Losing Touch

Disembodiment and the Impossibility of Feeling for the "Other" in J. M. Coetzee's *Dusklands*

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Abstract: The paper discusses J. M. Coetzee's first novel, Dusklands *(1974), which comprises two novellas. "The Vietnam Project" is narrated by Eugene Dawn, an American mythographer, who works on a report facilitating psychological warfare in the Vietnam War. The second novella, "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," tells the story of an eighteenth-century Dutch explorer's journey and encounter with the Namaqua people in Southern Africa. Following the author Coetzee's perspective, the paper does not focus on the figure of the oppressed, but on the oppressor instead, and the way he, specifically his relation to his body, is affected by either twentieth-century American imperialism or eighteenth-century colonisation. This paper argues that both Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee are trapped in their respective vicious dehumanising circle of imperialism/colonialism where they wish to become "disembodied." In* Dusklands, *disembodiment appears in the form of fantasies and feverish dreams; nevertheless, it has a sustained effect on the way Dawn and Jacobus interact with others. The paper draws on theories of dehumanisation, Matthew Ratcliffe's view on the relation of touch and reality, and the concept of vulnerability as investigated by Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero.*

J. M. Coetzee's earliest novel, *Dusklands* (1974), comprises two novellas. "The Vietnam Project" is narrated by Eugene Dawn, an American mythographer, who works on a report facilitating psychological warfare in the Vietnam War using photographs of the war as sources. Dawn admits that, since he started working on the report, his relationship with others—more specifically, with their

bodies—has changed. In his personal life, this appears most prominently in his relationship with his wife, Marilyn, with whom he is unable to live a satisfying sexual life. Marilyn is convinced that Dawn's changed behaviour is the dehumanising consequence of his work. After finishing the report, Dawn becomes even more paranoid than before and runs away, kidnapping his child, Martin. When Marilyn and the police arrive at the motel where Dawn and his son are staying, Dawn panics, hides behind Martin, and stabs the boy with a fruit knife. The story ends at the mental institution where Dawn is placed after almost killing his son.

The second novella, "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," tells the story of an eighteenth-century Dutch explorer's journey and encounter with the Namaqua people in Southern Africa.[1] Jacobus, travelling with his Khoikhoi servants, pays a short and unfruitful visit to the Namaqua people's village after which he wants to proceed northwards. However, he falls sick during the journey and his servants have to carry him back to the village. He resents the way he is treated and after getting better he leaves the village with Klawer, the most loyal of his servants. Jacobus returns to the village with soldiers and while they rape and kill the villagers and burn down their huts, Jacobus exterminates his disloyal servants who remained in the village.

Following Coetzee's perspective, the paper does not focus on the figure of the oppressed, but on the oppressor, and the way he—specifically his relation to his body—is affected by either twentieth-century American imperialism or eighteenth-century colonisation. It is argued that both Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee are trapped in their respective vicious dehumanising circle of imperialism/colonialism where they wish to become "disembodied." In this context, disembodiment can be defined as one's disengagement from their body, experienced as a restraining burden for the self, in the hope of getting rid of corporeal vulnerability. In *Dusklands*, disembodiment appears in the form of fantasies and feverish dreams; nevertheless, it has a sustained effect on the way Dawn and Jacobus interact with others. As they lose touch with their bodies, they become unable to feel for others, which leads to further dehumanisation and violence.

The paper draws mainly on theories of dehumanisation, Matthew Ratcliffe's view on the relation of touch and reality, and the concept of vulnerability as investigated by Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero. It begins with a short introduction

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1   The paper refers to Jacobus Coetzee (the character) as "Jacobus" and uses "Coetzee" to refer to J. M. Coetzee, the author.

to the literature on *Dusklands* and continues with the Cartesian view on soul and body. The Cartesian division of the self and the Other is a topic elaborated on in some analyses of the novel; however, I will argue that Descartes's thoughts on body and soul are equally relevant here. Disembodiment, the wish to get rid of an essential part of a human being, is construed as a kind of self-dehumanisation on the part of Dawn and Jacobus. This detachment implies the loss of vulnerability, which may be perceived as beneficial by Dawn and Jacobus, as it renders reciprocal relationships, touch, and feeling for the Other impossible. The only way the two perpetrators can interact with the world is through violence, and they reach out towards the Other with weapons instead of hands.

<div align="center">THE ENEMY BODY</div>

It is conspicuous that former analyses of the novel are mostly concerned with the narrator characters' relation to the Other and the world, but it is equally evident that the physical body and corporeal vulnerability are not in the focus of these studies. The first full-length book dedicated to the works of Coetzee was Teresa Dovey's *The Novels of J. M. Coetzee: Lacanian Allegories* (1988), which, as the subtitle suggests, provides a reading of Coetzee's earlier works through Lacanian psychoanalysis. David Attwell criticised Dovey for overstating the relevance of Lacan and pointed out that Descartes, Hegel, or Sartre would be equally valid references for interpretation ("Review" 517). Indeed, Coetzee's novels are often read though a Hegelian lens, in which the master and slave (or lord and bondsman) dialectic is in focus.[2] Though it might be tempting to draw an equal sign between the Hegelian master and the coloniser and the Hegelian slave and the colonised, the situation is much more complicated than that in the colonial condition and one has to be cautious not to interpret the master–slave dialectic as a concrete colonial encounter.[3] This complexity is reflected in Coetzee's novels as well. According to Mike Marais, Coetzee invokes the master–slave relationship in his works exactly

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2   See, for instance, Dominic Head's *The Cambridge Introduction to J. M. Coetzee*, Mike Marais's *Secretary of the Invisible: The Idea of Hospitality in the Fiction of J. M. Coetzee*, or Ottilia Veres's PhD dissertation, *Colonial Encounters in J. M. Coetzee's Early Fiction: Two Tropes of Intersubjectivity*.

3   For a more detailed description on the disparity between the Hegelian thought and postcolonial cultural studies, see, for instance, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon claims that the black man cannot be identified as the Hegelian slave, nor are the white masters identical to the Hegelian master, for the colonial situation lacks the reciprocity that is present in the Hegelian

to highlight the failure of this dialectic in the colonial scenario. Reciprocal recognition, which is the aim of the struggle of master and slave, is missing from Coetzee's novels (7).

David Attwell couples *Dusklands* with *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), and identifies both as "attack[s] on the rationalist, dominating self of colonialism and imperialism" (*Politics of Writing* 5). This "colonial self," writes Attwell, fails "to enter reciprocal relationships with the new landscape and its people" ("Problem of History" 113). He refers to this continuously re-emerging question of the "I" and "You" in Coetzee's works as "the poetics of reciprocity" in an interview with the novelist (*Doubling* 58).[4] In a 1978 interview with Stephen Watson, Coetzee himself talked about reciprocity in relation to his first two novels, saying that they are both about "living among people without reciprocity, so that there's only an 'I' and a 'You' is not on the same basis, the 'You' is a debased 'You'" (qtd. in Gallagher 98–99). Coetzee's words, concerning originally his first novels, have preserved their relevance, for lack of reciprocity has remained a general condition in his later fiction as well. Except for Magda and Michael K, Coetzee's characters do not live in isolation in the physical sense of the word, still, they seem incapable of maintaining reciprocal relationships. While the physical closeness of others would suggest that non-reciprocity is present only on a mental and/or an emotional plain, it is important to point out that it has a corporeal dimension as well. Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee are disengaged both mentally, emotionally, and physically from the world surrounding them.

The figures of the master and the slave also emerge in Allen Richard Penner's reading of Coetzee; however, he sees this dialectic and all colonial thought as a result of "the Cartesian division of the self and others" (13–14). In what follows, I will argue in accordance with Attwell and Penner that Descartes's relevance is equal to that of Hegel in *Dusklands*, and that the base of the division between the self and others is a division within the self between body and soul.

In *A Discourse on the Method*, René Descartes proposes the following thought experiment: "I saw that I could pretend that I had no body and that there was no world or place for me to be in, but that I could not for all that pretend that I did

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master–slave dialectic. In addition, the black man is less independent than the slave, while the white man demands work and not recognition from the black man (168–173).

4 Attwell also mentions Coetzee's 1977 essay "Achterberg's 'Ballade van de Gasfitter': The Mystery of I and You" and his 1987 Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech as non-fiction examples.

not exist" (29). From which he drew the conclusion: "I was a substance whose whole essence or nature resides only in thinking, ... [which] has no need of place and is not dependent on any material thing. ... [T]he Soul ... is entirely distinct from the body ... and would not stop being everything it is, even if the body were not to exist" (29). The Cartesian division of body and soul appears distinctly in the first novella of *Dusklands*. Dawn begins his narrative by complaining about his superior, Coetzee, who has asked him to revise his report. Dawn perceives this request as a threat, and presumes that Coetzee wants to get rid of him. He cannot bear conflicts, and describes himself as follows: "I am an egg that must lie in the downiest of nests under the most coaxing of nurses before my bald, unpromising shell cracks and my shy secret life emerges" (10). The metaphor of the fragile egg highlights the paradox of Dawn's simultaneous precariousness and solipsism. According to Judith Butler, "lives are by definition precarious," because "precariousness is coextensive with birth itself" (*Frames* xiv, 25). Though the egg with its connotations of birth and fragility would fit into Butler's definition of precariousness, its absolute closedness to the world makes it incapable of reciprocal connections. Dawn as an egg is indifferent to the precariousness of other lives, his "shell-body" prevents him from "being impinged upon by the exposure and dependency of others" (Butler, *Frames* xiv). Penner sees Dawn's eventual mental breakdown as a result of this "extreme Cartesian isolation of 'I' from the 'other'" (32). The confined inner world of Dawn appears later in a somewhat similar image of fragile embryonic crystals enclosed in a membrane of amnion: "I am living a crystal life nowadays. Exorbitant formations flower in my head, that sealed airless world. First the enveloping skull. Then a sac, an amnion" (55).

