abuser—just as Cholly in *The Bluest Eye*. Trauma victims pass on their traumas creating a transgenerational pattern; the only way

to stop this process is to reveal it, verbalise it, and gain forgiveness for the participants. However, without the support of the community it is not possible.

Frank's healing goes in parallel with his narration. During storytelling, he discovers his forgotten past, fragments of which were hidden even from himself. Besides telling his story to the readers, it is his sister's behaviour that helps him overcome his traumas. His sister's body was used as a kind of experimental place by a white doctor. When Frank takes her and brings her home, she is healed both physically and mentally by the older local women who tell her: "Look to yourself. You free. Nothing and nobody is obliged to save you but you. ... you a person too. Don't let ... no devil doctor decide who you are. That's slavery. Somewhere inside you is that free person I'm talking about. Locate her and let her do some good in the world" (*Home* 126). This reaction of the community resembles Paul D's words to Sethe and the Blacksmith's words to Florens. Probably Cee is the fastest to follow this advice. She accepts the truth, her life as it is, and tries to make the best of it; she does not need her brother's support or help any more.

Nonetheless, the performative act that gives back his agency to Frank is the ritual reburial of the black man who was killed by his own son. He digs out his bones, bundles them in a kilt (the first made by his sister), and buries it under a tree, with a headstone, saying: "Here Stands A Man" (*Home* 145). By this act, he reintegrates the man into society, as he is given a decent burial. This man is forgiven for making his son kill him. Moreover, this ritual of forgiving and reintegration becomes mutual, embracing the buried and the burier, giving back his manhood and agency to Frank. Nevertheless, without realising and narrating his traumatic memories first, he could not have done this. Frank's and the dead man's story are raised onto the communal level and so become part of black collective memory.

Bride in *God Help the Child*

Although Bride continues the pattern of neglected children in Toni Morrison's novels, this novel is different in many ways. She is treated as ugly, because her skin is very dark. The situation of being neglected and seen as hideous by the mother resembles Pecola's in *The Bluest Eye.* Moreover, she cannot call her mother mum either but Sweetness (as compared to Pecola's Mrs. Breedlove). After being deprived of intersubjective support, she is used by her mother to punish a white woman by false witnessing. She "helped put an innocent woman in prison. A long sentence

for childrape the woman never did. ... To get some love—from her mama" (*God Help the Child* 156). Consequently, her body was both used, exploited, and despised. The person closest to her denied her any social support (positive gaze); she is deprived of any company, as she is considered and feels despised.

Nonetheless, she spends her whole life proving the opposite: she becomes a beautiful, independent woman, looked up to and admired by society. She works in a high position in the beauty industry: in the magazines she is looked at as the symbol of beauty. Her blackness becomes attractive and seductive. This way Morrison's novels reflect how the view of American society changed about skin colour throughout history: her last novel shows the most recent views. Still, all of Bride's success is not enough to enable her to establish mutually trustful social relationships. That is only made possible by reliving her childhood trauma, narrating her story, understanding her and other people's motives, and being an empathetic listener to the opposing story of her lover. She has sent an innocent person to prison by becoming a false witness to child abuse; therefore, she feels sorry for the person. On the other hand, her lover's brother was abused and killed by a man, and she has to empathise with her lover, feel his emotions and rage as well. Thereby she begins to understand what the participants in a story about child abuse feel, something she could not decipher when she was a child. Consequently, this novel gives us the narrative of the abused child's relatives and also of a false witness, thereby asking for forgiveness for false accusations as well.

By living through Booker's story and telling him hers, she juxtaposed her experience to his, thereby creating a more or less comprehensive picture of this experience. By rationalising and understanding details, she is able to narrate and integrate her childhood story into her subjectivity. This makes her ready to start a new life becoming a parent. She will probably be conscious of patterns in her past, and she will know how important motherly love is. She will know how to support her daughter to be able to express her feelings, connect to other people, and be conscious of her own body, not letting anyone take control of it. This way, *God Help the Child* becomes Morrison's most positively ending novel, suggesting that recovery is possible. Thus, it stands in stark contrast to *The Bluest Eye*, although there are multiple similarities in the core narratives.

Interestingly, the novel ends with the mother's words: the one who caused the core trauma of the main character's life. This resembles *A Mercy:* the mother explains her reasons, seemingly asking for forgiveness; yet, her words cannot be heard by the one

she is talking to—as the daughter keeps in contact with her mother still by writing to her, although she does not expect an answer, there "is no return address on the envelope" (*God Help the Child* 177). Thus, the text invites the reader to become the empathetic listener and provide the place for her narrative: transforming trauma into a collective memory. Although she is mainly making excuses for her own behaviour, it is implied indirectly that she explains and understands her daughter's motives and deeds as well, making us forgive Bride and understand her more thoroughly.

Conclusion

Morrison's novels show us many patterns of trauma. These traumatic events can often be connected to childhood experience, mostly to the relationship with the mother. These traumatised children experience rejection and neglect from the maternal figures, which later shifts to their relationships within society. They usually feel disembodied: their bodies are owned and used by others; they are exploited. They cannot and do not speak about the causes of their isolation, their obsessional memories.

Most of these characters suffer a series of traumatisation: because they are at the fringe of society, they are much more vulnerable. There is often no one they can turn to for support or help. They are also the easiest targets for perpetrators. They repeat their stories again and again until they are either devoured by their trauma or find help in society.

These novels show us the process of recovery starting from a state where a person is obsessed with their trauma and its continuous haunting to the point where healing begins. The most important components of recovery are always social support and forgiveness. Without being accepted, storytelling is impossible as words can be discredited, just as in Pecola's case. However, it is just as important that the traumatised person can accept the offered forgiveness and (new) role in the society, and can forgive (society and possibly the perpetrator) in return. This becomes important in *Beloved* for Sethe. Narration is always an intersubjective process, needing an empathetic listener. These narratives sometimes evoke the listener in the form of readers, like in *A Mercy, Home* and *The Bluest Eye*. Consequently, gaining subjectivity becomes not just an intersubjective, narrative, and embodied process, but a metaliterary one as well. The context and situation of storytelling is created by these texts as a frame

wherein the inclusion of an empathetic listener (the reader) transforms individual trauma into collective memory.

Morrison's novels often evoke some kind of timelessness and include the mixture of magical and realistic elements which shift these stories into the world of myths. As Jan Assmann suggests, in cultural memory "the distinction between myth and history vanishes" (Assmann 113). I propose that Toni Morrison's narratives become parts of black cultural memory (using Assmann's term), "[n]ot the past as such, as it is investigated and reconstructed by archaeologists and historians, ..., but only the past as it is remembered," "as ours" (113). Morrison's characters gain and provide forgiveness to be able to narrate their stories, and they share these memories with us so that they are not forgotten but become part of the cultural memory of and so owned by the black community.

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Defenceless Bodies in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Rethinking the Hand's Role in Being Human

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Abstract: The article discusses the relation of the hand and humanness, a relation which permeates the novels of South African author John Maxwell Coetzee. It focuses on the hand's protecting function in one of Coetzee's earlier novels Waiting for the Barbarians *(1980). The article argues that the free use of the hands has often been overlooked in definitions of what it means to be human, but to deprive someone of the hands, or of the capacity to use them is one of the most important means of dehumanisation. First, the paper examines how we understand being human in general through Nick Haslam's theory on the two different senses of humanness and the two respective types of dehumanisation. While non-physical (cognitive, psychological, and social) characteristics have been analysed extensively in discussions of the features that make us human, the role of the body has often been neglected. However, Coetzee's works show that the specificities of the human body, and especially the human hand as an "instrument" to protect, create, communicate, and connect with the world and others through touch is a key feature of humanity. The restriction of the hands leaves the body defenceless, thus in a vulnerable state not dissimilar to that of animal bodies. The article concludes that in Coetzee's novel, the disablement of the hands results in animalistic dehumanisation.*

Introduction

When the question, "What makes us human?" is posed, the answers tend to be *soul*, *rationality*, *autonomy*, *agency, language,* or *empathy*. My aim here is not to confute these views but to point out how much the actual physical body of the human is overlooked in these conceptions in favour of these non-physical characteristics.

In his seminal article on dehumanisation, Nick Haslam distinguishes between *animalistic* and *mechanistic* dehumanisation, based on the two senses of humanness. Haslam differentiates between "uniquely human" (usually acquired) characteristics which "define the boundary that separates humans from the related category of animals," and "human nature" (inborn) characteristics that are essential to humans, but "may not be the same ones that distinguish us from other species" (256). According to Haslam, the denial of uniquely human characteristics—such as "civility," "refinement," "moral sensibility," "rationality, logic" or "maturity"—results in animalistic dehumanisation, while the denial of human nature characteristics—such as "emotional responsiveness," "interpersonal warmth," "cognitive openness," "agency, individuality," or "depth"—leads to mechanistic dehumanisation (257–258). Typically, Haslam's research is only concerned with non-physical characteristics; only cognitive, psychological, and social characteristics are identified. By definition, physical, thus bodily characteristics would belong to "human nature" (HN) because these attributes are described as deeply "rooted" and "biologically based" (257). Interestingly, when Haslam explains what he calls the HN sense of humanness, he, for the first and last time, gives a corporeal example of an essential characteristic; however, he does so only within the realm of non-human animals: "Having wings is a core characteristic of birds, but not a reliable criterion for distinguishing them from other creatures …" (256). Nevertheless, he refrains from providing a similar physical kind of example for an essentially but not uniquely human feature. A similar tendency is observable in the subchapter in which Haslam describes how people with disabilities are often dehumanised. Only people with some kind of cognitive disability are mentioned while the dehumanisation of those with motor or sensory disabilities is completely left out (253).[1]

1 Disability studies, however, may offer a new angle on the relation between the physical body and the concept of the human. People with disability are often perceived as "not being fully human," apparently because their disability indicates "an absence, lack, or loss" (Murray 39). The completeness of the body is part of our understanding of being human. Lennard J. Davis, one

Although it is unquestionable that non-physical characteristics are at the forefront of Haslam's research, there is one aspect of dehumanisation in his theory where the body has importance. Many individuals and whole groups of people have been likened to animals based on their ethnicity or race, writes Haslam; furthermore, these people have been depicted in a way that their physical features are caricatured to make them "look animal-like" (252–253). Animalistic dehumanisation is defined by Haslam as the denial of "uniquely human" characteristics and it is often accompanied "with a prominent bodily component, as in the nakedness of the Abu Ghraib prisoners" (Haslam 258). It seems that animalistic dehumanisation often *requires* more than simply the denial of uniquely human characteristics. In many cases, the dehumanisers feel the need to distinguish themselves from the target individual or group not only on a cognitive level but on a physical, and hence bodily level as well. This urge to distinguish the body of the dehumanised from that of the dehumaniser, to destroy the human-likeness of it either in a visual depiction or by exposing and torturing the actual body proves—together with the findings of disability studies—that besides the cognitive, psychological, and social attributes, the body has its significant place in the concept of being human.

The Body Too Similar

Concerning the relation between the groups labelled as "human" and "animal," one can generally identify two contrary approaches. One stems from Christianity and western philosophy and creates a binary opposition between humans and animals. The other, influenced by the views of eighteenth-century naturalists, such as Linné and Buffon, as well as Darwin's evolutionary theory, advocates the continuity between humans and other animals, in other words, it emphasises that the human is part of nature (McFarland and Hediger 4; Tallis 319).

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of the most prominent figures in disability studies, argues that the "normal" human body paired with the "abnormal" disabled body was invented in the nineteenth century, as a result of a growing interest in statistics ("Constructing Normalcy" 4). Using a law from astronomy, French statistician Adolphe Quetelet conceptualised "*'l'homme moyen'* or the average Man" and this concept served as a basis for eugenicists whose idea was "to create a dominating, hegemonic vision of what the human body should be" (Davis, "Constructing Normalcy" 4, 8). Another fact Davis points out is that similarly to people with disability, disability studies itself is marginalised, while race, gender, and class are always in the focus of discussions. He finds this puzzling and asks: "What is more representative of the human condition than the body and its vicissitudes?" (Introduction xv).

Recent discussions of the human–animal question usually revolve around the ways these two categories imbricate. Perhaps the most well-known champion of Animal Studies is Donna Haraway, whose views on the relationship of human and non-human beings go even beyond continuity and may rather be called an "entanglement" approach. She calls the idea of human exceptionalism a fantasy and a downright foolishness and sees the human and non-human critters as messmates connected via "lively knottings that tie together the world" (Haraway vii, 11, 19, 244). Though Haraway's book, *When Species Meet*, was published as the third volume of the *Posthumanities* series, she does not think of herself as a posthumanist: "I am not a posthumanist; I am who I become with companion species, who and which make a mess out of categories in the making of kin and kind" (19). Despite Haraway's disassociation from post-humanism, thinking of the human–animal relation as a continuum and doing so within the posthumanist paradigm are two things that do not exclude each other. Cary Wolfe, the editor of the *Posthumanities* series, formulates a new perspective on posthumanism that acknowledges that "we ourselves are human animals, part of the evolutionary history" but at the same time "also insists that we attend to the specificity of the human" (*What is Posthumanism* xxv). He refuses N. Katherine Hayles's description of post-humanism, which, according to Wolfe, "imagines a triumphant transcendence of embodiment"; drawing instead on the ideas of Derrida, Luhmann, and Foucault, he describes his sense of posthumanism as one which "requires us to attend to that thing called 'the human' with *greater* specificity, *greater* attention to its embodiment, embeddedness, and materiality" (*What is Posthumanism* 120). It is this "shared embodiment" and the "*physical* exposure to vulnerability and mortality" which connects us, human beings with non-human animals (Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism* 62, "Introduction" 8). Or, as philosopher Cora Diamond puts it: "The awareness we each have of being a living body, being 'alive to the world,' carries with it exposure to the bodily sense of vulnerability to death, sheer animal vulnerability, the vulnerability we share with them" (74). Although this latter approach, advocating the human–animal continuum has been gaining more and more ground thanks to the animal rights movement and the emerging field of Animal Studies in recent decades, the binary distinction is still deeply engraved in our concepts. According to the opposition-based approach, humans are superior to animals, either because of their souls or because of their rationality. For example, Renaissance humanist philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola stated that it is the soul that makes Man capable of ascension, thus he can lift himself "above

the temptations of the flesh" (Kontler 4). This hierarchical perception of the human–animal relationship and the demonisation of the body may lie under animalistic dehumanisation discussed in the previous section.

Though the second, continuity-based approach is generally attributed to Charles Darwin, the attempt to place Man in nature goes beyond the nineteenth century. László Kontler argues that "in spite of the paradigm-shift inaugurated by Darwin, his 'system' was not possible without, and was still deeply anchored in, the early-modern developments … the naturalisation of man and the historicisation of nature" (15). The two most influential eighteenth-century naturalists were the Swedish Carl von Linné and his "constant adversary," the French Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (Foucault 148). Linné is often credited "with having included the human in zoological classification" in his 1735 *Systema Naturae* (Hoquet 24). However, his inclusion of Man among animals is conspicuously lopsided:

> Like other animals who enjoy life, sensation, and perception, seek for food, amusements, and rest, and who prepare habitations convenient for their kind, he [Man] is *curious and inquisitive*; *but, above all other animals*, he is *noble in his nature*, in as much as, by the *powers of his mind*, he is able to reason justly upon whatever discovers itself to his senses; and to look, with reverence and wonder, upon the works of Him who created all things. (10–11, emphases added)

Despite his new approach, Linné was influenced by the idea of the Great Chain of Being and thought within the Christian paradigm. Though he placed Man among animals, he did not assert a "relation with animals" (Hoquet 25). He felt the need to emphasise Man's God-given superiority. It is intriguing how Haslam's division of HN and UH characteristics corresponds with Linné's description of Man whose *curiosity* is similar to that of animals' (HN characteristic), but whose *nobility* and *reason* (UH characteristics) raise him above them. Another important thing to note in Linné's work is that, faithful to the Enlightenment, he turns Man, who until then had been the creature *endowed with a soul*, into "the last and best of created works, formed after the image of his Maker, *endowed with a portion of intellectual divinity*" (12, emphasis added). Furthermore, Linné's system supported the polygenetic theory because he divided the human species into four subcategories based on supposed morphological and psychological traits (European–white, African–black,

American–red, and Asian–yellow). This was problematic since, after ranking these categories, he found not much difference detectable between the "lower" categories of humans and apes (Kontler 8–9).

Buffon is best known "for having enacted an important shift in the concept of species" when he stated that two specimens belonged to the same species if they were capable of producing "fertile offspring" (Hoquet 22; Kontler 9). Consequently, Buffon claimed that there is only one species of human: "mankind are not composed of species essentially different from each other; … on the contrary, there was originally but one species, who … have undergone various changes by the influence of climate, food, mode of living, epidemic diseases, and the mixture of dissimilar individuals" (Buffon27). Though Buffon argued that there was only one human species and he turned his attention to bodily traits rather than supposed psychological ones like Linné, he still focused on the differences and not the unity of these traits and, thus, created a hierarchy within the human species somewhat similar to the one created by Linné. According to Buffon, "[t]he most temperate climate lies between the 40th and 50th degree of latitude, and it produces the most handsome and beautiful men. It is from this climate that the ideas of genuine colour of mankind, and of the various degrees of beauty, ought to be derived" (Buffon 26). This means that those who were not—basically—white Europeans, were considered to be representatives of "degenerated versions of the original type" by the French naturalist (Hoquet 21). These developments of Linné, Buffon, and other eighteenth-century naturalists, or as Foucault calls it, the "quasi-evolutionism of the eighteenth century" (167), were necessary steps towards Charles Darwin's ground-breaking evolutionary theory.

The Great Chain of Being, though Darwin tried to distance himself from it, had its influence on his work as well, since the idea of links between living beings originated in this concept (Tattersall 32). However, instead of a hierarchy between these creatures, Darwin always put emphasis on the continuity linking them. Towards the end of *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Darwin turned his attention to morphology and discussed the interesting fact that the limbs of a man, a mole, a porpoise, or a bat—be it a hand, paw, paddle, or wing—are "constructed on the same pattern" so that bones are positioned similarly (*Origin* 359). To explain this phenomenon, Darwin suggested the existence of an "ancient progenitor" of mammals, meaning that, for instance, those variations of the limbs are the result of "the natural selection of successive slight modifications" of an "archetypical ancestor's" limbs

(*Origin* 360). The topic of similarity in the construction of mammals is further elaborated in Darwin's other influential work, *The Descent of Man* (1871). "It is notorious," wrote Darwin, "that man is constructed on the same general type or model with other mammals" (*Descent* 10). After reiterating that the bones, muscles, nerves, blood vessels, and so on, are positioned in all mammals according to a common pattern, Darwin compared the pictures of a human and a dog embryo in roughly the same phase of development as another proof of resemblance (*Descent* 15). These statements bridged the gap between Man and other animals, two groups which had seemed to be separated by a chasm until then: "Consequently we ought frankly to admit their [man and all vertebrate animals] community of descent … It is only our natural prejudice, and that arrogance which made our forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods, which leads us to demur to this conclusion" (*Descent* 32–33).

Besides showing the morphological and developmental continuity connecting human and other animal bodies, Darwin also examined cognitive and social characteristics. His unconcealed intention was to prove, using examples both from academic sources and his own life, "that there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties" (*Descent* 35). Darwin examined faculties and characteristics like intelligence, emotions, imitation, memory, reason, or language, ones that have been always associated with Man, but which could be possessed by animals as well considering the examples provided. Darwin's conclusion in this respect resonates with the continuity-based approach he advocated in the case of corporeal structure and development: "the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of *degree* and not of kind" (*Descent* 105, emphasis added).

Though Darwin always stressed the link between Man and other animals, he could not overlook the fact that despite the common progenitor and the morphological, developmental, and even mental similarities, Man is still different in a way. He claimed that Man is "the most dominant animal that has ever appeared on the earth" who owes this dominance "to his intellectual faculties, his social habits, … and to his *corporeal structure*" (*Descent* 136–137, emphasis added). Meanwhile, Darwin also realised the neglect surrounding the human body's significance; thus, he dedicated the second part of Chapter 4 of *The Descent of Man* to its

rehabilitation: "Although the intellectual powers and social habits of man are of paramount importance to him, we must not underrate the importance of his bodily structure" (*Descent* 138).

Clearly, the body is more closely tied to the second, continuity-based view of the human–animal question. Due to the similarities between the corporeal structures of humans and other animals, the physical characteristics of the human are not considered to be special or exclusive enough to raise the human on a pedestal above other species and, thus, they are often overlooked. As Darwin pointed out, the body must not be entirely disregarded when reflecting on the human. However, even though Darwin established a difference between animals and humans based on partly bodily features, later, the body started to be seen as a point of contact and continuity between animals and humans, and bodily vulnerability became one of the characteristics that we share with animals. Raymond Tallis writes that "whatever human possibilities may be uncovered or postulated through reflection and exploration, we deceive ourselves if we forget how we remain fastened to our physical body and, through embodiment, are vulnerable to pain and suffering" (5).

This approach that connects human and non-human animal bodies through shared vulnerability but at the same time upgrades the body's relevance resonates with J. M. Coetzee's thoughts on the body, expressed in *Doubling the Point*, his essay and interview collection published in1992: "If I look back over my own fiction, I see a simple (simple-minded?) standard erected. That standard is the body. Whatever else, the body is not 'that which is not,' and the proof that it *is* is the pain it feels. The body with its pain becomes a counter to the endless trials of doubt" (248). The heft of this "embodied perspective" is indicated by the fact that following Coetzee's earlier, apartheid-inspired works, written in a South African context, the suffering body has remained in the focus in the form of ageing and disability, in his later, "Australian novels" (Hall 64). It seems that the way Diamond, Tallis, and Coetzee see the body only furthers the thought that the body is not special enough to make a difference: animals feel pain too. However, the body does not only expose humans and animals to pain and suffering, but it also opens other possibilities. In the case of humans, the "specificity," as Wolfe would call it, that grants numberless possibilities is the hand.

The Hand

The sentiment in *The Hand*, "[w]e use it as we draw our breath, unconsciously" (13), by nineteenth-century physician, neurologist, and artist Charles Bell, summarises how humans relate to the hand—it is an essential part of human life, just as breathing is, and is used without a second thought. The hand's significance is usually realised when its functioning becomes hindered by injury or illness. Meanwhile, the hand holds a special position: it is both part of the body and, at the same time, is outside the body; as a result, it can be used as an instrument. The four main areas of use of the human hand may be described as protection, creation, communication, and touch. Indeed, the hand has raised the curiosity of many philosophers, physicians, and naturalists, from ancient times to the present day.

Aristotle famously called the hand the *tool of tools*, stating in *On the Parts of Animals*: "the hand would appear to be not one single instrument but many, as it were an instrument that represents many instruments" (373). He classified the hand, similarly to the face, as a non-uniform (composed of uniform parts e.g. bone) and instrumental part (109, 111, 113). Aristotle emphasised the strong bond between hands and intelligence, but he disagreed with Pre-Socratic philosopher Anaxagoras's assertion that Man had become the most intelligent animal because he had hands (371). Although the direction of this relation has remained contested, the existence of the connection between the hands and Man's distinguished status among animals is generally accepted (see e.g. Galen, Tallis). Thus, Aristotle's objection was not against the connection itself but the direction of this cause-and-effect relation. One of Aristotle's most important principles is that "matter" serves "form"—the body serves the Soul—therefore, humans have hands because they are the most intelligent of animals (36, 71, 373). Consequently, each body part has its purpose and, thus, all these parts are shaped so that they can realise their respective purpose (77). From the examples he provided, it seems that Aristotle saw the main purpose of the hands of Man to be defence. Disagreeing with those who thought Man to be the most vulnerable and defenceless of the animals, Aristotle claimed that Man had a huge advantage over other animals, namely that he could take off, put on, and change his "defensive equipment" at will: "Take the hand: this is as good as a talon, or a claw, or a horn, or again, a spear or a sword, or any other weapon or tool: it can be all of these, because it can seize and hold them all" (373).

Physician and philosopher Galen of Pergamon was influenced by Aristotle and dedicated an entire work to the human hand. He shared Aristotle's opinion on the relation between hands and Man's status: "because he is the wisest animal he has a hand" (7). Galen emphasised that the purpose of the hand is protection, since the human body is without any weapon; thus, "by the use of these [hands] he [Man] arms the body, and preserves it in every way" (9). However, Galen outdid Aristotle in a way because he identified another essential function of hands besides protection, namely *creation*. Man is not only a "warlike" but also a "peaceable" animal, and as such, he is able to *write*, *build*, or *make* by using his hands (7).

Centuries passed till the communicating aspect of the hands was realised by philosopher and doctor John Bulwer who wrote *Chirologia: Or the Natural Language of the Hand* (1644). As the further subtitles of the work write, Bulwer thought of the hand as "the chiefest instrument of eloquence." Bulwer claimed he found a huge deficiency while reading the classics, especially the works of Aristotle, in which "one Province not to have Beene visited, and that is *Gesture*." *Chirologia* was not only unique at its time but proved to be an influential work in the long run. Bulwer believed the gestures to be "the onely speech that is universall to Man" and the hand to be the "most *talkative*" part of the whole body; thus, it is not surprising that he was among the first who made suggestions on the education of deaf people and the use of sign language in England (Bulwer, *Chirologia* 1, 3).

Despite Aristotle's elaborate discussion of the sense of touch in *De Anima* and his comments on the hand in *On the Parts of Animals*, it seems he missed connecting the two thoughts. It was French philosopher Étienne Bonnot de Condillac who filled the gap in his 1754 work the *Treatise on the Sensations*. The hand being the "principal organ of touch" is a core element in Condillac's argument (446). He argued that "all our knowledge comes from the senses" and that "our sensations are only ways of being" (293). To resolve this paradox, Condillac raised touch above the other senses and claimed that, by touch, we realise that outside of our "sentient being" there are "extension and objects" (296). To prove his theory, Condillac proposed a theoretical experiment in which he opened the senses of a human-shaped statue one by one (or two or three at the same time), thus demonstrating the different characteristics of each sense. Condillac concluded that his statue would need three things in order to realise that there is a world outside of it: mobility of the limbs, objects around it, and that its hands were placed first on itself and then on the objects around

it (295, 396–400). Hence, the hand was ascribed a new role of being the instrument of touch and by this, being the intermediary of knowledge.

The beginning of the nineteenth century brought a comprehensive book on the hand, entitled *The Hand, Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design*, which was published as part of the Bridgewater Treatises in 1833. The intended purpose of these Treatises was to discuss an interesting scientific issue in a way that "promote[d] God's existence by detailing the purposeful design of the universe" as a necessary "response to the extreme materialistic physiology coming from France in the eighteenth century" (Capuano 1). The author, Charles Bell claimed that the hand was a perfect construction of divine creation and it is exactly its perfection "which makes us insensible to its use" (13). Bell's work discusses the hand from a new, natural theological point of view, but it also repeats and, thus, summarises thoughts on the hand mentioned afore. First and foremost, Bell reiterated the idea of Aristotle and Galen about the hand's protecting function and that having hands is a consequence of Man's superior cognitive powers: "We ought to define the hand as belonging exclusively to man—corresponding in sensibility and motion with that ingenuity which converts the being who is the weakest in natural defence, to the ruler over animate and inanimate nature" (16). The talkative hand originating from Bulwer also appears in the text as the "instrument of expression" (218). Bell supported his argument on this function by pointing out how the position of hands in paintings added to the meaning of the given works. Finally, though Bell did not mention or refer to Condillac in his work, his ideas of touch, which is "seated in the hand," are almost word-by-word identical to those of Condillac (150). It is claimed that the most important of the senses is touch because it is by the motion of the hand and touch that "we have a knowledge of our own body as distinguished from things external to us," and that we have a certain knowledge of the world external to us (179, 192–193).