A similar duality is observable in the case of Jacobus. Describing his happiness upon the revenge attack on the Namaqua people's village he says: "My mind bobbed in my body like a bottle on the sea" (157). Earlier in the story, Jacobus had already referred to these two separate parts of himself, though in a less explicit way: "I carried my secret buried within me. I could not be touched" (115). This supposed untouchability is, on the one hand, similar to Dawn's "egg" existence, which makes both characters callous to the outside world. On the other hand, untouchability also foreshadows invulnerability, or rather the fantasy of invulnerability, which has significance in Jacobus's narrative.

In his report, Dawn claims that the failure of American propaganda is due to the voice used in radio programmes which is neither the voice of the "father nor

[that of the] brother. It is the voice of the doubting self, the voice of René Descartes driving his wedge between the self in the world and the self who contemplates that self" (39–40). The programmes "have failed because they speak out of an alienated *doppelgänger* rationality for which there is no precedent in Vietnamese thought" (40).[5] Though he claims that the Cartesian approach is unprofitable in an imperial context, in his own work, Dawn follows Descartes's method. He refuses the offered familiarisation tour to Vietnam. Instead of first-hand experiences, he relies entirely on thinking: "I discovered all the truths in my Vietnam report, by introspection. Vietnam, like everything else, is inside me" (30). The body seems not only to be irrelevant from the point of the soul's existence (as Descartes claimed), but it becomes an albatross around Dawn's and Jacobus's neck. Or, as Noémi Doktorcsik puts it, "the inner and the outer parts are not in line; moreover, they contradict each other" (28).

The first signs of Dawn's conflict with his body emerge during the meeting with his supervisor, Coetzee. He tries desperately to stop his fidgeting fingers, to subdue "spasms in the various parts of [his] body" (16). The involuntary movements of his body annoy him because, as a reader of Charlotte Wolf's *A Psychology of Gesture* (1972) (which he incorrectly refers to as *The Psychology of Gesture*—evidence of his absolute belief in its truth and authority), Dawn knows that these gestures betray his depression and anxiety, making him look weak before Coetzee (15). In his annoyance, he bursts out: "I am vexed by the indiscipline of my body. I have often wished I had another one" (16). What makes Dawn even more displeased with his body is that it prevents him from enjoying his work by acting exhausted and suffering from watering eyes, headaches, and backache. Sitting at his desk in his grey carrel, he complains: "I should be in paradise. But my body betrays me. ... From head to foot I am the subject of a revolting body" (19–20). Dawn perceives his body as an enemy, a restraining weight, like the old man sitting on Sinbad's neck.[6] Although Butler notes that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is not much concerned with the body since it is "only referred to indirectly as the encasement, location, or specificity of consciousness" (*Psychic* 34), it is still important to mention the Hegelian thread (invoked at the beginning of this segment) in connection with the figures of Sinbad

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5   Like the Hegelian master–slave dialectic, Cartesian thought has its limits in the imperial/colonial context (see footnote 3).

6   The fable of Sinbad and the Old Man of the sea is a recurring element in Coetzee's *oeuvre*. In *Dusklands*, it is the body that acts as a tyrant over Dawn's spirit, while in *Foe* (1986), Susan feels it is Friday who weighs on her like the Old Man on Sinbad. However, the fable appears most prominently in *Slow Man* (2005), where the novelist Elizabeth Costello evokes the story when Paul wants to get rid of her.

and the Old Man. Veres, who, in accordance with Marais, sees the relationships in *Dusklands* as instances of the failed Hegelian dialectic, claims that the recurring tale of Sinbad and the Old Man in the fiction of Coetzee is a "motif and trope of intersubjectivity" (19, 30). Dawn says:

> I have an exploring temperament. Had I lived two hundred years ago I would have had a continent to explore, to map, to open to colonisation. In that vertiginous freedom I might have expanded to my true potential. If I feel cramped nowadays it is because I have no space to beat my wings. That is a good explanation for the trouble I have with my back, and a mythic one too. My spirit should soar into the endless interior distances, but dragging it back, alas, is this tyrant body. Sinbad's story of the old man of the sea is also apposite. (57)

Though it might be argued that Dawn sees himself as Sinbad and his superior, Coetzee, as the cruel Old Man from the tale, turning this situation into an example of intersubjectivity, the text clearly refers to the body as the tyrant and the spirit as the enslaved. Veres acknowledges that in some cases the tale stands for subjectivity instead of intersubjectivity, like in Dawn's account where it is a "metaphor for the split within the subject" (33). Thus, just like the egg metaphor, the reference to the Sinbad tale is the sign of split within Dawn himself. The explanation he finds for his backache, hence his clip-winged spirit restrained from exploration, is in line with Jacobus's thoughts. In the case of the latter, it is the fever accompanying his illness that frees his mind/soul/spirit from the body's prison:

> My fevers came and went, distinguishable only by the flexings of the soul's wings that came with fever and the lumpish tedium of the return to earth. I inhabited the past again, meditating upon my life as tamer of the wild. I meditated upon the acres of new ground I had eaten up with my eyes. (119)

Thus, Dawn's eighteenth-century explorer counterpart carries out the same Cartesian experiment of pretending away his body while lying sick in a menstruation hut of the Namaquas. During one of his fevers, Jacobus meditates on the effects of space and solitude:

... the five senses stretch out from the body they inhabit, but four stretch into a vacuum. The ear cannot hear, the nose cannot smell, the tongue cannot taste, *the skin cannot feel. The skin cannot feel*: the sun bears down on the body, flesh and skin move in a pocket of heat, the skin stretches vainly around, everything is sun. *Only the eyes have power.* The eyes are free, they reach out to the horizon all around. Nothing is hidden from the eyes. As the other senses grow numb or dumb my eyes flex and extend themselves. I become a spherical reflecting eye moving through the wilderness and ingesting it. Destroyer of the wilderness, I move through the land cutting a devouring path from horizon to horizon. There is nothing from which my eye turns, I am all that I see. Such loneliness! Not a stone, not a bush, not a wretched provident ant that is not comprehended in this travelling sphere. What is there that is not me? I am a transparent sac with a black core full of images and a gun. (121, emphases added)

As a self-proclaimed explorer, it is not surprising that Jacobus accepts sight as the only sense that retains its might, while the skin, thus touch, is doubly deprived of its power. However, "explorer" is merely a euphemism for "coloniser" here, part of the strategy Mary Louise Pratt calls "anti-conquest."[7] Pratt's term refers to the "strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (7). This image of innocence is reinforced in the afterword attached to Jacobus's narrative where he is portrayed as a hero, "discoverer of the Orange River and the giraffe", the latter of which "in his innocence he conceived to be a variety of camel" (165, 185).[8] Eighteenth-century travel writers styled themselves as the innocent "main protagonist[s] of anti-conquest," the "'seeing-m[e]n' ... whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (Pratt 7). Jacobus is constructed more or less along these lines: he calls himself an explorer, he makes discoveries and imagines himself as the "disembodied eye" that Pratt identifies with the scientific

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7   Mary Louise Pratt draws on Coetzee's *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988), and uses the study as a model for her chapter on Spanish America.

8   The afterword is part of the Jacobus novella. Here, Coetzee is writing from the perspective of the invented persona of the late Dr. S. J. Coetzee, an expert and admirer of Jacobus Coetzee, the explorer.

subject of anti-conquest (78).[9] However, Jacobus's gun protrudes visibly from this idealised scene of anti-conquest and points directly at conquest. In other words, the all-seeing domineering eye equipped with a gun alludes to colonisation. Jacobus does not only passively observe the landscape but makes it his own, he conquers the land as he "devours" or "ingests" it with his eyes. It is as if he became the disembodied "mode of consciousness" Michael Vaughan describes as the "Northern European Protestant type, with its project of world-colonisation" (123). In his narrative, Jacobus's encounter with the giraffe appears in the following form: "I move through the wilderness with my gun at the shoulder of my eye and slay elephants, hip-popotami, rhinoceres, buffalo, lions, leopards, dogs, giraffes, antelope and buck of all descriptions, fowl of all descriptions, hares, and snakes; I leave behind me a mountain of skin, bones, inedible gristle, and excrement" (122). Thus, seeing, "the innocent act of the anti-conquest," turns into the invasion and destruction of the African land by the use of guns, that is, "tool[s] of conquest" (Pratt 66).