The hand is also a core point in Darwin's argument about the importance of the corporeal structure of humans in *The Descent of Man*. The first bodily feature Darwin highlighted was indeed the hand and its perfection. Darwin acknowledged Bell's argument that it is the hand, working in concert with reason, which ensured the dominance of humans in the world, but as a naturalist, he explained this by the process of natural selection instead of some divine plan (*Descent* 141). The muscles of the hands and feet, being responsible for mobility, are crucial in natural selection: those individuals whose muscles adapted better could gain subsistence and defend themselves more easily; hence, they would be more likely to survive and

produce offspring (*Descent* 136). The hand's perfection and consequently Man's dominance is the result of natural selection: "Man could not have attained his present dominant position in the world without the use of his hands which are so admirably adapted to act in obedience to his will" (*Descent* 141). Darwin, similarly to Condillac and Bell, connected the hand and touch and claimed that touch is the sense on which the hand's "delicate use largely depends" (*Descent* 141).

Tallis agrees with Anaxagoras and uses the hand as the starting point of his argument. He looks at the small anatomical differences between human and primate hands to demonstrate how these subtle yet significant details lead to a handful of events causing the discontinuities between humans and primates beyond the biological (247). This perspective makes the binary and continuity-based approaches to the human–animal relation meet somewhere in the middle. Talis's main point concerns the hand and the development of agency and is summarised as follows: "The origin of the sense of agency has been attributed to the special powers and virtues of the human hand. This organ makes possible the transformation of our relationship to our own bodies into an instrumental one, as opposed to one of 'dumb' suffering" (295). The hand awakened the sense of agency in humans and since then, it has been the actor and protector of this sense. The human hand is able to put food into one's mouth, to defend oneself or, to the contrary, to cause harm, as well as to make contact with the other through touch. In short, the hand has the power to protect the body from suffering, caused either by hunger, pain, or loneliness, through action.

The Suffering Body and the Hand in *Waiting for the Barbarians*

The suffering body is a recurring theme in Coetzee's novels, and the hand plays a particularly important role. In *Slow Man*, for instance, Paul Rayment, a new amputee ponders the question of whether the Venus of Milo would still be considered the portrayal of beauty if one day it was revealed that the statue did not lose its arms sometime in the past—as it is widely accepted—but it had been originally modelled on an amputee (76). This is, in fact, a question that is interesting not only from an aesthetic perspective, but it raises broader philosophical concerns as well. The hand in Coetzee's novels is often disabled due to torture, injury, illness, or ageing. According to Robert A. Wilson, disability, similarly to gender and race, can be a "marked variation that dehumanises" (181). Moreover, if the hands

are impeded, they cannot function as actors and protectors, thus leaving the human body to suffer. What remains without protection is a vulnerable physical body not dissimilar to that of animals. The disablement of hands dissolves the demarcation between human and non-human animals; therefore, the disabling of the hand is a particular form of dehumanisation.

Coetzee's 1980 novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, serves as a perfect starting point for exploring the relationship between hands and humanness. The novel is unquestionably dominated by hands, many of which are bound, tortured, or, to the contrary, ready to bind and torture (and there is also a distinct role of caring hands, which should be the subject of another paper). The mainly restraining, oppressive, and even destructive, in short, negative ambiance surrounding the hands exemplifies the fictional Empire's ideology, which is a reflection of the colonial and apartheid ideology in South Africa.

Though the unnamed narrator of the story serves the Empire as a magistrate of one of its settlements on the frontier, he becomes doubtful and begins to question the rightness of the Empire's ideology when Colonel Joll arrives in the town. The high-ranking officer of the Third Bureau captures and tortures nomadic people, called the "Barbarians," claiming, without any apparent evidence, that these people are plotting to attack the Empire. Joll leads a campaign against the Barbarians beyond the frontier, and after just a few days, he sends back a group of prisoners escorted by soldiers to the settlement. The magistrate is ordered to *hold* the prisoners until Joll returns. He is exasperated by the fatuousness of the Colonel who has captured these innocent fishing people simply because they hid seeing the approaching soldiers. Not knowing what to do with them but wishing to treat them humanely, the magistrate accommodates the fishing people in the barracks yard and provides them with food. A soldier offers bread "to the oldest prisoner. The old man accepts the bread reverentially in both hands" and, then, divides it among his people (19). The bread's way, going from hand to hand, signifies that the prisoners are still looked upon as fellow human beings; however, the magistrate's description of the scene where he and his men watch the fishing people eat "as though they are strange animals," foreshadows the future relation of the two groups (19). After a while, the town gets tired of the prisoners, and they begin to seem more and more animal-like. The food, which was offered from hand to hand at first is simply thrown: "the kitchen staff refuse them utensils and begin to toss them their food from the doorway as if they were indeed animals" (21).

Later, Colonel Joll returns triumphantly with a dozen Barbarian captives. The men are bound in an extraordinarily cruel and painful way that the magistrate describes as follows:

> at the end of the rope, tied neck to neck, comes a file of men, barbarians, stark naked, holding their hands up to their faces in an odd way as though one and all are suffering from toothache. … A simple loop of wire runs through the flesh of each man's hands and through holes pierced in his cheeks. "It makes them meek as lambs," I remember being told by a soldier who had once seen the trick: "they think of nothing but how to keep very still." (113)

It has been common practice to tie the hands of captives since the dawn of time, this being the easiest and surest method to deprive them of their ability to act and to place control over them into the hands of the captor. However, the way these men are bound goes beyond common practice. Being the chief instrument of protection, the hand can protect the body from suffering, but in the case of the Barbarian captives, their own hands turn into both the cause of and the protector against pain. From human beings, they are turned into "meek lambs" simply because they cannot use their hands freely. With the wire loop pierced through their hands and cheeks, the captive men are doubly robbed of their agency: they cannot act, or otherwise, they would hurt themselves, and as a result, they are unable to fend off the pain coming from outside. Four of the men are made to kneel and are tethered to a pole by their loops. The men's restrained posture is contrasted with the gestures of Joll. The colonel controls events like a conductor "directing the soldier with little gestures of the hand" (115). Then, Joll writes "ENEMY" on each man's back, literally turning them into enemies with the act of his hand, and the soldiers begin hitting them with canes.

The magistrate cannot stand this injustice and when Joll raises a hammer, he intervenes. Short of any weapon, the magistrate has to rely on his hand, which he "points at him [Joll] like a gun" (116). "'Not with that!' I shout. The hammer lies cradled in the Colonel's folded arms. 'You would not use a hammer on a beast, not on a beast!'" (117). Humiliated, deprived of agency, and beaten almost to death, however, the prisoners seem more animal- than human-like. Their upper limbs, having lost their function completely, ceased to be arms and hands and have transformed

into paws: "the four prisoners who lie docilely on the earth, their lips to the pole, their hands clasped to their faces like monkeys' paws" (117). The magistrate is attacked by a soldier and his last weapon, one of his arms, gets broken by a strike of the soldier's stick. Besides being a physical injury, the break of his arm marks a metaphoric break in the magistrate's belief in human supremacy. The moment he loses the capacity to use his hand freely and, thus, becomes vulnerable, he realises the similarity linking human and non-human animals:

> I raise my broken hand to the sky. 'Look!' I shout. 'We are the great miracle of creation! But from some blows this miraculous body cannot repair itself! How—!' Words fail me. 'Look at these men!' I recommence. *'Men!'* … What I wanted to say next I cannot remember. A miracle of creation—I pursue the thought but it eludes me like a wisp of smoke. It occurs to me that we crush insects beneath our feet, miracles of creation too, beetles, worms, cockroaches, ants, in their various ways. (117–118)

The faltering words and the eluding thoughts of the magistrate in his injured bodily state can also be interpreted in terms of Cora Diamond's assertion about Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello*. According to Diamond, it is exactly because she is very much aware of the shared vulnerability of human and non-human animals that Costello refuses to engage in the debate about animals, which unfolds around the dinner table after one of her lectures. "She sees our reliance on argumentation as a way we may make unavailable to ourselves our own sense of what it is to be a living animal" (53). Although the magistrate's recognition, unlike Costello's, is involuntary, the realisation of shared embodiment and, thus, him being a "living animal," dawns on him when he stops arguing and feels what it means to be an embodied being.

This injury of the hand is, nonetheless, only the beginning of the magistrate's dehumanising torture. The Colonel and Mandel the warrant officer make sure that he does not make himself a martyr whose death would turn the entire town against the Bureau. His protestation is depreciated and the magistrate himself is tortured and made the laughing-stock of the settlement. The torturers "were interested only in demonstrating to me what it meant to live in a body, as a body, a body which can entertain notions of justice as long as it is whole and well" (126). The magistrate is made to run naked and do tricks to entertain the soldiers, scullery

maids, and children. As a final attraction, he is almost hanged from a tree, but eventually, Mandel knots the rope around his hands bound behind his back.

> If I can hold my arms stiff, if I am acrobat enough to swing a foot up and hook it around the rope, I will be able to hang upside down and not be hurt: that is my last thought before they begin to hoist me. But I am weak as a baby, my arms come up behind my back, and as my feet leave the ground I feel a terrible tearing in my shoulders as though whole sheets of muscle are giving way. (132)

Once more the impotence of the person with bound hands is in sharp contrast with the agency of those whose hands are free: "Two little boys drop out of the tree and, hand in hand, not looking back, trot off" (132). The magistrate bellows uncontrollably and only hopes that if the town's children hear him, "they do not imitate their elders' games, or tomorrow there will be a plague of little bodies dangling from the trees" (133). After this last "performance," the magistrate is released from his cell and can do whatever he wishes because he has ceased to be a threat to the Third Bureau, he "lost his last vestige of authority" (136). However, along with authority, due to his damaged arms, he seems to have lost the last trace of humanness and sense of self as well, for he uses the third person singular instead of "I": "for a week [he] licked his food off the flagstones like a dog because he had lost the use of his hands" (136).

It was noted in the introduction that Haslam identifies the denial of HN characteristics, where bodily features would belong by definition, as mechanistic dehumanisation. However, reviewing the descriptions of people with bound or injured hands in Coetzee's novel, we see that the disablement of hands results not in mechanistic, but in animalistic dehumanisation. The bound Barbarian prisoners become meek lambs, their hands turn into monkey paws, while the magistrate licks his food from the floor like a dog. Despite being a biologically based corporeal characteristic, the human hand stands out from the human nature category and fits into the category of uniquely human characteristics as well.

One day the arrival of a corpse on horseback causes a sensation in the settlement. The man was once a member of Joll's troop who was most probably captured by the Barbarians. However, the magistrate does not mention any trace of wound or torture, only one thing is certain: the man has been dead for days. What is most

alarming for the townspeople is the posture of the corpse: "He is lashed to a stout wooden framework which holds him upright in his saddle. His spine is kept erect by a pole and his arms are tied to a crosspiece" (153). It is not clear whether the man was tied to the framework already as a corpse, or while he was still alive, in which case his death was caused by the restrained posture of his body, most importantly by the inability to use his hands. Nevertheless, the intention behind this crucified scarecrow figure is clear: it is the response of the Barbarians to the "civilised" way their captured people were treated by the Empire.

Eventually, after this unsuccessful campaign, Colonel Joll and his troops leave the settlement for good, and the town's life returns, it seems, to normal. The visit of the Third Bureau does leave a subtle but unsettling trace nonetheless. Though the children of the town did not begin to hang each other from trees, their watching the beating of the bound-handed barbarians and, then, the hanging of the magistrate planted the seed of the Empire's ideology in them. It is the danger of this tendency that beliefs are transmitted from one generation to the next that the magistrate senses unconsciously but is unable to grasp: "There has been something staring me in the face, and still I do not see it" (170). The "elders' game" is reflected in the game of children. It is winter and the magistrate watches children building a snowman in the middle of the square. When the body and head are completed, the children place pebbles for ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, and even a cap on top of its head. The children, either because they do not realise their absence or because they deliberately want to finish the snowman this way, do not give their creation hands: "It strikes me that the snowman will need arms too, but I do not want to interfere," he notes (170). The snowman, thus, stands without hands to act or protect, its body exposed entirely to the world.

Conclusion

Although the meaning of "human" is not set in stone, tentative definitions of the concept are certainly dominated by cognitive, psychological, and, or social characteristics. Our physical body seems to be self-evident and, thus, slips our notice. Nevertheless, the way disability is perceived reveals our deeply engraved idea about the "normal" human body. Another proof of the body's role in the concept of the human is provided by Haslam whose work (though it focuses mainly on non-physical characteristics) defines animalistic dehumanisation as one kind

of dehumanisation which may involve bodily dimensions. Perhaps it is this connection between humans and other animals through the body that relegates the body to the background and makes it seem less significant. This link through the biological body may have begun to emerge when naturalists first included Man in zoological classification and solidified with Darwin's evolutionary theory. In the recent discourse on the human-animal relationship, it is our shared vulnerability that is always emphasised, the human and non-human animal bodies are knitted even closer.

However, despite the shared vulnerability, there is the hand, a body part that is used almost unconsciously, that renders humans capable of defending their bodies in various ways. For philosophers from Aristotle to Tallis, the hand seems to be a marker of humanness, a bodily characteristic that differentiates humans from other animals. Naturally, the hand can do much more than simply protect the body; however, its most fundamental purpose or function is defence.

The body, its vulnerability, and suffering are central themes in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*. This entails that hands have a significant role in the novel as well. They are depicted either as weapons ready to cause harm, or as useless appendages that are bound, broken, or torn. The latter kind of depiction always indicates the deprivation of humanness. Thus, the disablement of the hands in *Waiting for the Barbarians* marks a form of dehumanisation. The characters with disabled hands are likened to different animals (lamb, monkey, dog); hence, in terms of Haslam's theory, they become the victims of animalistic dehumanisation. At the same time, the hand proves to be understood as a uniquely human characteristic.

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Natural Areas and Places in Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* Reflecting on the Status of Arabs in the US

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to examine the human connection with nature, place, and the physical environment in Mohja Kahf's The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf *(2006) in order to demonstrate the ways the Arab American author employs these themes to reflect the diasporic experience of her protagonist, providing (in)direct commentary on the wavering location of Arab Americans in repellent contexts, on the one hand, and offering readers a possible solution, on the other. This paper, then, explores the portrayal of nature, place, and environment in Kahf's novel as an active agent that accompanies the protagonist throughout the events of the plot to finally highlight the way she finds to reconcile with the world, blend differences, and find inner balance.*

Introduction

During the late twentieth century, the number of Arab immigrants to North America increased significantly. This increase has been accompanied with the development of literature written by Arab immigrants—previously called Mahjar literature, but in contemporary scholarship known as Arab American Literature, which should be read as "a literature in its own right," as Majaj insists ("Arab-American Literature" 3). In the writing of the contemporary generation, the idea of home has been highly reflected, especially as many of these works discuss moving from

homeland to the host-land, where characters try to negotiate their wavering position between worlds. Women writers have especially flourished in reflecting the theme of home since they, as Bahareh Lampert argues, struggled to "find home among the oppressive and empowering forces of both the US and the Middle East" (1).

Influenced by theories of postcolonialism and feminism, Arab American literature has expanded its themes in recent years, which coincides with the emergence and accomplishments of a new generation of Arab American women writers. Issues of gender, class, race, color, ethnicity, and identity have provided a backdrop for works produced by significant authors, such as Naomi Shihab Nye, Lisa Majaj, Diana Abu Jaber, Mohja Kahf, Joanna Kadi, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Suheir Hammad, Laila Lalami, Evelyne Accad, Mervat Hatem, Samia Serageldin, and Laila Halaby, in addition to many others who have become well-established writers of a new generation adopting more theoretically inflected feminist approaches.

Contemporary Arab American female writers have moved beyond ideas of nostalgia or the search for home to discuss "topics that are considered as taboo in their countries of origin" such as resistance to conventions and male dominance that undermine their abilities and freedom (Ulayyan 38). Themes highlighted in their works range from subverting stereotypes about Arabs and Arab females, confronting racism as well as socio-cultural and political exclusion, voicing cultural critique and self-criticism, to reflections on the anxiety regarding the conflictual political relations between their homeland and the US, fighting for recognition, rejecting gender discrimination, searching for identity, and the advocacy of intercultural dialogue (Majaj, "Arab-American Literature" 3–7). Arab American women writers have continued to challenge traditional gender roles and to explore the conjunctions of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and politics, while they have also started to shed more light on the dilemma of identification and belonging in diaspora (Majaj, "Arab-American Literature" 7–10).

Much Arab American writing has been focusing on the experience of expatriates in transitional locations, or "the transit lounge of cultures," as anthropologist James Clifford termed it (7). As a consequence, nature has been "a peripheral topic in most critical interpretations of Arab American literary writings" (1), as Ismet Bujupaj remarks. This might be attributed to the belief that nature is not likely to exist in a transit lounge; therefore, it is not considered fertile ground for research. However, despite the absence of notable critical work on the treatment of natural areas, environment and places in Arab American literature, scholarship has slowly

turned towards portrayals of nature, as the intellectual climate began to foreground ecofeminist perspectives.

Critics have started to focus on the imagery of nature and place in relation to the socio-cultural and political status of diasporic figures. As Edward Said indicates in his *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, immigrants and people who travel have the advantage of a multiple spatial vision (185–186). In the same vein, Bujupaj points out that Arab American literary production offers the advantage of exploring peoples' experience in "doubled places" (2). In this sense, diaspora literature can utilise nature, place, and environment simultaneously in different places through descriptions of one's homeland and of the place of displacement. In fact, criticism on Arab American literature can greatly benefit from exploring the ways in which diaspora, or more precisely immigration and displacement, affects human relationship with natural areas and places. Nature presentation in Arab American writing is not used in vain, or for purposes of mere amusement through lengthy descriptive paragraphs, but to reflect both on cultural politics and on the formation or stability of the diasporic figures' identity (Bujupaj 2).

In diaspora literature, returning to the place of origin is considered essential for finding and stabilising diasporic characters' identity and is best understood in the tradition of "narratives of return." "Return narratives recount the adventures embarked upon by diasporic subjects in an attempt to approach and comprehend their origins, most of the time in the hope of resolving the conflicts and contradictions they encounter in their sense of self" (Arami 49). Theses narratives, eventually, "formulate identities beyond singular national affiliations; they write the diaspora and establish a transnational, diaspora consciousness" (Kindinger 85). Experiencing new environments involves direct and indirect contact or interaction with nature, which plays, in turn, an important role in shaping the personalities of diasporic subjects and affects the way they see things. Thus, return travels and the sojourns undertaken by diasporic figures are of paramount importance, since they combine the discovery of new environments or places with the discovery of their own self (Farley 12; Ulayyan 9).

I suggest that nature, environment, and place are employed in these novels to reflect on human relations and sociopolitical issues. More specifically, I argue that Mohja Kahf, author of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, utilises imagery of nature, place, and environment to offer her readers a critique of the conflictual socio-cultural and political relations experienced by the Arab American population in the US.

In addition, through the commentary provided by nature imagery, Kahf unveils the fears and hopes of Arab American women within the context of diaspora.

Can Natural Areas and Places Speak?

Mohja Kahf belongs to the most recent generation of Arab American writers (Ludescher 105) who is considered a vibrant and daring literary voice among expatriates, raising new and diverse concerns compared to previous generations (Majaj, "Arab-American Literature" 11; Ulayyan 37). As Sirene Harb states, Kahf's status as an Arab Muslim American exposes the ambivalent location of diasporic subjects in America, in addition to the various forms of self-division that result from the contradictory strategies of belonging (14). Kahf's writing focuses on the Middle East, Islam, cultural antagonism, overlapping identities, the misrepresentation of Arab Muslim women, and the conditions of Arab and Muslim minorities in diaspora. This makes her a writer very much in tune with what might be called the contemporary Arab American literary canon. As Majaj asserts, she also explores issues such as the politics of racial discrimination, gender and sexual stereotyping, and contexts of female appropriation for male agendas (Majaj, "Arab-American Literature" 8).

In many of her writings, Kahf deals with the identity of Arab Muslim women in crisscrossed cultural and dogmatic contexts. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, she attempts to expose and indict the operations of racism, cultural antagonism, and women's oppression. The novel explores various facets of peoples' attitudes and criticises institutions, social contexts, legal systems, and educational institutions along with exposing power relations that are fuelled by the intersection of race, class, gender, and religion as pretext to legitimize hegemony. The author's feminist stance is inherently political since she demands, alongside Arab American feminist activists, that social conventions fostering superiority of men over women should be changed. In addition to offering a critique of the various manifestations of hegemony and antagonism, the novel can also be interpreted as a call for the reformation of the politics that rule human relations in multicultural societies. More closely, the author examines the construction of a new generation of women who began building their own stories, creating a new perception of their individuality and negotiating the concept of their "subjectivity in the space of diaspora" (Marques 177).

Kahf's debut novel chronicles, on the narrative level, the story of the Syrian immigrant, Khadra Shamy, who is forced to leave Syria with her family due to the political

conflicts in the early seventies and settle down in Indianapolis in the United States, where the family tries to integrate with both the Arab Muslim community and the local American one. In diaspora, Khadra is raised by her strictly devout Muslim family and the Dawah Centre community according to their cultural ideals. All the events narrated in the novel are focalised through the perspective of Kahf's protagonist who faces paradoxes, discrimination, and exclusion resulting from the intersection of religion, race, gender, and politics in both mainstream America and in her own Arab community in the US. In short, the novel tells the story of the development of Khadra who tries to identify herself within crisscrossed contexts and who sets off to visit Arab countries to find stability and reclaim her roots.

Since the publication of her novel, critical attention to Kahf has not only grown in volume but has also started to undergo a shift from general feminist discussions or commentaries on social and cultural complexities experienced by expatriates to an expanding array of interpretations open to evolving modern concerns. I contend that Mohja Kahf employs imagery of nature and environment not only to add pastoral scenes to the architectural design of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. Rather, I read the novel as a multi-layered text in which descriptions of nature are embedded on the level of narrative discourse to reflect on the experiences characters undergo in certain locations. I suggest that nature appears as an agent to reflect on universal themes concerning human relations and sociopolitical conflicts.

Indeed, utilising nature "adds a deeper dimension to experiences already shaped by political and cultural contestations" (Bujupaj 2). Whether in her poetry or her novel, Kahf injects the depiction of nature and environment with socio-cultural and political commentary. The author gains two advantages from utilising nature in this way. First, she uses nature symbolism to criticise the conflictual human relationships that are experienced within the diasporic environment, particularly between the Arab expatriates' community and the Hoosiers—locals of Indianapolis. Second, having a novel impregnated with a variety of descriptions of places and scenes of nature in both the US and Syria exemplifies the vision of "doubled places" characteristic of displaced subjects and authenticates their stories accordingly. These descriptions are cleverly used as key motifs both to unveil Khadra's fears and anxieties resulting from the overlapping hegemonic relations based on socio-political and dogmatic differences and to unveil her hopes that provide her with a spiritual alternative and form a "source of solace at moments of desperation and despondency while in exile" (Sadouni and Abu Amrieh 1).

The narrative describes events that take place during a time span that covers twenty years of the protagonist's life. However, the reader will observe that the most significant encounters between Khadra and nature appear mainly during her childhood in Indianapolis and during her sojourn of self-discovery in Syria seven years later. On the one hand, nature has shown different facets in each location that may be interpreted as belonging to two opposite poles, heaven and hell, in their effect. Thus, positive and negative facets of nature can be read as commenting on the protagonist's hopes and anxieties, respectively. On the other hand, nature is centralised and is given a strong voice that helps the protagonist undergo spiritual change.

The possibility that natural places or elements of the environment may be used to comment on conflictual socio-political and cultural relations—between Arabs and Americans in the US or, more generally, between the East and the West—is introduced on the very first pages of the novel. The narrator clearly informs the reader how Khadra pictures the natural topography of Indianapolis as a hegemonic body that will not belong to her, which rejects her existence and augments her fear and loneliness. The novel is, in fact, full of instances that corroborate, in free indirect discourse, the image of nature as an antagonistic force of exclusion, with its "[f]orests, high-treed and terrifying, and then land so wide and flat it made you lonely" (Kahf 15). Or even more emphatically: "Khadra, returning to this ground that didn't love her, tries to save the panic in her gut that is entirely the fault of the state of Indiana and the lay of its flat, flat land, to which she had never asked to be brought" (Kahf 17). Hence, it seems appropriate to say that some places and areas, whether natural or humanly constructed, are presented as sharing similar features of hegemony and showing the same indifference towards Khadra's existence:

> She passes over the Whitewater River, bracing herself. Here comes the unbearable flatness of central Indiana. She has the feeling that the world's been left behind her somewhere, in the final stretches of Pennsylvania, maybe, where the land had comforting curves. Out here there seems nothing for the eye to see. Strip mall, cornfield, small town main street… soybean field… *All blending into one flat sameness.* There are silver silos and pole barns, tufts of goldthread on the meridian, and the blue day beginning to pour into the dark sky. But it is not mine, she thinks, this blue and gold Indiana morning. None of it is for me. Between the flat land and the broad sky,

> she feels ground down to the grain, erased. She feels as if, were she to scream in this place, some Indiana mute button would be on, and no one would hear. (Kahf 1–2, emphasis added)

Streets, roads and highways are central to Kahf's use of place and environment to convey negative experiences the protagonist undergoes. It is evident on many occasions in the novel that nature has played the role of the enemy, in collusion with mainstream America, showing hostile attitudes towards Arab Americans; therefore, it is associated with sadness, fear, loneliness, grief, and even death. While Khadra is driving on the highway to Indiana, panic sometimes urges her to scream because this road, which she calls the "evil road to Simmonsville" (Kahf 414), is where her friend, Zuhura, a dark-skinned Kenyan Muslim woman, was raped and murdered, leaving Khadra with irreversible panic and everlasting anxiety. Thus, the narrator informs us that some places in diaspora form a threat upon Arab Americans in general and upon immigrant females in particular, especially after linking these places to the dark side of relations with others. Put in another way, this particular road and the ditch where Zuhura's body was left sends warning signs to the protagonist to tell her that she is an intruder, that is, an immigrant not welcomed in the US community. Furthermore, the crime that took place on the road to Simmonsville reflects the fact that women are always the most vulnerable in conditions of displacement and the most susceptible to discrimination—especially women of another race and ethnicity. One could, perhaps, say that all the components found along the road, including people, are imbued with the politics of exclusion and discrimination due to cultural or gender difference. When Khadra sees the scary gazes of people on the old National Road, "she feels them [men] screw their eyes at her as she drives past" (Kahf 3). Highway signs, such as the one that says "The People of Indiana Welcome You," are utilised by the narrator to display a deceptive environment that is ready to kill, as revealed by Khadra's fears. Such an environment has contributed to stripping off feelings of intimacy towards the host land, leaving the diasporic figures realise that they are literally "erased" (Kahf 2), as Kahf informs us, and that none of this place, this nature, and this America belongs to them.

This, indeed, shows how nature and elements of the environment can work as an antagonist that refuses the existence of the protagonist and, with its repulsive force, renders her detached, lost, and placed on the margins. As Majaj points out, Arabs and Muslims are placed in an ambiguous location within the American context

("Arab-American Ethnicity" 320), rendered invisible on the margins of nations. To some extent, margins can also be considered indicators of place. They can be construed as places for banishment, leading diasporic subjects towards estrangement within a certain community. Thus, through their connection with the sociocultural and political atmosphere, nature and places can be complicit in causing the tension experienced by diasporic subjects, as a result of conflicts between countries and cultures. Accordingly, the issue of belonging is interrogated through questions, like "[m]aybe we don't belong here" (Kahf 97).

Nature as Safe Haven for All

At this point, it becomes opportune to shift towards the positive images through which Kahf introduces nature as a place that fills the protagonist with tranquility, enabling Khadra to find answers to her confusion and achieve stability. The author shows that Khadra's retreat to Syria is an attempt to achieve inner stability by consolidating her attachment to places in the homeland. In Syria she encounters a kind of environment and nature that is totally different from what she has known and experienced in Indianapolis. As the novel proceeds, nature is presented through bright images, offering a place for development and reconciliation with the world.