The lack of reciprocity Coetzee talked about appears in this feverish fantasy of the eye as well, since Jacobus's relation to the African landscape is one-directional. The eyeball's transparency is in sharp contrast with its all-seeing ability. In an essay in *White Writing*, Coetzee deals again with this dominance of sight when writing about Sydney Clouts's landscape poetry. In that essay, he quotes Wordsworth's "The Prelude":

> I speak in recollection of a time
> When the bodily eye, in every stage of life
> The most despotic of our senses, gained
> Such strength in "me" as often held my mind
> In absolute dominion. (*White Writing* 177; "The Prelude,"
> bk. 12, ll. 127–131)

Wordsworth's poem goes on to describe how Nature calls upon the other senses and thus "thwart[s] / This tyranny" of the eye ("The Prelude," bk. 12, ll. 134–135). Unlike Jacobus, whose senses go "numb or dumb," the speaker of Wordsworth's poem is undoubtedly in a reciprocal relationship with nature, because the landscape affects him (121). Moreover, the image of the "transparent sac" is an allusion

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9   Pratt defines two types of eighteenth-century anti-conquest protagonists, the sentimental and the scientific. The latter one moves on the periphery of his writing and his main aim is to systematise nature.

to Ralph Waldo Emerson's metaphor of the transparent eyeball, which he introduced in his essay "Nature," published in 1836 (López 72). Despite the apparent connection, the two transparent eyes differ in a crucial aspect, namely, the direction of the one-sided relationship to the landscape. The passivity of the transcendentalist contemplating eye is juxtaposed with the violent activity of the colonial gaze. While Emerson's unification with nature is harmonious, and the eye accepts the sight of the wilderness as it is, Jacobus's eye is a predatory black hole equipped with a gun that hunts down and engulfs everything from stones to animals.

This self-image of Jacobus as an eye with a gun strengthens his fantasy of invulnerability already mentioned above. He develops this fantasy to the degree that he can rely on sight only because, as he puts it, "the skin cannot feel," and indeed, he does not seem to feel pain (121). This way, Jacobus becomes disembodied, or rather he "disembodies" himself. When the villagers attack him for mutilating a child, he does not describe his torture with his own bodily sensations but can only invoke witnesses who might be able to see how badly he is being treated:

> A claustral despair came. Someone was sitting on my head, I could move not even my jaw. The pain became trivial. It occurred to me that I could suffocate and die and these people would not care. They were tormenting me excessively. Surely they were tormenting me excessively, surely anyone could see that. ... "*That which is not felt by the criminal is his crime.* I am nothing to them, nothing but an occasion." Beyond rage, beyond pain, beyond fear I withdrew inside myself and in my womb of ice totted up the profit and the loss. (140, emphasis added)

The irony of the words in italics is revealed when Jacobus, watching, listening to, and carrying out the massacre in the village of the Namaqua people, feels only boredom (155–156).

Both Dawn and Jacobus disengage themselves from the body which only generates conflict and annoyance and exposes them to pain. They become their thoughts and live in their mind instead: "I am my work. For a year now the Vietnam Project has been the centre of my existence," says Dawn proudly (11). This seems to be an advantageous step for Dawn and Jacobus who perceive the liberation

from the body as a "triumphant disembodiment" (Wolfe xv).[10] However, in reality, the loss of corporeal vulnerability entails the loss of "humanity." For Butler, bodily needs and dependency as well as "vulnerability to injury" are "clearly political issues," and "precarity only makes sense" if they are identified as such (*Notes* 117). According to Butler, "everyone is precarious, and this follows from our social existence as bodily beings," to which she adds: "No one escapes the precarious dimension of social life—it is, we might say, the joint of our nonfoundation" (*Notes* 118–119). Thus, in a Butlerian vein, it can be claimed that the two narrators of Coetzee's novel deprive themselves of "a primary vulnerability to others, one that one cannot will away without ceasing to be human" (*Precarious* xiv). Disembodiment can, therefore, be seen as a kind of self-dehumanisation in *Dusklands*.

It is important to point out that despite the usually negative connotation of the expression, dehumanisation is, in general, a neutral concept (Kronfeldner 10). Dawn and Jacobus's self-dehumanisation does not imply negative emotions, for instance, hatred for themselves. Stéphanie Demoulin et al. identify two main catalysts of self-dehumanisation: meta-dehumanisation (when one dehumanises oneself as a reaction to being dehumanised by someone else) and "immoral acts performed by the self" (265–266). Or, as Maria Kronfeldner puts it referring to the latter, perpetrators may dehumanise themselves "in reaction to their own dehumanising attitudes or actions toward others" (10). At first glance, this explanation seems plausible in the case of Jacobus, who views and treats the natives as animals, as well as Dawn, who does not see the Vietnamese as fully human beings either. However, Demoulin et al. add that self-dehumanisation can "arise as a consequence of one's immoral act at least to the extent that the target recognises the immoral qualification of her behaviour" (270). In other words, self-dehumanisation presupposes an acknowledgement or recognition of the immorality of one's actions (Demoulin et al. 265–267). Jacobus never comes to this realisation: at the end of his narrative he still thinks of killing the Namaqua people as a heroic "sacrifice" (163).

Dawn's case is more complex. Though Coetzee offers a solution in the form of the doctors' diagnosis, it is evident from the tone that this explanation is ironic rather than definitive. At the mental institution, Dawn is sorry for having stabbed Martin, but he also claims he is not guilty, not having been himself when he hurt

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10   Wolfe uses "triumphant disembodiment" in reference to N. Katherine Hayles's *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (1999). He claims that the term posthuman is used by Hayles as the opposite of embodiment.

his child (76). Nevertheless, the Vietnam Project's inhumanity does not dawn on him. Neither Marilyn nor her friends can make Dawn see that the report and the whole Vietnam war are morally questionable and that the hours writing the report have affected him adversely. He mocks his wife's notion: "She lives in the hope that what her friends call my psychic brutalisation will end with the end of the war and the Vietnam Project, that reinsertion into civilisation will tame and eventually humanise me" (23). Dawn believes in the legitimacy and importance of his work as a mythographer and is not aware of its questionable morality. However, the resistance he experiences in his body might be a sign of the unconscious realisation of the inhumanity of the Vietnam Project. Eventually, the doctors at the mental institution come to a conclusion about which Dawn is rather sceptical: "The hypothesis they test is that intimate contact with the design of war made me callous to suffering and created in me a need for violent solutions to problems of living, infecting me at the same time with guilty feelings that showed themselves in nervous symptoms" (82).

Therefore, to a degree, the repressed realisation of the immorality of his acts contributes to his mental breakdown as well as to his disengagement with his own body. Jacobus's self-dehumanisation can be explained by a more abstract view of dehumanisation. According to Kronfeldner, an ever-present aspect of dehumanisation seems to be the fact that it "*establishes difference and distance* between human beings" (9). Jacobus's narrative begins with a lamentation on the vanishing dividing line between the white settlers and the Khoikhoi, whom he refers to as Hottentots: "Everywhere differences grow smaller as they come up and we go down. ... In hard times how can differences be maintained?" (88). The only vague difference Jacobus can devise is "true" Christianity, because, though the Khoikhoi took up Christianity as well, theirs is only "an empty word" (89). On the other hand, he has no difficulty in establishing difference and distance between white men and the San people, whom he calls the Bushmen and who live outside the white settlements. These native people become the targets of Jacobus's dehumanisation, more precisely, animalistic dehumanisation according to Nick Haslam's dual model.[11] Jacobus proclaims that "[t]he Bushman is a different creature, a wild animal with an animal's soul" (89). Besides the tendency to steal, mutilate and kill white men's stock, Jacobus finds the most obvious sign of inhumanity in the way the natives supposedly treat their sick and elderly. While elaborating on the apprehension and killing

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11 See Nick Haslam's "Dehumanisation: An Integrative Review" (2006).

of the San, he mentions that the one he was able to capture on foot was a sick, old woman left behind by her people because she could not walk. "For they are not like us," states Jacobus, "they don't look after their aged, when you cannot keep up with the troop they put down a little food and water and abandon you to the animals" (91). The response to vulnerability is marked by Jacobus as a difference that distinguishes humans and non-humans.[12]