At this stage, trees, plants, and flowers become central to the narrative as much as streets, highways, buildings, and signs were earlier, but with different associations. Through repeated portrayals, the green environment comes to acquire optimistic connotations, perhaps because such environment has a positive effect on the psychological state of humans in general—that is why so many people visit natural areas to relax and ease feelings of tension (Sadouni and Abu Amrieh 13). In this sense, Kahf utilises nature to be Khadra's savior who helps her release both her thoughts and will from the spiritual, psychological, mental, and even physical restraints that were imposed on her by conflicting Western and Eastern ideologies. It is in delightful scenes of nature that Khadra finds refuge and escapes her hyphenated state: "in a grove of old-world cherry trees" she "reaches a key moment in her self-development or personal journey" (Bujupaj 19). When breakdown and schizophrenia threaten her, especially after an abortion and consequent divorce leave her abandoned by everyone, surrounded by pressures that question her identity both as Arab Muslim and American, the natural areas in Syria offer her a safe haven and a place where she can retrieve her inner peace and stability.

Kahf introduces the theme of human–nature blending through the most significant scene in the novel, which takes place in Ghuta orchard, a wide green area located on the boarders of Damascus. A mixture of nature components and people of different backgrounds are integrated into a single scene:

> "To the Ghuta, before they cut down the last grove, hurry!" Auntie Hayat and Téta said. The peaches had bloomed and ripened and gone. White cherry flowers in long, pendulous corymbs had blossomed on the dark naked wood, light against dark, like a pale girl in a black man's arms. Fallen petals carpeted the orchards and had melted into the earth and now the cherries, the cherries were in their prime… In a Ghuta orchard, Khadra and Téta and Hayat and the poet picnicked among other clusters of picnickers. The sky was the blinding turquoise blue typical of Syrian days… (Kahf 308)

In this excerpt, where Khadra and her aunt, Téta, along with Téta's Christian and Jewish friends, Hayat and Iman, and Khadra's mentor, the poet, go on a picnic to the grove of cherry trees, Kahf "blends the natural world with a blending of different races or skin colours in the social world, making a statement about the beauty of mixing ethnic differences," as Bujupaj states (19–20). To some extent, nature is introduced as the saviour who guides Khadra to what Majaj would describe as a modern emphasis on celebrating individuality and cultural diversity ("Arab-American Ethnicity" 20). In addition, the depiction of different images of the natural environment, such as trees, plants, and flowers, along with the juxtaposition of opposites, such as dark/light, pale/black, and girl/man, all coexisting in one place that is "nature," shows how the human world could also be unified, divested of its conflictual and hegemonic relationships. All people, all religions and all cultures can be connected, just like the layers of nature that should not be trapped into the pressure of social, cultural, racial, ethnic, or gender-based discrimination. This argument is also in line with the perspective evolving from ecofeminist theory. Borrowing Carolyn Merchant's words, ecofeminist thinkers call for an egalitarian society that is devoid of a dominant group (193–221). Nature, here, becomes an important agent that leads the protagonist to grasp good knowledge and learn that difference in viewpoints, ethnicities, and dogmas should not be used as pretext for conflicts or exclusion.

The influence of natural areas continues as Khadra enjoys the positive feelings nature gives: "Khadra ran and picked cherries, meandering through the colonnade of trees, reaching up through the dappled play of leaf and light and shadow. And the trees bent their fruited branches low for her" (Kahf 308). As Bouchra Sadouni and Yousef Abu Amrieh stress, trees are present as an archetype in literary texts, ranging from the earliest legends and mythologies till contemporary stories, and have always carried layers of cultural and religious symbolism (2). This whole scene of tree branches bending low for Khadra to pick from, as Bujupaj notes, echoes Quranic verses that describe paradise where tree branches bend for believers to pick ripe fruits from them (20). I argue that the reason Kahf presents nature as a simulation of the Garden of Eden is to reinforce nature's role as a greater primordial force that provides the protagonist with tranquility and peace to enable her release from all tension and think well. As the scene of the orchard continues, the narrator makes nature an active agent paving the way for a turning-point in Khadra's character development. In the following scene, the focal point transfers from the narrator to nature and, using Samaa Abdurraqib description (63), nature speaks a message from God through which the protagonist ends her distraction:

> Khadra paused, standing there in the fading rays with her palms spread, her hands spiralled upward to the sky like question marks. She was in a position like the first stand of prayer. A yellow butterfly flittered by. The scarf was slipping off. She shrugged. The chiffon fell across her shoulders. She remembered when she'd taken her last swim in the Fallen Timbers pool as a girl. She closed her eyes and let the sun shine rough the thin skin of her eyelids, warm her body to the very core of her. She opened her eyes, and she knew deep in the place of *yaqin* that this was all right, a blessing on her shoulders. *Alhamdu, alhamdulilah*. The sunlight on her head was a gift from God. (Kahf 309)

This passage shows how nature has contributed to generating feelings of intimacy towards her homeland and towards her identity as Arab Muslim woman that overwhelm Khadra. At the same time, trees evoke feelings of nostalgia towards some places in the US from where she had good memories such as Fallen Timbers. Going back in time to Khadra's childhood, the reader would obviously see that she

also experienced positive encounters with natural areas in America. The imagery of trees in Indianapolis equally echoes the connotations of the Garden of Eden implied through the tree imagery in Damascus. The protagonist recalls that in Square One, "there was a willow tree on the lawn, which her mother called 'the Shy Tree,' its Arabic name… The lawn was watered by wonderful spigots that made a musical sound as they inched around… Then up swept an arc of water going back to the beginning…" (Kahf 8). And when Khadra asks her mother, "Mama, what's heaven?", her mother replies that "Heaven is where you have all your heart desires" (Kahf 9). Khadra finds solace in the fact that heaven necessarily exists in the US as well. Such encounters with nature in different geographical locations are of paramount importance since they reveal that nature bestows spiritual value on the connections between places and this value is one of the key concepts in Kahf's novel. One would also argue that Kahf's narrator correlates, through this technique, conflictual places, and tries to bring them closer together through proving similarities existing among discordant poles.

One more important detail in the excerpt above is the slipping scarf and the entering sunlight. In fact, the veil is ambiguous in this scene. It has been argued that the scarf is seen as a stigmatising device since it is an ethnic dress, thus, a representative of a nation that is considered an Other from the perspective of the west (Abdurraqib 63–64). In this scene, however, the veil has assumed a new meaning. The fact that Khadra lets her scarf slip off her head without fixing it, letting the sunlight touch her head and skin, implies that preserving the markers of her Arab identity does not necessarily mean that she should repel the components of her American identity. The interference of nature results in enabling Khadra to learn how to make balance between her two identities, the American and the Syrian, by embracing the foreign and keeping a firm grip on her Arab Muslim heritage. America is no more a strange land. Khadra does not feel dislocated, but rather reconciled with living in a multicultural world.

Conclusion

Khadra finds a safe haven among trees and nature, which provide her with a sensation of comfort and confidence after her struggles with the feeling that she does not fit anywhere. Acquaintance with nature helps the protagonist set her ego free and understand that the coexistence of political and religious diversities is possible.

The effect of nature, places, and environment brings reconciliation and makes her understand the fact that multiculturalism does not lead to crossroads (Bose 90). This also helps Khadra recognise that one can extract the beauty and inner peace from the heart of a chaotic and violent reality. Nature has been, accordingly, an active factor that stood side by side with the protagonist throughout the process of self-discovery and the development of her personality. Indeed, embarking on a sojourn in nature offers "a healing experience" (Bujupaj 20) through which Kahf's protagonist finds the way to reconcile with herself and the world, to blend differences, find inner-balance, and cherish herself.

Through the use of nature, places, and environment, Kahf provides (in)direct commentary on the wavering location of Arab Americans in repellent contexts, on the one hand, and offers her readers—Americans and Arab Americans—her solution, on the other. The novel, thus, adopts a voice of dual critique of forms of oppression that operate, simultaneously, in both mainstream America and the Arab American community. This dual critique, as Bujupaj insists, constitutes "the balance of Kahf's work" (18). In doing this, Kahf does not offer a voice of rebellion against any of her communities. Instead, she advocates celebrating and embracing coexistence among both communities—a viable alternative for the protagonist to her struggles with pressures that come from mainstream American society or from the traditions of her Arab community.

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The Abject Body of History

Fleshing Trauma in Nadine Gordimer's "Tape Measure"

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Abstract: Across the disciplines and ages, the human body has been approached as complex, political, and mysterious. Caught in an intricate socio-cultural fabric, it acquires and projects multiple patterns of symbolism, seized by literature to convey deep realities and perplexing themes. The body has become to be recognised as an eloquent metaphor for postcolonial writers, effectively staging the resistance to colonial practices and discourse. It is from the insides of such a body that the strange voice of a worm emerges and recounts its memories in Nadine Gordimer's short story, "Tape Measure," from Beethoven Was One-Sixteenth Black and Other Stories *(2007). Drawing on the insights of trauma studies, this paper focuses on the body as a metaphor to show how its use addresses the problematics of memory reconstruction and its limitations in the South African context. The unnatural voice of the worm articulates South African history as an abject "body" marked by "filthy" crimes, proposing the legacy of racism as an "excremental" practice that stains South African reality. The analogy finds its purchase in Julia Kristeva's theorisation of the "abject" as "lack of cleanliness" and "monstrous"; history, thus, emerges as dark and deformed, and memories are hard to "expel."*

"The body itself has also been the literal 'text' on which colonisation has written some of its most graphic and scrutable messages."
(Aschcroft et al., The Post-Colonial Studies Reader 321)

"My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning ... The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly."
(Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks)

Introduction

Post-apartheid South Africa has been shaping its national identity and reconfiguring its multiple "races" in an environment that is marked by massive loss, trauma, and disorientation. By the 1990s, apartheid was over, the African National Congress won the elections under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) embarked on a painful cruise for truth that has later proved difficult and sometimes impossible. Coming to terms with the past is a laborious enterprise, fraught with disillusionments and disappointments about ever being able to emerge cleansed, whole and healed as a nation. Telling stories and giving voice to traumatic memories were at the heart of assembling the pieces, in order to recover individual and collective identity, to inscribe difference, and to redeem the silenced and the suppressed. However, the TRC's work yielded "a primarily descriptive rendition of the past, uneven in its discernment of detail and indifferent to the complexities of social causation" (Graham 32).

Within this context, Nobel prize winner Nadine Gordimer stresses the "writer's essential gesture" when she states that "the creative act is not pure. History evidences it. Ideology demands it. Society exacts it" (*The Essential Gesture* 3). She, thus, advocates the artists' commitment to the social and political demands of their age. Her diverse writings and stylistic experimentations celebrate the imaginative freedom and the unquestionable power of the word to engage with the unspeakable and the horrific. The unlimited potential of textuality provides the ground to examine the past, to translate the present, and to address the thorny issues of the future. According to Gordimer, there is no escape from digging up the truth, no matter

how hard and painful it might be. Using different modes and genres, she accurately surveys her nation's ordeals through the apartheid and post-apartheid eras to present the reader with unique narratives that weave imaginative style and technique with an eye for detail, capturing experiences and transferring their intensity. For her "it is a matter of finding the approach that will release the most from the subject. The form is dictated by the subject ... to make the identification for the reader with what is being written about and with the people in the work" (Schwartz 78). And the subject of post-apartheid reality, indeed, posits challenges in reporting the past, as fictional storytelling intertwines with actual testimonies in the course of the work of the TRC. Gordimer's post-apartheid works mark the transition in South African literature from raising the alarm about apartheid to treating its lingering effects and exposing its horrors through truth-telling.

However, as Shane Graham asserts, post-apartheid literature "exhibits a collective sense of loss, mourning, and elegy, as well as a sense of disorientation amid rapid changes in the physical and social landscape. These changes necessitate new forms of literal and figurative 'mapping' of space, place, and memory ... Implicit in this idea is the assumption of complex interconnections between the body, memory, and social space" (1–2). The difficulty proceeds from the impossible erasure of the racial legacy with the inevitable distorted and contested nature of its verbal articulation. Correspondingly, in Gordimer's "Tape Measure" (2007), this process takes unusual routes, following writers that strive for techniques that would translate the complexity and impossibility of mourning and reconciliation, confessing in part to the barred access to the past in pure storytelling. Faced with a reality marked by historical complexities, social and economic contradictions, and a scale of damage beyond horrendous, Gordimer manipulates an unnatural mode of narration to approach the South African problem. Reading "Tape Measure," one gets the impression that there is a clear statement by the writer that a conventional mode of story-telling, with a straightforward narrative expression of the South African reality, would not accurately reflect its intricacies and ramifications. In fact, in an extreme narrative move, Gordimer assigns the task of story-telling to a worm that inhabits a human body. The worm speaks from inside the intestines, accompanied by the digested food in its weird journey out. While talking animals are not unconventional in narratives and genres across the ages, a first-person-narrating worm, coupled with the intestines as the setting, constitute an atypical and disturbing narrative situation and composition. The unnatural voice invites readers to drop

mimetic approaches and stretch their interpretive faculties, to reflect on the possible allegorical function of speaking from the insides of a body, presented as abject, stained by the deep-seated anxieties and the buried brutality of apartheid. The body hosts the abject worm as it tells its story, in the same way a disfigured South Africa hosts the countless stories of abuse.

Accordingly, this paper focuses on the body politic, to show how the use of the body as a metaphor addresses the problematics of memory reconstruction and its limitations, as part of the national healing process. In the words of Desmond Tutu, exposing the past is an attempt against "collective amnesia." Ingeniously, Gordimer draws on the great potential of the body to problematise history, suffering and the complexity of recovering the past. The body as the main locus of experience under the apartheid regime—imprisonment, torture, and indentured labour—finds the articulation of the traumatic in the short story through a voice that emerges from the inside. Foregrounded as the primary site of history on which suffering is inscribed, the body must be urgently engaged with. The idea of the abject slowly takes shape in the short story, pointing to the "filthy" crimes suggested by the excrements that ironically repel the worm. The analogy finds its purchase in Julia Kristeva's theorisation of the "abject" as "lack of cleanliness"; history, thus, emerges as dark and deformed, and memories are hard to "expel." The focus will be on how the unnatural narrative voice opens up new paths in the portraying of traumatic experience, where its actual verbal manifestation in the context of the TRC has consensually failed, somehow. In fact, "the TRC's ambit was too narrow, too constrained by the Commission's political mandate, and it ignored and downplayed whole categories of human rights violations for the good of national stability and reconciliation" (Graham 32). The different levels of symbolism the body displays will be revealed as we follow the worm in its journey through the intestines. The present argument follows Graham's postulate that post-apartheid artistic and cultural productions prevent collective memories from becoming "ossified ... because they become so familiar" (4); hence the accent on the defamiliarising narrating figure of the worm in this paper.