Adriana Cavarero identifies caring and wounding as the two alternative responses "inscribed in the condition of vulnerability" to which the body, being exposed to others, is open (*Horrorism* 20). Caring, in this case, is clearly a sign of humanity, while wounding is associated with the San people's animality. Wounding, of course, does not only refer to physical violence. Writing about the primary vulnerability of newborns, Butler argues that besides violence, abandonment and starvation are equally harmful, hence qualify as wounding, because, instead of support or care, their "bodies [are] given over to nothing, or to brutality, or to no sustenance" (*Precarious* 31). The reassuring distance between the European colonists and the Africans established by the opposition between caring and wounding decreases suddenly when Jacobus visits the chieftain of the Namaquas. Arriving at the village, Jacobus is told that the old man is sick, but he is not abandoned, in fact, he is being taken care of conscientiously: a girl sits with him, waving away flies; he is covered with and lies on animal skins, he is washed and given medicine. The comforting distance vanishes completely when Jacobus himself falls sick and, instead of abandoning him, his servants bring him back to the village with the help of the Namaquas. Jacobus's way back to the village is marked by hands, mostly the caring hands of the supposedly inhuman African people: "I was handled roughly," Jacobus tells us; "Rough men were lifting me, wrapped in blankets like a corpse. My hands were locked at my sides" (116). On top of being sick, Jacobus's hands are restrained, and his vulnerable body is entirely exposed to the others' will, just like a newborn's, whose "survival is dependent on what we might call a social network of hands" (Butler, *Precarious* 14). Jacobus continues: "Gentle hands raised me till I was sitting. ... I realised that, sick with who knows what fever, I had fallen into the hands of callous thieves ignorant of the very rudiments of medicine" (117). Yet, however hard he tries to portray the Namaquas

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12 Ironically, Jacobus will similarly abandon the ill Klawer on the way back home. He leaves food and water for his servant, just like, according to him, the San did in the case of the old woman. Although Jacobus promises Klawer that he will come back for him on horseback, he never actually tries to find the man afterwards.

as ignorant barbarians, Jacobus cannot deny the fact that caring, which he had thought to be the privileged attribute of white Christians, is also valued and practised by the natives of Namaqualand.

Moreover, it is Jacobus's own body that betrays him. A visible manifestation of his vulnerability is the carbuncle that appears on his left buttock in the last phase of his illness. Though the fever has gone, Jacobus seems to experience himself still as the all-seeing but unfeeling eyeball. Sight remains the only trustworthy sense, thus, to examine the carbuncle, Jacobus longs for a mirror and says: "I was teased by my inability to see it. How large was it? Only eyes could be trusted, for my fingertips refused to distinguish between their own sensation and the sensation of the skin they touched" (133, 137). Since the boil makes walking painful and riding impossible, Jacobus goes to the stream and, after a struggle, he succeeds in lancing it. Jacobus repeats his wish for a mirror later with the very same words, "I longed for a mirror" (133). This time, short of a stream, he dreams of a pool of water (149). Jacobus's tendency for boasting, his lack of empathy and his craving for a mirror all point towards the myth of Narcissus. The myth is relevant even more so since the carbuncle on his buttocks can be seen as a narcissistic wound. According to Butler, such a wound can open when one's physical vulnerability is put on public display (*Precarious* 7).

The body's illness uncovers the vulnerability shared by every living being, by the coloniser as well as the colonised. Jacobus's disembodiment can, therefore, be explained as a result of this uncomfortable realisation of similarity. By becoming the soul with wings or the spherical transparent eye, Jacobus disengages from his traitorous and confining body. Like Dawn, Jacobus does not perceive this disengagement or self-dehumanisation as a loss, but rather as a positive, liberating experience.

Nick Haslam's dual model of dehumanisation is a relevant source with regard to the self-dehumanisation as well as the dehumanisation of others in *Dusklands*, as mentioned before in the case of Jacobus and the San people. Although Haslam's work does not deal with corporeal characteristics, the body has a place in his concept of the human and may be listed among the HN (human nature—inborn) characteristics as defined by Haslam. This would mean that in Haslam's model, both Dawn and Jacobus are the subjects of mechanistic self-dehumanisation, since they wish to deprive themselves of their body, an inborn human characteristic. This is significant since Haslam points out that mechanistic dehumanisation is closely linked with empathy deficits and that it "may therefore index the extent to which people see no relatedness to others" (261–262). Research conducted by Demoulin

et al. confirms that mechanistic self-dehumanisation is characterised, for instance, by coldness, numbness and "lack of emotional reaction" (270). Furthermore, I will argue that this mechanistic undercurrent is significant in the way the two narrators are trying to connect with others.

<div align="center">

RELATION TO THE OTHER

</div>

The rather positive attitude of Dawn and Jacobus towards losing their bodily vulnerability implies a negative influence on their relationships with the Other. By losing their supposed vulnerability, both Dawn and Jacobus become the "I" who lives among the others without reciprocity. The node where *Dusklands*, the body, and reciprocity meet is touch. The sense of touch has been the subject of debate since Aristotle, who wrote in *De Anima* that it is the most basic of the senses (373). French Enlightenment philosopher Étienne Bonnot de Condillac thought that touch is the most superior sense that is able to teach the other senses "to judge external objects" (283, 296, 449). Though Aristotle ranked touch at the lowest level in the hierarchy of the senses, he admitted that it is this sense that is most refined in the case of humans (*De Anima* 372, 428). Unlike Condillac, Aristotle did not identify the hand as the organ of touch, he argued instead that it is the flesh, "the most corporeal of all the sense-organs" (*Parts* 115), which is responsible for touch. The delicacy of human touch is, therefore, explained by the softness of human flesh which is, according to Aristotle, "the softest kind of flesh there is" (*Parts* 199). This view of the human flesh propounds an interesting correlation highlighted by Pascal Masie, namely, that "intelligence is proportioned to the degree of tactile sensibility in such a way that it is our *vulnerability* that accounts for our alleged superiority" (84, emphasis added). That touch is labelled as the most basic and primitive sense by Aristotle also means that it is the most necessary of all the senses, without which no animal can exist (*De Anima* 376, 533, 535).

Matthew Ratcliffe's writings on touch, situatedness, and reality offer an approach in which both Aristotle's and Condillac's thoughts are reiterated to a certain degree. First, Ratcliffe acknowledges that the hand is often regarded as "the fovea of touch"; nevertheless, he cautions that its "tactual significance" should not be overstated ("Reality" 142).[13] In an Aristotelean vein, the essentiality of touch is stated as fol-

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13   The fovea is the region of the retina where the acuity of vision is the greatest (Lackie 1123). By borrowing a term from the eye's anatomy, Ratcliffe points to and simultaneously questions the view that

lows: "Without vision or hearing, one would inhabit a very different experiential world, whereas one would not have a world at all without touch" ("Reality" 132). In addition, Ratcliffe comes to the same conclusion concerning the importance of touch in realising the outside world as Condillac did:

> I want to maintain that tactual possibilities, along with the tactual background, are indispensable to a sense of reality and belonging—they connect us to things. The sense of reality presupposed by sight depends on them; without our experience of potential touch, what we see would not appear as "there." ("Reality" 148)

In light of the relationship between touch and reality, Jacobus's question during his transparent eye fantasy—"What is there that is not me?"—gains new meaning. It is not simply the haughty statement of the coloniser, but the ontological question of the self who only relies on sight. As Susan Gallagher sees it, the two novellas are connected by their exploration of "the common psychology of colonisation and oppression" and by the "ontological problem" Dawn and Jacobus share (51, 60). Touch is particularly undesirable for Jacobus since it presupposes belonging and closeness, while by sight, he can keep his distance. While he is waiting for Klawer to pack for the homeward journey, standing among the villagers, he says: "I am among you but I am not of you" (142).

Dawn expresses a similar condition: "during the past year relations between my own and other human bodies have changed" (24). Yet again, reciprocity, which, according to Ratcliffe, is "integral to touch" ("Reality" 134), is broken between Dawn, Jacobus, and their respective surroundings. One example of this brokenness is Dawn's sexual relationship with his wife, or, as he calls it, his "sad connection with Marilyn" (20). Dawn says that, though he and Marilyn make love following the instructions of marriage manuals to the letter, the bliss described in the books eludes them (20). The reference to manuals evokes an image of machines being operated rather than bodies embracing. This image is reinforced by the use of mechanistic terms such as iron spine, sewer, or ducts. There is no mention of touching or sensations at all, Dawn withdraws into his mind and blames Marilyn's disengagement for the failure. It does not cross Dawn's mind that it might be his disengagement from his body that causes the problem; instead, he thinks: "The word which

defines the hands as the sense organs of touch, similarly to the eyes being the sense organs of sight.

at such moments flashes its tail across the heavens of my never quite extinguished consciousness is evacuation" (20). What really happens between Dawn and Marilyn is not touch, but "one object colliding with another" (Ratcliffe, "Situatedness"). It is Dawn's disembodiment that prevents him from realising Marilyn's body as a body through touch instead of perceiving it as a kind of mechanistic reproductive system. He is unable to connect, as his egg metaphor revealed at the very beginning of his narrative. Ratcliffe's thoughts on the body as a "bounded object," an egg, for instance, are especially relevant here:

> Perception of the body as a discrete object with clear boundaries is, at the same time, a failure to perceive and engage with the world, a loss of connectedness. ... Many phenomenologically-minded psychiatrists have pointed out that this kind of predicament is characteristic of experiential pathologies such as schizophrenia ..., where diminished bodily affect is, at the same time, an object-like conspicuousness of the body. In conjunction with this, there is a lack of relatedness to the world, a failure of the body as a "feeling," rather than "felt" entity and a consequent sense of unreality, estrangement and lack of practical belonging that pervades all experience. ("Situatedness")

Dawn may not be diagnosed with schizophrenia in the end, but Ratcliffe's thoughts add an interesting psychiatric layer to Dawn's disembodiment, nonetheless. In light of his lack of connection with Marilyn, it is ironic that Dawn believes himself to be "a specialist of relations" just "like so many people of an intellectual cast" (63). It is Marilyn who realises connections, such as the one between the changes in Dawn's attitude towards other human bodies and the twenty-four photographs of human bodies he carries in a paranoid manner with him everywhere. These pictures of Vietnamese people subjected to rape, starvation, imprisonment, or decapitation, and the consequent dreams and fantasies that haunt Dawn throughout the novella are the only actual link between him and Vietnam. What Dawn achieves by refusing the familiarisation tour to Vietnam and writing his report relying merely on the basis of the photos and introspection is the convenient distance from the Other and the fantasy of invulnerability. Watching a film about tiger cages on Hon Tre Island, Dawn praises his own prudence:

> I applaud myself for having kept away from the physical Vietnam:
> the insolence of the people, the filth and flies and no doubt stench,
> the eyes of prisoners, whom I would no doubt have had to face …
> these things belong to an irredeemable Vietnam in the world which
> only embarrasses and alienates me. (32–33)

The distance Dawn keeps from Vietnam protects him from being touched, both physically and emotionally, by the Vietnamese Other. In other words, Dawn is not exposed to the Other, he is invulnerable in a physical and emotional sense. By watching the film and constantly looking at the twenty-four photos, Dawn hovers over Vietnam like an all-seeing but unfeeling transparent eye. It is this imbalance in vulnerability, or lack of shared corporeal reality, that causes Dawn's indifference. According to Butler, "to be injured means that one has the chance to reflect upon injury, to find out the mechanisms of its distribution, to find out who else suffers from permeable borders, unexpected violence, dispossession, and fear, and in what ways" (*Precarious* xii). Dawn refuses this chance by refusing the journey to Vietnam. He is utterly unable to feel for the Other simply by looking at photos of rape or torture. To realise the vulnerability of the Other, a shared corporeal reality is needed that implies the ensemble of the senses working in concert. Sight alone is insufficient, as Butler puts it: "It is not only or exclusively the visual apprehension of a life that forms a necessary precondition for an understanding of the precariousness of life. Another life is taken in through all the senses" (*Frames* 51). Consequently, a "photo cannot restore integrity to the body it registers" (Butler, *Frames* 78).

The absence of the sense of bodily integrity is most prominent in the case of Dawn's second photograph, which depicts two American soldiers posing with three severed Vietnamese heads. These "trophies," says Dawn, were "taken from corpses or near-corpses" (32). Due, on the one hand, to the photo's insufficiency and, on the other, to his disengagement from his body, Dawn does not perceive the heads as body parts that belonged to a living human being. Bodily integrity is key to Cavarero's concept of horror: "for the being that knows itself irremediably singular," horror has to do with the unwatchability of disfigurement of the body and can best be described as an "instinctive disgust for a violence that, not content merely to kill because killing would be too little, aims to destroy uniqueness of the body, tearing at its constitutive vulnerability" (*Horrorism* 8). About decapitation, Cavarero writes: "it is not so much killing that is in question here but rather dehumanising and

savaging the body as body, destroying it in its figural unity, sullying it" (*Horrorism* 9). It is, however, not horror that the photograph evokes in Dawn but rather a perverse happiness. He finds severed heads ridiculous, and giggles at the picture (32). His reaction shows clearly that he lacks the precondition, namely, the sense of singularity and unity of his body, of apprehending horror. For the same reason, Jacobus is completely clueless as to why his biting off a child's ear is considered mutilation and such an unforgivable crime that he is banned from the village.

Interestingly, Dawn does not only enjoy looking at the photos but feels an irresistible urge to touch them as well: "On evenings when the sober edge of reality is sharpest, when my assembled props feel most like notions out of books ..., I find my hand creeping toward the briefcase" (31). Here, Dawn's hand seems to have its own will, proving again that his relation to his body is disconcerted. In addition, though it is a failed attempt, he tries asserting reality by touch. It is important to note that this kind of touch lacks reciprocity and is aggressive in nature. Dawn attempts to touch, or rather to penetrate the third photo in his collection (which is a still from the film already mentioned above), portraying a man in a tiger cage:

> I close my eyes and pass my fingertips over the cool, odourless surface of the print. ... Everywhere its surface is the same. The glint in the eye, which in a moment luckily never to arrive will through the camera look into my eyes, is bland and opaque under my fingers, yielding no passage into the interior of this obscure but indubitable man. I keep exploring. Under the persistent pressure of my imagination, acute and morbid in the night, it may yet yield. (34)

Dominic Head calls this wish to touch "penetrative desire" that "plainly parallels the penetrative (yet paradoxical) desire of colonial domination" (40). Since the aim of this penetration has to do with domination and not reciprocal connection, it cannot be successful through touch. Dawn wants to touch the man in the picture without being touched himself. Drawing on Husserl, Richard Kearney notes that it is sight that "promises domination," while touch is the intersection "between me and all that is not me" (47). There are two other instances of failed touch in Dawn's story, and the key to both of them lies in domination and the inability to feel for the Other. Dawn is convinced that Marilyn cheats on him, which is why he spies on her through their bedroom window. The scene evokes the earlier

scene of Dawn flipping through his photographs: Dawn sees but is not seen, and Marilyn is framed by the window, the glass being the "cool, odourless surface." He says: "My heart went out to her. I longed to stretch a hand through the glass" (60). Mentioning his heart, Dawn tries to stage this situation as an attempt for a feeling connection. However, when he goes on describing his dreams about people from his photographs, it becomes clear that he does not feel for the Other:

> In euphoric gestures of liberation I stretch out my right hand. My fingers, expressive, full of meaning, full of love, close on their narrow shoulders, but close empty, as clutches have a way of doing in the empty dream-space of one's head. I repeat the movement many times, the movement of love (open the chest, reach the arm) and discouragement (*empty hand, empty heart*). Grateful for the simple honesty of this dream but bored all the same by its moral treadmill, I drift in and out, drowning and waking. (60–61, emphasis added)

Though he finds the dream boring, Dawn realises that touch and empathy are related. Kearney summarises this as follows: "touch serves as the indispensable agency of intercorporality—and, by moral extension, empathy" (47).

Considering how stubbornly Jacobus wants to maintain the distance between himself and others and how uncomfortable Dawn feels when he has to be among other people, the question arises as to why they would want to be among and to interact with others at all. Dawn seems to be the happiest in the mornings when he is not disturbed by Marilyn or his son and can be creative; yet, when he runs away, he brings his son Martin along. Jacobus states proudly on the journey back home that he "was casting off attachments" (144). When he eventually leaves Klawer behind, he performs a dance, hugs and kicks the earth, and sings in his joy to be alone: "Every possible copula was enacted that could link the world to an elephant hunter armed with a bow and crazed with freedom after seventy days of watching eyes and listening ears" (147). He exclaims his love for God and everything in the world, but adds a strange request: "But God, don't let them love me. I don't like accomplices, God, I want to be alone" (147).

Jacobus's monologue, besides being another instance of non-reciprocity in the novel, foreshadows Coetzee's thoughts expressed in his Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech. In the speech, Coetzee claimed that the masters, that is, the white

settlers in Africa, had always expressed their excessive love only for the land—"what is least likely to respond to love"—but never for its people (*Doubling* 97). However, after the joyous speech about freedom and being alone, Jacobus says: "I longed for a mirror. Perhaps I would find a pool, a small limpid pool with a dark bed, in which I might stand, framed by the recomposing clouds, *see myself as others had seen me*" (149, emphasis added).[14] Eventually, he turns into the transparent eyeball wandering alone in the desert. Although this lonely state seems ideal for Jacobus, the absence of others results in self-doubt. What Jacobus really becomes is a "disembodied desire for self-reflection" (Butler, *Psychic* 35).[15] It is as Cavarero claims, that "already on the corporeal level, in so far as a unique being is concerned, identity depends upon the presence of others" (*Relating* 21). Lacking human relations, Jacobus needs a mirror to resolve his ontological uncertainty and assert himself.

Domination over the Other overrules reciprocal connection with the Other in terms of self-assertion. Neither Dawn nor Jacobus is capable of establishing reciprocal relationships, and for this reason, their only option remains dominance. Attwell argues that the two novellas are "coextensive in their quest for self-realisation through dominance" (*Politics* 35). According to Dawn, the Americans wanted to "love" the Vietnamese people, but due to the others' disengagement, these hopes of the Americans were broken. Dawn's explanation for the failure in his personal life (his unhappy connection to Marilyn) is repeated, now in a larger, political context. For their love, the Americans only asked for their recognition in return, but since the Vietnamese failed to provide them with that, the Americans had to extort acknowledgement from them: "We brought them our pliable selves, trembling on the edge of existence, and asked only that they acknowledge us. We brought with us weapons, the gun and its metaphors, the only copulas we knew between ourselves and our objects" (35). Similarly, Jacobus is convinced "that imperial violence is a desperate quest for ontological reassurance" (Head 40). Or, as Peter Knox-Shaw puts it, Jacobus views "his identity coterminous with that of the external world," so that he needs violence as a means of "demonstrating his separateness" (117). After the massacre in the Namaqua village, Jacobus makes this claim: "through

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14   This is the second time Jacobus longs for a mirror to see himself. It can be seen as yet another sign of his narcissistic personality mentioned before.