Citing the example of *The Story I am about to Tell* (1997) as a prominent post-apartheid cultural production, Graham explains how this play in its form and unfolding enacts the "calcification of memory" occasioned by the TRC proceedings. From another perspective, engaging with the question, "how does one map the intimate networks of memory, identity, body time, space, and place?", Antji Knog's *Country*

of my Skull (1998), Graham argues, condemns the marginalisation of black victims' stories in favour of a disconcerting interest in the white perpetrators' accounts. Graham also notes that "Knog's memoir ... refuses an easy closure through artificial mourning" (49). Within the same context and of special correspondence with the focus of this paper, Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Hillbrow* (2001) adopts second-person narration which establishes a direct communication channel with the reader, while simultaneously allowing "the 'you' to continually shift and expand to include an ever-larger webs of relations" (Graham 114). Strange narration, thus, comes as an alternative to denounce "the Christian doctrine of confession and forgiveness" (101), denying closure to a complex collective narrative.

Urgent Demands, Twisted Means: It Speaks through the Body

South African history has been the theatre of numerous upheavals; a palimpsest of encounters between different ethnicities, each leaving a lasting mark on people, the land, and the individual. One particular word that automatically evokes South Africa with a shameful tone is apartheid. Apartheid in Afrikaans means "separateness and aparthood" (Aschcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies* 14). The term literally denotes physical separation between blacks and whites in space through segregated public spaces and facilities, townships, and cities. Through a series of laws initiated by the white Nationalist government in the 1940s, it remained the official policy that regulated the life of natives up until its dismantling in the 1990s. Shockingly, black South Africans were subject to multiple atrocities and injustices. These could be categorised depending on the nature of damage. Thus, we can speak of psychological, physical, social and/or cultural harm, among other aspects. The one that is most akin to the human being and of most outrageous nature is physical harm. The South African black body was the direct recipient of apartheid injustice in the form of brutal violence, sexual offence, slavery, indentured labour, displacement, and starvation. Consequently, engaging with the body is crucial for its rehabilitation. In his *The Location of Culture* (1997), Homi Bhabha notes that the skin "is the prime signifier of the body" (82), and in the case of black South Africans, it was perceived as an indicator of an inferior self; as a body to subjugate, mutilate, and enslave.

Accordingly, postcolonial literature offers pictures that depict the postcolonial body through multiple lenses to record the painful experiences and to identify

and denounce the different webs the body was caught in. Accurately, theorists on their turn insist on the postcolonial body as a site of discursive intervention as it was (1) negatively constructed in discourse and (2) brutally treated in reality. Represented in the most derogatory terms, the "savage" and "primitive" body, just like the land, invited colonisation, exploitation, civilising, and taming. It follows that "bodily presence and awareness in one sense or another is one of the features which is central to post-colonial rejections of the Eurocentric and logocentric domination'" (Aschcroft et al., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* 321). On top of being "otherly" as non-European, the South African black body was a source of anxiety as threatening. This was manifest in the Immorality Act (1950) which prohibited white-black marriage or sexual intercourse, a clear statement of fear from miscegenation and an attempt to preserve the purity of "race." In line with Deepika Bahri's interest in the postcolonial body, the short story, thus, "claims biology as a valid—indeed a crucial—area of interest for critical postcolonial studies in order to direct attention to the question of life lived in the psyche and the flesh after empire" (viii). What follows will take us through an improbable narrative experience that allegorises a nation's past through engaging with the body politic.

"All I can do is trace back along my length how I began and lived and what has happened to me. My beginning is ingestion…" (Gordimer, "TM" 19), thus spoke the intestinal tapeworm inaugurating the short story and its journey of being expelled from its "home." The voice immediately strikes the reader as a narrative deviation that departs from both conventional storytelling and conventional narrative reception. The reader is prevented from understanding the narrative in accordance with familiar parameters, as the technique occasions a break with a cognitively retrievable experience, following mimetic norms. A mimetic recuperation of a narrative, according to Monika Fludernik, resorts to the cognitive frames and scripts that shape our bodily existence in the world (121). Thus, Gordimer's worm narrator departs from the natural conception of a speaking voice that can only be a human voice. Interestingly, the worm announces: "Once I'd been ingested I knew what to do where I found myself, I gained consciousness ... and began to grow myself" ("TM" 19, emphasis added). Indeed, actual speech situations can only emanate from a human consciousness; hence, the worm seems to "reassure" the reader that it has gained consciousness and knowledge, with clear analytical skills as it processes its new environment. The worm seems to share the faculties of a human consciousness,

as it is endowed with memories and perceptions, conveying an elaborate account of an entity undergoing a traumatic experience.

Given the disturbing effect of unnatural narratives for the reader, it is clear that these techniques obviously convey more than mere experimentation and play. It seems that post-apartheid reality resists understanding and articulation in a conventional narrative that unfolds according to known logic and parameters. The reader is, thus, being reminded that natural human story-telling within the context of the TRC has failed the victims and their attempts at voicing horror. In post-apartheid South Africa, the "rediscovery of the ordinary" (Ndebele 160) was a journey into so-far concealed and distorted realms: a long history of social and economic discrimination practically impossible to redress, a multitude of suppressed narratives that uncover the ugliness of a violent past, and a national identity to reconceive and reconstruct. Johannesburg and its suburbs, the townships, and the Bantustans emerged as sites of irreconcilable realities and deeply rooted paradoxes. On the "black side," diseases, poverty, violence, and hatred were gnawing at society, while the government, international assistance and personal endeavours were at loss, faced with such a complex task. The so-long privileged whites had to concede power and confront the legacy of injustice perpetrated by their "race" over generations. In order to deal with the past, the TRC set the nation on trial to recognise the legacy of violence, using the cathartic power of public testimony to heal trauma. However, the competing versions of truth, the outburst of the psychological manifestations of trauma, and the heavy yet unfulfilled demands of justice, made the work of the TRC contentious. The aspirations of establishing a "democratic and open society" and committing to "improve the quality of the life of all citizens" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, preamble) have remained largely chimerical. From another perspective, rather than "closing the book" of the past, "the TRC helped make possible the continual writing and rewriting of that book" (Graham 16).

Correspondingly, an alternative voicing of history is demanded, and there is no delay in the short story in establishing the allegory of South African black suffering: "NO-ONE of any kind or shape or species can begin to imagine what it's like for me being swirled and twisted around all manner of filthy objects in a horrible current" ("TM" 19). Automatically, an informed reader retrieves images of South African natives being displaced, subject to all kinds of suffering. The symbolism of the voice speaking from the guts is also very powerful, as the guts represent a canonical metaphor for authenticity, truthfulness, and intense emotions. Thus, it both speaks for

and encapsulates the traumatic past, suggesting that the only way to cure is by exorcising the demons. Interestingly, the Greek "trauma" originally refers to an injury inflicted on a body (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 3), enhancing the appreciation of Gordimer's manipulation of the voice that emerges from inside a body.

Speaking of voice, Caruth asserts the impossibility of representing trauma by a direct and linear rendering (*Trauma* 144). This is precisely the significance of the worm as the unnatural narrative voice. Processing the worm's discourse in its "self" depiction, one sees the unmistakable projection of a hidden entity that lurks inside an individual and that has "many kinds of nourishment to feed on, silently, unknown, and unobserved" ("TM" 19). In an analogous way, traumatic memories inhabit the collective as well as the individual psyche, and "grow to take up a lot of space" inside ("TM" 20), affecting psychological and mental health. The worm's "host" is unaware of the existence of this parasite that grows comfortably inside; equally, memories of traumatic past events do not fade with time, and the illusion of healed wounds hides a more terrible reality for the victims of harm. The worm/trauma grows bigger, and "feeds" on the "host's" insecurities, on long inflicted injustice and on the internalised inferiority that cripples any healing.

It is undeniable that the crimes of the white government under the apartheid regime cannot be easily eradicated. They constitute a monster that haunts the collective and individual consciousness. Suppressed and silenced, it grows beyond control. The worm's endeavours to "speak" and "tell" engage us into a listening and responding typical of the therapeutic practice. This is also reminiscent of the process undertaken by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that is, public hearings of the so long ignored and silenced stories of the victims. These stories are "parasites" that inhabit the social body; they have to be expelled for the body to survive and gain integrity. Untold and unresolved, the past turns into "suffocating putrefaction and unbearable effusions" ("TM" 21); "a putrid torrent" ("TM" 22) that poisons life and inhibits progress and proper acts of mourning.

Significantly, the worm has "the knowledge how to grow but not how to die" ("TM" 22). Likewise, traumatic memories do not evaporate just by the fact of being "driven out" or "ejected." If not appropriately handled/cured, they leave their "eggs" and "the whole process shall begin over again. Come to life" ("TM" 22). This is in line with Elizabeth Stanley's conclusions about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in her article: the healing power of the truth has been compromised by "the governmental reticence to provide reparations, the judicial

disregard to pursue prosecutions, and the dismissal of responsibility for apartheid at a wider social level" (525). This large-scale disillusionment severely undermines opportunities for reconciliation and change, and memories transform into "many kinds of rottenness" ("TM" 21).

Mirroring the resurgence of traumatic memories, the worm is suddenly interpellated by the debris that seems to stifle its existence ("TM" 21). The bitter flow of past experiences submerges being and its "stinking filth" confronts the masses with the "unspeakable." Thus, surrendering first-person narration to a despicable entity can only transmit the accepted idea in trauma theory that "no words yet capture sufficiently the existential intensity and multiple levels of meaning of this particular experience with the abyss" (Lindy and Wilson 691). From the worm as representing and living in "filth," the South African "body" emerges as mutilated, and its open wounds are rotten for lack of proper treatment. The very nature of the worm as a disgusting parasite, the evocation of excrements and "petrifaction" all coalesce to support the "abject" body as the metaphor that "captures trauma's biological sensorimotor impact," acting as a "cognitive and psychological organiser" to comprehend traumatic experience (Lindy and Wilson 691). Abjection for the reader occurs as memory retrieval takes up the very mimetic journey of "excrements" in their way out of the human body. The unfamiliar voice occurs within what is most intimate to the reader. Loathing for the bodily is, thus, percolated to the abject history with its load of "nauseating" brutality and "dirt."

Hence, using the worm as the enunciating instance grounds the discussion of history in the "flesh and blood"; in the immediately human. It symbolically obliterates the distance occasioned by any ethnic or "racial" belonging, as well as by an immaterial or "objective" processing of history. The advantage of reading with the lens of the abject is that its "horror" contaminates the tendency to sanitise a nation's history. The past acquires an embodied presence and bears the traces of its very violent dynamics. Accordingly, the worm-narrator-excrement acts out both dimensions of historiography: (1) that unreported or silenced stories have to be acknowledged and expelled from the individual and collective mind and (2) that the tendency to produce tempered and cleansed accounts has to be resisted, giving full manifestation of the intolerable and the unattractive. As such, the text does not describe, it rather incarnates the process and the phenomenology of history. Hence, Gordimer's style is an integral part of her argument. The process of healing requires patience and coexistence with the unbearable. Reconciliation can be attempted at, but with

the nation's recognition of the "worm" and "filth" inside. The story's discourse, thus, aims "to articulate the abject in a way that does not repress it," or purify it (Kristeva 37); rather, to bear it and bear with it.

The Body Politic and the Politics of Space Intertwined

Inseparable from the phenomenology of the worm within the body is the fact of the intestines themselves as space. The description shifts focus from the worm itself and its recollections to stress its movement, foregrounding the intestines as a site and location, with multiple "check points" and stations. Indeed, Gordimer is famed for creating twisted narrative constructions and for playing with metaphors that acquire fragmented, multiple, and even paradoxical layers of meaning. Such is the case of the worm, for as we shall see, the allegory acquires a rhizomatic nature and the worm's journey becomes an allegory of black South Africans' forced removal over time. As the worm is painfully expelled and forcibly moved through the intestines, it gradually experiences a disintegration of the self through its alienation from its natural habitat and "moist-padded soft home" ("TM" 22). The worm is animated by discontent and nostalgia for its home. In the same fashion, the dialectic of place and displacement inhabits postcolonial writing in an obsessive attempt to recover a sense of home and together with it, a sense of self, severely damaged by dislocation. The worm is "driven out mercilessly, hatefully" ("TM" 22), and it experiences the journey as an oppressive removal that enacts the different forms of displacement and relocation natives suffered from. In fact, as dictated by the Group Areas Act (1950), large proportions of black South Africans were restricted in designated homelands known as Bantustans. In addition, over generations thousands were displaced to work in mines or farms, not to mention those who "willingly" changed location to escape persecution and enslavement, abandoning their homes and lands, and hence, their identity and cultural load. In the same fashion, the worm deplores the loss of its "warm and smooth-walled, rosy dark" ("TM" 20) home, blacks found themselves confined to the least productive lands, leaving behind the diamond mines and their agriculturally rich lands. They were dispossessed of their belongings, kinship, and ultimately their identity. Crucially,

> a sense of place may be embedded in cultural history, in legend and language, without becoming a concept of contention and struggle

> until the profound discursive interference of colonialism. Such intervention may disrupt a sense of place in several ways: by imposing a feeling of displacement in those who have moved to the colonies; by physic ally alienating large populations of colonised peoples through forced migration, slavery or indenture; by disturbing the representation of place in the colony by imposing the colonial language. (Aschcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies* 161)

The spatial removal is inevitably a removal from the past, from a collective symbolic territory, replete with memories of incidents, events, happy and sad, accumulated through generations. Space and history are inextricably linked, and they are definite markers of collective and individual identity. Alienating whole tribes from their lands and to their minds literally from their ancestors amputates their past, their anchorage and sense of who they are. Just like the removed natives, the worm is disoriented, and we can easily place these words in the mouth of a displaced self: "how long will this chaos last and where am I going? Helpless" ("TM" 19). In their previous existence, natives were relatively safe, content, and unharmed. The encounter with the white man was disastrous. Well before apartheid became an official policy, several acts had already controlled natives' movement and access to land. But with apartheid, their existence was harshly monitored. The Population Registration Act (1950), for instance, classified citizens along "racial" lines in a hierarchy that defined privileges and denied rights; the Mixed Amenities Act (1953) codified racial segregation in public facilities; and the Group Areas Act (1950) divided towns and suburbs into white and black territories. The richest lands were confiscated; the diamond mines made the fortune and glory of the European man. Thus, every aspect of society was subject to segregation, and injustice was institutionalised. A huge gap separated blacks and whites, and though they were living in close proximity in space, they were worlds apart in terms of rights and living conditions. Dislocation is, thus, "a feature of all invaded colonies where indigenous or original cultures are, if not annihilated, often literally dislocated, i.e. moved off what was their territory. At best, they are metaphorically dislocated, placed into a hierarchy that sets their culture aside and ignores its institutions and values" (Aschcroft et al., *Postcolonial Studies* 66).