15   The Hegelian thread emerges once again here. In Butler's reading of Hegel, the master and slave have different relations to bodily life. While the slave "appears as an instrumental body," the master "postures as a disembodied desire for self-reflection" (*Psychic* 35).

their deaths I, who after they had expelled me had wandered the desert like a pallid symbol, again asserted my reality" (163). Dawn and Jacobus both have the same selfish desire of obtaining self-reassurance behind their interactions with the Other. As a result, violence becomes the only way to get in touch with the Other, meaning that touch is reduced to violence—"surely a touch of the worst order" (Butler, *Precarious* 28)—in asserting reality.

It is telling that Jacobus, as a transparent eyeball deprived of all senses except sight, carries with himself a gun: "The gun stands for the hope that there exists that which is other than oneself. The gun is our last defence against isolation within the travelling sphere. The gun is our mediator with the world and therefore our saviour" (122). On the one hand, the gun can be seen as a metaphor for violence, thus the only way for Jacobus to reach out towards the world. On the other hand, it bars the chance of reciprocity. As a mechanical device, the gun is an ideal mediator for Jacobus, since, unlike a hand (generally a mediator), it does not expose its holder. The gun, in Dawn's description quoted above, plays the same role. Furthermore, weapons are more successful in satisfying his penetrative desire than his fingertips. The bullets—"probes of reality" (35)—fired from the guns penetrate the bodies of the Vietnamese people. Another manifestation of this penetrative desire realised with a weapon is Dawn's heinous crime of stabbing his son. This scene parallels the scene of Dawn's failed attempt to penetrate the photograph: "Holding it like a pencil, I push the knife in. The child kicks and flails. … The ball of my thumb still carries the memory of the skin popping. At first it resists the orthogonal pressure, even this child-skin. Then: pop" (73).

In both novellas, the reduction of touch to violence entails the replacement of hands with weapons. This replacement can be seen as an aftermath of Dawn's and Jacobus's mechanistic self-dehumanisation. Their hands, capable of touching but implying exposure and thus potential injury, are replaced with mechanistic devices ensuring invulnerability.

Conclusion

The soul and body division is present in both novellas. While the soul, or spirit as it is sometimes referred to, is cherished, the body is perceived by the two main characters as burdensome and it exposes Dawn and Jacobus to pain. In the latter's case, it reveals the uncomfortable truth about the similarity between European

and African peoples. Therefore, both narrator characters are eager to escape their traitorous bodies in feverish dreams and fantasies. Since the body is undoubtedly an inborn characteristic of human beings, this disengagement from the body is interpreted as a particular type of mechanistic self-dehumanisation on the part of Dawn and Jacobus.

Given that this disembodiment grants the fantasy of invulnerability, Dawn and Jacobus experience it as something positive, even beneficial. However, this disengagement from their bodies affects their relationships with others and the world surrounding them significantly and negatively. Most importantly, neither Dawn nor Jacobus can develop reciprocal relationships with other people. They both realise, nevertheless, that the Other is necessary in asserting themselves. Hence, they establish one-directional, dominating relationships. Violence remains the only way for the twentieth-century mythographer and the eighteenth-century explorer to interact with others. Unlike the Namaqua people, who reach out with caring hands to cure Jacobus, the two narrators reach out with weapons towards the Other.

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Cosmopolitanism and Neocitizenship in Teju Cole's *Open City* and Zadie Smith's *NW*

ANITA BARTA

Abstract: This paper examines the possible new dimensions of the cosmopolitan disposition and a phenomenon that can be called neocitizenship in two contemporary literary works, Teju Cole's Open City *and Zadie Smith's* NW. *The main question the paper explores is how literary narratives portray the clash of cosmopolitan attitudes with material and economic interests in contemporary neoliberal societies. It is argued that some characters can theoretically identify with the classical, human-centric idea of cosmopolitanism based on the principle of fair treatment, but it remains an unattainable utopia because they bump into obstacles when putting principles into practice. Julius is an example of this attitude in Cole's* Open City. *Other characters, such as Natalie in* NW, *exemplify the pragmatic notion of self-entrepreneurial neocitizenship which is constrained by the inhuman practices of neoliberalism. They are flexible and opportunistic characters who work meticulously to achieve personal success and seem successful on the surface. However, it turns out that both of these characters, who believe in cosmopolitan ethics and are more down-to-earth neocitizens, only chase a mirage and eventually fail in the novels, which can be retraced to the fact that they live in denial and are unable to come to terms with past deeds.*

ANITA BARTA

Cosmopolitanism and Citizenship in Neoliberal Societies

The concept of cosmopolitanism (i.e. world citizenship) was born in the European civilisation and it has existed primarily within the European context for more than two thousand years. Even though it reflects an approach based on Western culture, during this unthinkably long period the meaning of the word has noticeably transformed. The expression "world citizenship" evokes an urban environment and, in this respect, cosmopolitanism, cities, and citizenship can be seen as inseparable ideas, though the meanings of these terms have always been defined by a given social and political context. The ancient Greek idea of cosmopolitanism, in short, means that people deserve fair treatment, just like quasi-siblings, which should be coupled with a profoundly open-minded attitude.

Cosmopolitanism suggests that despite profound cultural and social differences, mankind constitutes one community. The first usage of the word in the fourth century BC differs from its twenty-first-century meaning and, due to never-ending social changes, the meaning of the term also keeps changing. Colonisation and its aftermath have irreversibly altered, among others, the social composition of the inhabitants in many cities of once colonising countries, and the specific social issues and typical challenges they are coping with at present, for instance, racism, prejudice, and undue police violence can be retraced to this heritage to some extent.

Like the concept of cosmopolitanism, the meaning of citizenship has also transformed in contemporary Western societies. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines citizenship as a form of relationship between an individual and the state, the latter giving freedom and responsibility to the citizens. However, according to Eva Cherniavsky, the "old" term citizen refers to abstract equality in bourgeois civil society, and since the 1990s, heated debates have taken place about the relationship of the nation and the state under the political and economic condition of neoliberalism (23), which clearly shows that the term citizenship, not unlike cosmopolitanism, needs to be redefined. Accordingly, the meanings of cosmopolitanism and citizenship have been in the process of transformation under the economic imperative of neoliberalism, and the aim of this study is to explore how twenty-first-century literary works thematise this change. The question I am going to explore is what new dimensions of cosmopolitanism can be traced in Teju Cole's *Open City* and in Zadie Smith's *NW,* and how a new phenomenon, which can be called "neocitizenship," appears and shapes the behaviour of fictitious characters. The novels are part of diasporic literature, they

were written by a Nigerian American and a British Jamaican author, both exploring topical issues, such as migration, prejudice, and violence, from the perspectives of contemporary diasporic fiction.

Teju Cole is a Nigerian American novelist, photographer, critic, curator, and author of several books. He was born in the United States but partly grew up in Lagos and is currently the Gore Vidal Professor of the Practice of Creative Writing at Harvard. He published *Open City* in 2011. Julius is the main character of the narrative; he was born in Nigeria, has a German mother and grandmother, and works in New York. From the beginning, he is described as someone who pays special attention to visual arts and classical music; he is a highly educated, open-minded intellectual with a multi-ethnic background, which superficially implies a cosmopolitan disposition. However, it gradually emerges that he lives with repressed memories and, although a psychiatrist by profession at an American hospital, he has fundamental problems with becoming emotionally attached to people. By the end of the novel, the readers learn that they see everything only from Julius's perspective and the character, who is successful and open-minded on the surface, hides secrets in his past that he fails to admit to, which questions the viability of cosmopolitan ideals.

Zadie Smith is a contemporary British author of novels, essays, and short stories. She published her fourth novel, *NW,* in 2012. Set in Northwest London, the narrative focuses on the friendship of Leah Hanwell and Natalie Blake who grew up together in Willesden. As young adults, they gradually drift apart since their education, social class and status, career ambitions, and family life take them in different directions; however, the novel's final scene offers hope that their friendship has deeper roots than it seems on the surface. In the novel, Leah embodies innocent goodwill, a hallmark of the cosmopolitan utopia, whereas Natalie is the model of an entrepreneurial neocitizen with a strong drive for social and economic self-realisation. The two characters provide excellent grounds to explore how cosmopolitan ideals and neocitizen reality clash in the city-dwellers' lives in modern London.

My analysis of Teju Cole's *Open City* and Zadie Smith's *NW* shows that today's cosmopolitanism sometimes suggests an escape to avoid facing personal responsibility, for example, for violent acts. It can also be a constraint in the case of an abused victim who may prefer to move far away rather than live where the violence happened. Thus, ultimately, people in both categories may leave their countries of origin for a new home where nobody knows what had happened to them. The main characters in the novels I explore in this paper carry injuries or secrets from their

pasts; they subsequently become world citizens, establish a new existence, and start to flexibly adapt to new circumstances yet cannot really overcome the previous trauma or misery.

Although neoliberalism is an economic term, it has an impact on many non-economic spheres of the present Western world, including the concepts of cosmopolitanism and neocitizenship. In the wake of neoliberal changes, the word "citizen" has slowly been divested of the modifier "bourgeois" and gave way to the birth of new descriptors, for instance, "entrepreneurial citizen-subjects" (Cherniavsky 2). *Open City* and *NW* are set in this Western, neoliberal world and some characters in the stories can be labelled neocitizens because they represent the gap between the ethical principles of cosmopolitanism and the inhumanity of neoliberal practices.

Cherniavsky's recent monograph, *Neocitizenship: Political Culture after Democracy* (2017), helps understand the social background of the novels because she discusses the changing contexts and practices of citizenship in twenty-first-century neoliberal societies (5). The expression "neocitizen" needs to be introduced "as we are living in the midst of a momentous reconfiguration of political order" (11). She suggests that "neocitizens" are citizens who are not primarily characterised by an active political identity (36), but they are neoliberal subjects with fewer claims on the state; they are "citizen-subjects" who are obliged to become entrepreneurs of themselves (38). Cherniavsky assumes that in the context of neoliberal governance, the classical term citizenship (which implies abstract equality, racial nationalism, bourgeois civil society) has been transformed, eroded, and made to disappear, and instead, flexible (23), openly opportunistic (64) and entrepreneurial neocitizens live in the neoliberal states (11). Since Cole's and Smith's novels explore the dynamic transformation of characters with biracial or multi-ethnic backgrounds in an urban context, Cherniavsky's observations may prove useful in highlighting the social-civic environment in which the personal stories unfold.

Correspondingly, it has become obvious by the second decade of this millennium that under the condition of neoliberalism, the expected advent of freedom and equality that cosmopolitanism fosters is lagging. Instead of working like a well-oiled machine, diverse and multicultural societies are struggling with new challenges, for instance, instead of becoming integrated, many people live in quasi-enclaves. Although the ever-expanding boundaries of a global world make London and New York more versatile, cosmopolitanism is still not a synonym for a new type of freedom. In this essay, it is argued that cosmopolitanism is acquiring new meanings

in neoliberal societies; it is becoming an unattainable, utopian ideal, an escape, as the two diasporic novels I discuss, Teju Cole's *Open City* and Zadie Smith's *NW*, suggest. Some characters are self-made entrepreneurs, others are cosmopolitans showcasing an approach that differs from the classical interpretation, and both categories express the disillusionment of a nominally open society that is bound together with the longstanding ties of neoliberalism in a shrinking world. The characters chase a mirage and can never reach the glowing image of equality as they fail to face personal responsibility and run up against the norms and limits of neoliberal societies.

Modern Conceptions of Cosmopolitanism

It is Immanuel Kant who defined cosmopolitan citizenship in a way that continues to have an impact on the twenty-first century. He speaks of a world in which states are obligated to recognise that every human being has the right to visit a foreign country without being treated with hostility. The ultimate goal of history would be to establish a community and, in his work *Perpetual Peace,* Kant envisions this ideal world, a cosmopolis, a world made up of confederated free republics (Taraborrelli xi–xii). This idea has endured throughout the twentieth century and has been the inspiration underlying global projects such as the League of Nations or the United Nations Organisation to promote international peace and defend fundamental human rights (Taraborrelli xii). In the twentieth century, the Kantian notion of cosmopolitanism became a theoretical resource to face the challenges triggered by globalisation processes (Taraborrelli xiii).

Today, in literary academic discourses, the term cosmopolitanism seems to be more heterogeneous, and sometimes contradictory; it appears as an umbrella term. Sonya O. Rose notes how debated the concept is in academic texts and elaborates on a possible definition: "an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity" (3). Robert Spenser also describes the term as contradictory because it may designate the Kantian ideal of hospitality, it may refer to an expanded definition of citizenship, or it can label a cultural mixing represented by literary texts (2). Both arguments include a new aspect of the contemporary academic approach, namely, cultural mixing, broadening further the earliest interpretation of cosmopolitanism and revealing the experience of the characters in Cole's novel.

In *Open City,* cosmopolitanism refers to real or imaginative mobility, and a summary of personal memories and collective historical recollections as well (Gehrmann 9). Besides mobility, in Julius's case, the word can be associated with both intellectual curiosity and a normative concept that characterises globalised societies. In a similar vein, *Open City* is customarily read as an exemplary cosmopolitan performance (Vermeulen 3) that both fosters and critiques cosmopolitanism. The accelerating progress in global economies and societies, and the escalating migration waves suggest that the number of possible interpretations of cosmopolitanism will increase in the future, and probably more neologisms will be born that follow the latest developments in multi-ethnic societies.

In *NW*, cosmopolitanism is not described as a perfect ideal, but rather as something defective. According to Kristian Shaw, cosmopolitanism is "the means by which to achieve harmony when living with difference" (21), which resembles Kwame Anthony Appiah's view on difference. Leah exemplifies the hard side of cosmopolitan reality: even though she approaches Shar with trust at the beginning of the novel, she bumps against walls. The relationship between the two of them shows the harsh reality of transnational engagement, the cultural tension, and social divides in the Northwest district of London. Although she is refused and scammed by Shar, Leah does not stop being altruistic. On the contrary, she seeks a way to help Shar, she even goes to her flat and she is not discouraged when the trust she shows is not returned. Her naïve treatment of her fellow citizens is a refreshing illustration of human generosity and coincides with the utopian cosmopolitan ideal. When she is cheated, she does not seek revenge; she can handle rejection and she can be as generous as before, which is comparable to Christian ideals of forgiveness.

Nevertheless, it is surprising that there is not a single viable example of cosmopolitanism in *NW,* despite the fact that London is the capital of multi-ethnic Britain, and theoretically could be an example of happy coexistence in the novel. Although the history of colonisation and the Commonwealth after decolonisation are not dealt with in the novel, the long history of multi-ethnic London would have undoubtedly created some positive and happy experiences at the same time. With this lack, the novel suggests that due to the social changes in twenty-first-century London, the utopian ideal of cosmopolitanism fails inevitably.

The two novels explore the experiences of diasporic characters in American and British societies in the twenty-first century in which new layers of the word cosmopolitanism are also in the process of taking shape. One such new expression

is vernacular cosmopolitanism, which has been coined by Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha found Naipaul's central character in *The Mimic Men* enthralling because he worked through his despair, anxieties, and alienation and lived a sort of incomplete but intricately communitarian and busy life (11). Bhabha calls this type of character vernacular cosmopolitan, meaning that such characters can move between cultural traditions, and live hybrid forms of life. His term also refers to refugees, who are on the periphery of Western societies and belong to more than one language or culture (13). According to Bhabha, vernacular cosmopolitans are free but have the right to difference in equality (16). In other words, vernacular cosmopolitanism describes the universality of non-Western citizens with local bonding, who can be called "local-universal citizens" since they are willing to broaden their cultural horizons. These citizens, nevertheless, do not consider equality as a "neutralisation of differences in the name of the 'universality'" (Bhabha 17). However, it must be noted that the context Bhabha deals with is mainly the post-colonial habitat of better-educated members of the former British Empire; undoubtedly, he describes an intellectual battlefield.

Open City and *NW* are also examples of urban fiction where the city and the setting of the stories play a central role. The metropolises, New York in the *Open City* and London in *NW* are not randomly chosen environments. Both novels deal with characters who have multi-ethnic backgrounds, family ties, and social relationships and they live in a city, a perfect hiding place to run away from past mistakes. In the case of Cole's novel, the main character lives and travels through three continents, yet he always chooses a global city. On the other hand, *NW* exposes disharmony, a morose, bitter atmosphere of a district in London where characters struggle in a life fraught with many complications and they are on the verge of losing the game. They are not excluded from the ideal world of freedom and equality; they just do not pursue dreams out of reach because it is beyond dispute that the utopian community of a harmonious cosmopolitan society does not exist in the world of this novel. This claim is supported by a sentence on the very first page of *NW*: "Here's what Michel likes to say: not everyone can be invited to the party" (Smith 3), revealing that equality is only a mirage.

There is one more significant difference between the two novels: the question of mobility. Julius is a continuously moving, walking, travelling, and working person, he is described as somebody who is constantly leaving a location or heading to a new place; he is a highly mobile person, which is a profoundly cosmopolitan

trait and does not necessarily characterise neocitizens. The characters in *NW,* however, are mostly immobile. Leah, for example, has never had any experience outside the NW neighbourhood in the novel as Molly Slavin states (8). Leah's hammock scenes frame the novel; the narrative begins and closes with an image in which Leah is lying in her hammock, her immobile resting place. Another difference is that Leah and Natalie's world could be "nowhere," as Slavin puts it (7), whereas Julius's world could be called "everywhere," which poses further questions about locality.