One particular statement by Desmond Tutu addresses this particular ugly aspect of the encounter with the white man; it says "when the missionaries came to Africa

they had the bible and we had the land. They said 'let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the bible and they had the land" (qtd. in Gish 101). This reveals that indigenous people, on the whole, may not develop immediate feelings of hostility. Rather, several accounts by a number of early explorers or settlers point to the harmless nature of the indigenous populations, which unexpectedly for them caused their own peril. Drawing the contours of a perfect allegory for suffering, by the end of its journey, the worm keeps wondering why would not there be "a just and fair coexistence" with "both [the worm and the host] satisfied," "a contented, shared life" ("TM" 21).

To further convey its distress as it realises it is under aggression by medicines targeting it, it laments:

> O How I have come to know now! How I have come to know!
>
> For what has just happened to me—I can only relive again, and again, in all horror, as if it keeps recurring all along me. First there was that period, quite short, when no nourishment or liquid came down at all. My host must have been abstaining.
>
> Then—
>
> The assault of a terrible flood, bitter burning, hipping, and pursuing all down and around into a pitch-black narrow passage filled with stinking filth ...
>
> My host. So he knew. This's how he planned to get rid of me. Why? What for? This's how he respected our coexistence ... It ends up, him driving me out mercilessly, hatefully, with every kind of ordure. Deadly. ("TM" 21–22)

It is indeed perplexing for black South Africans to be invaded, robbed, physically, and mentally abused, in their own lands, while peaceful coexistence could have been envisaged. It is such a perplexity that Gordimer translates through the unnatural voice, faced with the violence and greed of the coloniser. The deviating mode of story-telling is a wake-up call to raise the reader's awareness about the atrocities, the absurdity of the "race" classification, and the injustice through generations, passed on like a legacy. Ultimately, the past morphs into a burden that has to be discharged of, tracing the natives' frustrations and ordeals in their struggle for survival, uprooted and displaced. The intricacies of memory and truth, mourning

and reconciliation, trauma and healing, are thus entangled in spaces as sites of history, cruelty, and injustice. The loss of space is deeply a personal and intimate loss, the reparation of which "has been addressed only in the most nominal and superficial way by the architects of land reform" (Graham 141), which amplifies the frustration with the work of the TRC.

The metaphor achieves completion by the end of the journey, as the worm encounters "more and many, many kinds of rottenness, objects, sections of which [it] sense[s] from [its] own completeness must be dismembered from organic wholes that one such as [itself]" ("TM" 21). In the last phase of its expulsion, the worm comes to realise that its ordeal and displacement are collective experience, in which other "dismembered" "selves" were also brutalised. Mutilated, the South African black subject is exiled and lost. Time and space have to be constantly redefined, as the individual and the communities are losing anchorage and are estranged from their homes.

Conclusion

Across the disciplines and ages, the human body has been approached as complex, political, and mysterious. Far from being reduced to a mere biological entity, the body is caught in an intricate socio-cultural fabric. It acquires and projects multiple patterns of symbolism, seized by literature to convey deep realities and perplexing themes. "Given the fraught history of the role of the biological sciences in histories of racism" (Bahri 142), postcolonial literature recaptures the body discursively, in order to inscribe its difference and worth away from any hierarchy. This diverse and vindictive "body" of literature has established a distinctive type of writing that challenges discursive traditions, the canon, and the dominant ideas, as the major strategy of resistance and revolt against a history of subordination. Postcolonial writers seize upon the verb and ingenious metaphors to allegorise the perils of nations and individuals. Adopting unnatural narration as a strategy in her short story, "Tape Measure," Gordimer propels the body to the foreground in a striking way, to reconceptualise history and memory, inscribing traumatic experience in its physical and immediate ground.

In the choice of a worm that inhabits a human body as the first-person narrator, the short story enacts an alternative voicing of history and a lucid representation of South Africa as a diseased body, following Salman Rushdie's statement that, "if history creates complexities, let us not try to simplify them" (65). The choice

of an invisible worm as the speaking voice rejoins Caruth's claim that "trauma is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" (*Unclaimed Experience* 4). Gordimer laid the scars of her nation wide open for the external world to see. Fruitfully, it was as a consequence of an untenable state of emergency and pressure from the international community that apartheid was finally dismantled in 1994 and the nation moved to a new era. Writing in the post-apartheid era, Gordimer is aware that the task is complicated and new writing themes emerge. It is mandatory for the nation to face its past and strive to make amends both at the individual and collective level. To abolish the laws and policies that implemented apartheid neither means its end nor the emergence of an ideal society free from racism, segregation and violence. The reality is far more complex and painful to be reduced to a "truth = reconciliation" equation. It appears to exceed the pattern of tell, forgive, and forget. As such, Gordimer's abject aesthetics of dismemberment and excrements emerge as suggestive symbols of the intricate process of history writing, where nothing is complete, stable or finished. In the image of the worm, history is formless and plural, demonstrating how the stylistic incarnates the thematic, allowing the body to unfold as a hermeneutic terrain, being the prime historical signifier. The short story ultimately "teach[es] us to be suspicious of fixed, immutable narratives of historical truth, and to query the motives and interests of those who most insistently proffer their narratives" (Graham 5).

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Radical Continuities

Blake and Hamann in the Transnational Enlightenment

Review of Alexander Regier, *Exorbitant Enlightenment: Blake, Hamann, and Anglo-German Constellations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

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According to the introduction to this fascinating new study, *Exorbitant Enlightenment* is "a book about the power of multiple comparativisms" (28) and a book of polyglot interests, which allows several comparative methods to run simultaneously in order to reveal new patterns in literary and cultural history. The subtitle is *Blake, Hamann, and Anglo-German Constellations*, but the book has much more to offer than a comparison of two extraordinary figures in the context of two interconnected cultures. A forgotten world opens its gates for the reader, of radical thinkers participating in an international network of intellectual and cultural exchange. Regier's "exorbitants" are outsiders who are still central to many crucial debates of their time. They belong to a polyglot, mainly Anglo-German history of religion, literature, philosophy, and linguistic theory that came to be dominated and domesticated by a monolingual, national literary history from the nineteenth century onwards, obscuring the role of certain institutions and intellectuals together with their impact on British and European culture.

The book starts with a long introduction, followed by eight chapters focusing on interconnected aspects of the radical culture of the Anglo-German Enlightenment. Regier begins with a demonstration of German cultural and linguistic presence

in eighteenth-century Britain. German influence is traced through a series of examples, the most elaborate and interesting of which is Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), a book whose protagonist was originally called Kreutznaer. Regier emphasises the importance of polyglot transnationalism and the apparently natural presence of Germans and their culture in seventeenth-century England and even earlier. He writes about German churches, schools, and printing presses active in London before the 1790s, all more or less integrated into British society, and shows the important roles they played in the culture of the Enlightenment.

The introduction also clarifies Regier's understanding of the crucial concepts of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Instead of the more usual linear, monolingual and dialectical model of historical analysis, he aims to acknowledge the continuities between the two periods. This, in itself, is not entirely new: in recent years we have seen more and more scholars questioning the sharp dividing line between Romanticism and the Enlightenment. What distinguishes Regier's approach is his transnational framework and a willingness to think in non-linear ways, and thus to re-arrange literary history into something surprisingly multi-dimensional. Based on Walter Benjamin's writings, he promotes the idea of an Anglo-German "constellation," that is, he studies a bundle of relations and connections within the field.[1] This approach also defines how the chapters of the book relate to one other: they should not be examined as a simple consecutive pattern but as something like a stellar constellation, in which each individual star is linked to the others in multiple ways.

As the title suggests, the concept of the "exorbitant" is central to the book's overall argument. For Regier, this is a term to describe someone "who exceeds proper limits" (7), and not someone who is an outsider. He maintains that to domesticate such figures as "canonical outsiders" (15), which is common in their respective national traditions, is a mistake. Attempting to understand Blake, Hamann and a number of other writers and artists on their "own exorbitant terms" (16), Regier reads the period from a position that is rather off the beaten path, while he resists the temptation of putting the exorbitants at the centre. He believes that "there is something to be gained when we engage with their excessive ways of thinking as being out of orbit" (18). He insists that we need to take these thinkers seriously instead of accepting the still

1 Another recent study with a transnational focus is *Coleridge and Cosmopolitan Intellectualism, 1794–1804: The Legacy of Göttingen* by Maximiliaan van Woudenberg (Routledge, 2018), which relies on the methodology of *Konstellationsforschung*, or the research of constellations, as put forward by Martin Mulsow.

prevailing interpretation that they are creative but at the same time mad, interesting but also incomprehensible. Regier's approach is fruitful when speaking of individuals like Fuseli and Lavater, institutions like the Moravians, and especially true of William Blake and Johann Georg Hamann, the two emblematic English and German radical thinkers of the time.

Blake and Hamann are in the centre, if there is any, of Regier's study. Referring to the opinion of William Wordsworth on the madness of Blake and G. W. F. Hegel who called Hamann's texts a "tiresome riddle," Regier shows why these two could never fit into the ruling patterns of their age. However, he also demonstrates—and this is probably the most innovative aspect of the book—that they were not individual lights but rather bright stars in a constellation. Regier's introduction and the first two chapters provide the reader with the necessary background to understand their respective cultural roles and the theories crucial to them and to the book in general: multilingualism; the relationship of language, body and thought; the interconnectedness of religion and sexuality, revelation and imagination, poetry and creation.

The first chapter starts with a passage from English critic and historian Leslie Stephen from 1898: "It is a familiar fact that no Englishman read German literature in the eighteenth century. One sufficient reason was that there was no German literature to read ... It would, I imagine, be difficult to find a single direct reference to a German book in the whole English literature of the eighteenth century" (31). Although this is still the basis of most standard accounts of Anglo-German literary relations, Regier demonstrates that Stephen's view does not match the historical facts and suggests that our understanding of the period is severely limited by it. He cites nineteenth-century politics, and the influence of Romanticism on Victorian scholarship as two of the main reasons behind Stephen's historically inherited claim. Regier shares Eric A. Blackall's view that German became a "literary language of infinite richness and subtlety" (33) between 1700 and 1775, and refutes the idea that eighteenth-century German literature was inferior in quality, as promoted by Stephen and others.

To counteract the effects of Stephen's claims, Regier turns to the study of translation and publication of German texts in eighteenth-century Britain. German publishers and booksellers played an important role in British literary and cultural life; German books were on the market. Regier enlists works that were commonly available for English readers in their own language, including such highly popular ones as Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* or Johann Caspar Lavater's famous *Physiognomy*

but also works by Klopstock, Wieland, Bodmer, Bogatzky, Rambach, and more, many of which were also discussed in periodicals. Based on the work of Garold N. Davis and Graham Jefcoate combined with Regier's own research, there were at least 135 volumes translated from German to English in London alone between 1680 and 1790, which demonstrates a considerable demand. Regier identifies two waves of German arrivals in London, proposing that the French Revolution meant a transition, rather than a break, in the influx of immigrants, and shows how significant the growing German-speaking community could become in eighteenth-century London life.

Regier insists that we should read "larger historical changes" in connection with "radical individual authorship," and focuses on the two great radicals, William Blake and Johann Georg Hamann, in order to reveal wider cultural and historical transformations. Regier locates these thinkers in their own cultural context and highlights their vital connections to the Anglo-German religious and literary world. He stresses the importance of religious life: of intellectuals and clergymen, as well as certain religious movements and institutions, most notably the Moravian Church. Each small piece of the puzzle is essential to see the richness of the Anglo-German context from which exorbitant and strange figures like Blake, Hamann, Lavater, and Fuseli emerged.

Regier presents Blake and Hamann as two radical thinkers whose works shatter the neat boundaries between what we think of as the Enlightenment and Romanticism. He offers an extensive comparative reading of their similarities and differences in terms of style, attitude, ideas, politics, and more. One of the most elaborate aspects of Regier's investigation is his focus on their respective language theories, which seem to have remarkable affinities with each other. Both Blake and Hamann believed that language was inherently poetical with its own ontological power, which was also the subject of important scientific debates at the time. Moreover, they were both anti-systematic thinkers rejecting "instrumental reason" (70), which they saw as supporting institutional religion and other ideological formations.

In connection with Hamann's critique of instrumental reason, Regier challenges Isaiah Berlin's view (put forward in his influential 1993 essay, *The Magus of the North*), according to which Hamann should be perceived as a precursor to a form of irrationalism—in effect, preparing the ground for Nazism—merely because Hamann was critical of the role of reason in rationalist philosophy. Regier refutes this charge by demonstrating that Hamann was not against reasonable discussions,

and insists that "it is both historically inaccurate as well as conceptually weak to portray Hamann as a precursor of ideologically dubious politics" (89). In fact, both Blake and Hamann celebrated the bodily dimension of all human existence and argued vocally in a style and tone that is unusual in its radicalism, perhaps even today. As Regier states: "In their views and expressions, both of these remarkable figures simultaneously look backward and forward: motivated by deep religiosity and a fascination for origins, they hold positions that *seem* extremely (post)modern but turn out to be even more radical" (71).

Regier shows that both "exorbitants" were part of a wider context and suggests that their possible connection is worth investigating. He traces in exacting detail a transnational cultural network which includes Hamann, Fuseli, Lavater, and Blake. By emphasising the relatively unknown sides of these figures, Regier manages to establish an important continuity between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, while presenting a network of international connections that was typical of the period. He also provides interesting details about the personal lives of Fuseli, Hamann, and Lavater. Such details are far from insignificant, as they reveal how well contemporary intellectuals of the continent and England knew one another, and that they were equally familiar with texts written in English, German, or French. We also get a broader and deeper account of these thinkers' education and the motivations that shaped their ideas, for example, on language, God, religion, and politics.

An entire chapter is dedicated to a significant but "exorbitant" religious group of eighteenth-century Britain: the Moravian Church. This congregation formed a crucial part of the Anglo-German community in London before the 1790s; however, according to Regier, they are "an institution that does not fit into the scheme of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, neither in literary historical terms nor in the terms that we usually inherit from intellectual history" (151). "The Germans," as John Wesley called them, brought their culture with them, adding an important dimension to the multilingual and multicultural character of the Anglo-German world. The polyglot nature of Moravian life was a central feature of their existence, survival and influence in those times, and Regier underlines their endeavour to record everything from the ordinary to the extreme, and not only within local ecclesiastical circles, but worldwide. All this evidence places the Moravians in an international network of cultural exchange that affected artistic, literary, religious, and political life in Britain through a wider Anglo-German context that contributed to the theories and works of both Blake and Hamann.

The possibility of a connection between the Moravians and Blake's family was first raised by Thomas Wright in 1929, and it was proved by Marsha Keith Schuchard in 2004. One year before the publication of Regier's book, Ágnes Péter in an elaborate study, *William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job* (2017; in Hungarian), considered the impact of this new discovery on Blake scholarship.[2] She attributed even greater importance to the fact that both Emmanuel Swedenborg, who had a decisive effect on Blake's theology, and John Wesley, whose hymns possibly influenced Blake's poetry, were in connection with the Fetter Lane congregation of the Moravian Church where Blake's mother was also a member. Regier elaborates on this connection and reveals many aspects of the relationship between John Wesley and the Moravians, as well as on Swedenborg and the Moravian brothers. He uncovers the multilingual network of religious reform culture only mentioned in Péter's book and joins Schuchard in emphasising the significance of Swedenborg and Wesley in Moravian circles.

Moravian teachings differed both from Anglican and from Dissenter doctrines. Regier devotes special attention to their highly eroticised Christology, and to the importance of the body in their ceremonies and liturgy. He also proves that multilingualism was central to Moravian life and practice: they embraced languages and multilingualism as a gift of God and believed that God spoke to mankind in all languages at the same time. As Regier shows, Moravian poetry and their understanding of Biblical texts was full of physicality, which is not far from the language theory and theology close to the heart of both Blake and Hamann.

Regier moves from what is mostly known to scholars of the period towards what is most unexpected by focusing not only on theories of language and theology, but also on their relation to ideas on matrimony and pedagogy. Blake and Hamann thought of instrumental reason as a force that created a form of religion that was deprived of creativity, which helped to establish destructive and severely limiting social constraints. This form of religion could not be tolerated by either Blake or Hamann, and this is why their deeply religious, yet anti-clerical thinking does not fit into any orthodox form of Christianity. They agreed that institutionalised religion was deeply problematic because it relied on "a structure that has lost all spiritual authority" (174). This loss is properly shown through Blake's and Hamann's views concerning marriage: it was, for them, a cornerstone of society, but its institutionalisation

2 The question is revisited in Péter's "Disbelief in Disbelief: William Blake and the Moravian Brethren" in *The AnaChronisT* (18.1).

by contemporary marriage laws led to an anti-human perversion, which they were ready to challenge both in their works and in their personal lives.

Regier continues his study by connecting the institutionalisation of religion to pedagogy. Institutional religion—that shaped marriage laws, among others—was spread mainly through education. This kind of education influenced not only ethics and morality but also language acquisition, which was a crucial issue for both Blake and Hamann. Instead of schools where time, reading, and thinking were all strictly regulated, they both promoted unconventional forms of education. However, Regier is right in criticising them for putting forward no exact programme that could be realised. They envisioned a form of Christianity that was deeply personal for every individual, one that could use its own private language—an impossible scheme, as Regier concludes.

In the last chapters, Regier reminds us of Blake's familiarity with the Moravian hymns and music via his mother and demonstrates in parallel readings how *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* echoes those polyglot lyrics. We also read about the importance of the Moravian hymnody and its connections to the physical and sexual dimensions of language in the works and theories of Blake and Hamann. According to them, the body is the instrument that allows us to understand ourselves as made in the divine image and to understand "language as a divine gift that allows revelation" (204). In this understanding, language is inherently sexual and not a neutral rationalisation. Both Blake and Hamann insist on sexuality and the sexual quality of language, as an essential and positive feature that needs to be celebrated. As Regier shows, "the graphic articulation of the topic of sexuality and language is part of the conceptual argument" (216) shared by Blake and Hamann. Summarising their thought Regier concludes that "we should rejoice in the physical aspect of man and language, even though they will inevitably illustrate the limited nature of human existence" (218).

In his conclusion, Regier returns to the limitations of Blake and Hamann's thinking. Although these remarks are not elaborated to form a sustained critique, the argument is fresh and engaging throughout. All in all, the abundance of information and the sources Regier re-discovers open diverse new perspectives for scholars of literature, theology, linguistics, philosophy, and for the general reader interested in the period. Regier uses a direct voice, which makes the book easy to read and sometimes very entertaining, while it demands close attention due to the complexity of the subject itself and to the vast amount of detail synthesised in each chapter.

With *Exorbitant Enlightenment*, a constellation has emerged urging experts to rethink the relationship between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, as well as to form a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the "exorbitant" figure of William Blake and Johann Georg Hamann.

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Repetition and Innovation

Review of *Dracula 2020*

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Dracula is a BBC1/Netflix series consisting of three 90-minute episodes that aired in January 2020 and was created by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat (whose previous writing credits include *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock*). The story—which is only initially faithful to the original narrative in Bram Stoker's most celebrated and most adapted 1897 novel—begins in a Hungarian convent, where an emaciated and visibly ill Mr. Jonathan Harker (John Effernan) recounts his experience with Count Dracula to the assertive and unusual Sister Agatha Van Helsing (Dolly Wells). In the first episode, "The Rules of the Beast," Harker reaches the Count's castle in Transylvania in order to conclude some business transactions establishing the nobleman's acquirement of some properties in London. The castle itself becomes a protagonist in this episode, as it is presented through vertiginous frames in its exteriors and through medium shots in its narrow, claustrophobic candle-lit interiors. Contrary to the previous cinematic and TV adaptations, it is for the first time depicted as a labyrinthic setting, a "prison without locks," that Harker vainly attempts to escape on several occasions. Dracula (Claes Bang) is an old, withered man with long white air, but he becomes younger and stronger with each passing night while Harker grows weaker, loses his hair, and becomes paler and paler until he is an emasculated, feeble being completely in the Count's power. More terrorising is the spontaneity with which the vampire reveals his nature and actions (even his adversity to the Sun) to his guest, who is too weak and impotent to react—an impotence that is definitely a source of anguish for the spectator.

The vampire's act of feeding on Harker is never shown during the episode, which contributes to the viewer's growing anxiety for the fate of the character. This is the case also for those spectators who are familiar with the story and would rather expect the Count's brides to prey on the Englishman (only one of them is seen; the others are held inside locked boxes) rather than the Count himself. In this sense, this series actualises the vampire's pronouncement regarding Harker, "this man belongs to me," which has been interpreted by Christopher Craft as an assertion of potential homo-bisexuality on the part of Dracula (262–263). Such intimacy between the two male characters was only alluded to in F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) and its remake by Werner Herzog (1979) as well as in Jesús Franco's Spanish production, *Count Dracula* (1970), but it was realised explicitly in Dario Argento's *Dracula 3D* (2012). Equally innovative is the presence, in the subterranean tunnels of the castle, of zombie-like rotting corpses that follow the protagonist and are supposedly his predecessors as Dracula's guests, the "undead" who are conscious of their own bodily corruption. This is one of the most distressing details of the series, the rotting body consuming itself while the individual's mind being left conscious—a representation severely different from the eternal life and beauty depicted in Neil Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) and the series *True Blood* (2008–2014) and *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–2017).

In the second episode, "Blood Vessel," the Count's journey to London aboard the *Demeter* is narrated to Sister Agatha, who is the unwilling prisoner of the vampire. The latter, passing for one of the passengers, takes his time to decimate all the humans aboard the vessel until he is discovered and fights against the remaining people, with a final explosion that incapacitates him before the ship can reach the shores of Whitby. The final episode, "The Dark Compass," is set in modern-day England and depicts the Count coming to shore after sleeping for over a century inside a box on the ocean's floor. After some mayhem he causes in the countryside, he is captured by scientist Zoe Van Helsing (Dolly Wells), a descendant of Sister Agatha, and imprisoned in the facility controlled by the Jonathan Harker Foundation she runs. After submitting some blood, he is freed by his lawyer, Frank Renfield (Mark Gatiss), as he cannot be charged with any crimes—a comment on how a real criminal can be protected by legal quibbles. Contrary to the vampire in Alan Gibson's *Dracula AD 1972* (who confines himself inside an abandoned church in the middle of London), but similarly to Patrick Lussier's *Dracula 2000* (whose Count enjoys the festivities of the Mardi Gras in New Orleans), this Dracula

takes advantage of contemporary life and its comforts, living in a luxurious top-floor apartment and going to clubs. He is even fascinated by modern technology and learns quickly how to use weapons, television, email, and mobile phones. He meets Lucy Westenra (Lydia West), a willing victim who texts with him and dates him in cemeteries (where some of the vampire's victims are buried undead). The treatment of the character is quite original because, as Alasdair Wilkins has pointed out, her "total nihilism and unprecedented willingness to let Dracula feed on her are potentially interesting departures from the book's depiction of Lucy as a paragon of sweetness, as her role here is not as the corrupted innocent but rather as a disaffected wanderer through life. Her life isn't so different from Dracula's undeath."

Quite original to the series is the depiction of Dracula's sadism: his calm delivery of the lines and sardonic half-smile make him a hateful character, quite far from the fascinating creatures of the night represented by Anne Rice or the modern versions of the vampire presented in the TV series *The Originals* (2013–2018), a viewer could be attracted to or could sympathise with. Furthermore, and contrary to Dan Curtis' *Dracula* (1974), John Badham's *Dracula* (1979), and Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold* (2014), the 2020 series' Count is incapable of love, as he himself admits to one of his victims, thus making him all the more a vicious and unpleasant figure. As Michael Idato argues, "Dracula the caricature is, by virtue of over-mining, a tiresome cliché. But Dracula the man, drawn here in three dimensions and an unsettling mixture of loathing and charm, is a masterpiece."

Similarly to what occurs in the *Underworld* saga (2003–2016), the vampire can read his victims' thoughts and memories after he tastes their blood—blood which he craves even in tiny drops and admits being intoxicated by and addicted to. Previously unheard of is also the fact that the kiss of the vampire works as an opiate, erasing recent memories of his victims and turning them into mindless zombies even without the mutual exchange of fluids—which, in the novel as well as in Hans W. Geißendörfer's *Jonathan* (1970) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), is depicted as necessary for the vampire to create another of his kind, to reproduce. The special effects, though not as spectacular as in a cinematic production such as Stephen Sommers' *Van Helsing* (2004), are nonetheless very effective in depicting Dracula's supernatural powers, as when he climbs the convent's walls, transforms back from a wolf into a human, and literally vomits the fog enveloping the *Demeter* during its doomed voyage.

Apart from those parts of the narrative that reproduce faithfully the precursor text by Stoker, what is notable is the emphasis, in the first episode, on written documents—hand-written in the case of the letters and Harker's diary, type-written by Mina—through the close-ups on them, which hints at the epistolary nature of the original novel. On the other hand, allusions are made to some predecessor films, including the first Hammer production, Terence Fisher's *Dracula* (1958). Another detail that is worthy of note is the fact that the vampire's main adversary in the three episodes is an adult woman, which re-settles the dynamics of the original narrative by Stoker (in which women are unwilling preys of the Count and need to be defended and rescued by the group of men constituting the Crew of Light) into a more contemporary frame of mind presenting both Sister Agatha and her descendant, Zoe, as resolute women, ready to face and even challenge their ruthless adversary in spite of his supernatural powers.

The television series is filled with unexpected twists and sudden revelations quite far from the original narrative, though they are completely coherent with this story's premises and course of events. *Dracula* thus fills in some details that add up to Stoker's precursor text, as is the case of the passengers of the *Demeter*, whom Dracula socialises and flirts with, only to feed on them later on (the original narrative only mentions the members of the ship's crew). On the other hand, the last episode's drastic departure from Stoker's story by means of the chronological setting of the story in contemporary London is a welcome alternative to the original narrative that has been rarely considered before. The finale is decisively unexpected, though maybe it comes too suddenly and may leave spectators unprepared for it. Reviewers have generally agreed on the merits of this series. Lucy Mangan recognises that it is a "homage to all the great Counts who have gone before, but still entirely its own thing. And again, like the best of Gatiss and Moffat's Sherlocks, with the searching intelligence that promises to flesh out the foundational story." Among the few voices who have not appreciated this production is Melanie Macfarland's, who affirms that the series is dull and tedious, especially in its first episode, in which "Moffat and Gatiss (perhaps unintentionally) translate [Jonathan Harker's] feeling of weakness and sluggishness into a vicarious experience by conveying the boredom that comes with imprisonment." The 2020 *Dracula* is an innovative contribution to the adaptations of the figure of the Transylvanian Count and will certainly be appetising to both fans and scholars of the prince of darkness.

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