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UNIVERSAL VS. LOCAL VALUES

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As a friendly gesture, Julius sends a copy of *Cosmopolitanism* by Kwame Anthony Appiah to Farouq, a young Moroccan man who runs a phone shop in Brussels (Cole 124). Although no concrete part of the book is referred to or analysed in detail during their discussions, the modern conception of cosmopolitanism offered by the book must have made a deep impact on Julius. When Appiah discusses the question of whether it is worth speaking about universal values and universal morality or not, he undoubtedly communicates his commitment to objective values, which he defines as universal and local values (Appiah 20). He is thinking about a universal morality that rests on both being part of the place where one lives and a part of a broader human community (Appiah 17). In other words, certain values are universal just as certain values are local: this argument adds new features to the classical interpretation of cosmopolitanism; however, as my analysis will showcase, the reconciliation of the two types of values remains unsuccessful in both novels. For instance, an ironic remark in *NW* reveals that Smith's novel regards universal ethical principles utopistic, which are challenged by local practices: "She and Michel are invited [to the dinner at Natalie's house] to provide something like local colour" (Smith 87); referring to the fact that Leah and Michel are an interracial couple, Leah is white and Michel is black.

In *Open City*, Julius meets Dr Maillotte, a retired surgeon, on the flight to Brussels, whose approach to maintaining or losing personal ties to a country can be read as a model for advancing from a national to a global direction. They have a long discussion on the plane and later meet for lunch (Cole 88). Dr Maillotte shows that it is possible "to work through the national towards the global" because she, by nature, never has to choose between the local and the global but her inborn cosmopolitanism helps reconcile local attachments with global allegiances (Spenser 38). Local

attachment can mean, for instance, personal relationships in New York or Nigeria for Julius, or the fact that Dr Maillotte travels to Belgium every now and then because her friends there keep her coming back. On the other hand, she thinks that her husband slowly loses his connection to Brussels (Cole 142), and it can be one reason why she mainly comes to Europe without him. When she asks Julius about his travels to Nigeria he says that he rarely visits the country of his birthplace because he is rather busy, and that he too is losing some of his connections.

Farouq, on the other hand, thinks about global and local values from a different angle as he would like to be the next Edward Said (Cole 128). He makes reference to Said, who published *Orientalism* in 1978, in which he criticised the stereotypical Western vision of otherness: "European culture was able to manage—and even to produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said 3). Farouq is disappointed because marked difference is never accepted and never seen as containing its own value in Europe. Farouq describes "Belgium as a difficult place for an Arab" to live in because there is a specific trouble about being here and maintaining uniqueness and difference (Cole 142–143). Nevertheless, Farouq represents a self-contradictory point when he says, "in [his] opinion, the Palestinian question is the central question of our time" (Cole 121), suggesting that he believes this question to be more important than others, including the question of the value of difference.

Professor Saito, who used to give lectures at Maxwell College before he retired, can be seen as another character who embodies universal values. Appiah argues that cosmopolitanism is based on two ideas: first, it is an obligation that exists toward others and that stretches beyond personal interest, and second, human lives are taken seriously since practices and beliefs are treated as significant (Appiah 14). In this vein, we can observe in the novel that the professor enjoys the debates with Julius, shares his opinion with him, and warns him that he "must be careful about closing too many doors" (Cole 172), which can be a relevant piece of advice to help him maintain the cosmopolitan open mindset. Julius in turn visits him in New York, sometimes due to respectful obligation. One day Julius meets Mary, who used to work as a nurse for Professor Saito, and she lets him know how much the professor enjoyed his visits (Cole 234), meaning that not only did Julius highly appreciate the professor but that Saito also equally valued his company. They have a master–disciple relationship, and when Julius eventually learns that the professor is gay (Cole 172), he only says that "[they] had had conversations for three years without

any idea about this vital part of his life" (Cole 172), coming to the conclusion that there is no reason to bring it up now.

According to Appiah, a further tool the cosmopolitan disposition relies on in case of discord is conversation; it is a universal value, and it can be the first step when the voices of dissent are heard. Appiah acknowledges that a "conversation doesn't have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it's enough that it helps people get used to one another" (Appiah 87). Julius applies this method when he talks to Farouq and Khalil; he listens to them and transmits their one-sided opinion to the reader. He does not refuse or quarrel, but he also shares his final thoughts on Farouq's position: "there was something powerful about him, a seething intelligence, something that wanted to believe itself indomitable. But he was one of the thwarted ones" (Cole 129). It may sound disappointing because the men's different points of view do not come closer in the end; nevertheless, reaching an agreement on such complex questions is anything but utopian, rather, it would require a down-to-earth approach.

The analysis of the local versus global aspects of cosmopolitanism, then, suggests that representing both dimensions generates tensions that remain unsolved throughout the novel. The difference is regarded as an enriching component in an ideal case, and multi-ethnicity or same-sex relationships may add diverse values to the composition of society. The role of conversation is also mentioned as a crucial element in the understanding of other points of view and Farouq's narratives supply many examples for this. Farouq's opinion is revealed on many topics, and Julius transmits them in an impartial style, he positions himself as neither superior nor inferior to Farouq. It is left to the reader to agree or disagree with Farouq; nevertheless, the inherent tension due to irreconcilable opinions never disappears, and the unrealistically utopistic character of cosmopolitanism is strengthened even further.

Neocitizenship in the Neoliberal Frame

Whereas the ideal of cosmopolitanism appears as an unattainable mirage throughout the novels, another accessible form of conduct is slowly taking shape on the horizon: neocitizenship. Characters manage their lives in the freedom offered by a neoliberal environment which ensures the conditions for opportunistic self-realisation. Michel in *NW* can be an example of this attitude when he says, "[he] know[s] this country has opportunities if you want to grab them, you can do it"

(Smith 29). In addition, the ideology of neoliberalism is inseparable from market capitalism, the prime mover of neoliberal societies. However, this perceived freedom is often very deceptive: migrants who are less skilled than Julius can easily find themselves on the periphery of the neoliberal city. In *Open City*, for instance, Julius speculates about a black woman who is cleaning a church in Brussels, he tries to find out about her story while he is walking up toward the altar in the silent hum of the vacuum cleaner and the organ music (Cole 138). Interestingly, this immigrant woman never says a word, she remains a marginal character on the periphery; it is only Julius who speculates about her story. The woman is working in silence while the well-educated, elite Julius remains the single narrator, and the less privileged woman's story in the background is conveyed exclusively through his perspective. *NW*, on the other hand, provides a less stereotypical example of how labour force moves when the story of a Brazilian girl, Maria, is related, who, after arriving in London, "discovered her employer to be several shades darker than she was herself" (Smith 299). The two examples show that being a mobile world citizen itself does not guarantee equality; people can be equal cosmopolitan human beings only in theory as the labour market prices them very clearly in neoliberal societies.

Sheri-Marie Harrison claims that in immigrant novels, such as *Open City,* the movement of migrants follows the model of capital flow: "they formally position migrant subjects as analogues of capital" (203). Nations remain important, though not as fixed goals but as a means to forward the flow of capital or labour force, and in this respect, "an immigrant novel mirrors neoliberal capital's paradoxical reliance on the nation as an economic mechanism that can facilitate competitive conditions for the free flow of capital" (203). Unlike the cleaning woman who may be perceived as cheap labour force, Julius is an elite diasporic intellectual; he is from Nigeria, but he lives in America as a respected psychiatrist, not as a refugee. His patients are proud of him, one of his elderly patients, for instance, notes with emotion in his voice how important it is for him to see a black man in a white coat: "Doctor, I just want to tell you how proud I am to come here and see a young black man like yourself in that white coat, because things haven't ever been easy for us, and no one has ever given us nothing without a struggle" (Cole 210). This episode shows that neoliberal societies welcome those who can adopt the attitude needed to become successful, but the underprivileged layer is ignored and neglected, for instance, the reader knows nothing about this patient except that he is black.

Julius demonstrates what Spencer has called cosmopolitan disposition, though he only looks free and altruistic on the surface. He never really intends to put his ideals into practice, instead, turns out to be a self-entrepreneurial neocitizen. Spencer states that cosmopolitanism is, first of all, a disposition characterised by self-awareness, a sensitivity to the world beyond one's immediate milieu (Spencer 4), and this is true for Julius on the surface. This disposition characterises his life; at first glance, he appears to be sensitive to the suffering of others. The young Julius wants to protect a girl in his class because she has polio which has withered her left foot into a twisted stump that she drags behind her when she walks, and Julius is afraid that the boys in the class would mock her (Cole 61). His first instinct is a gallant, protective one, though he has nothing to do with that girl. This is a generous, altruistic step toward a stranger, but it is odd at the same time that he shows empathy only to people who are emotionally removed from him in the novel.

Until the end of the narrative, Julius creates the impression of an objective observer, a person who is highly sensitive and responsive to others' suffering, but it is rather telling that this is true exclusively in the case of strangers. For instance, as part of his professional duties, he wants to buy a book written by his patient just to understand her mindset; though he knows he would not have time to read all of it, he wants to think more about what his patient has written, and he also hopes that the book might help him gain further insight into her psychological state (Cole 27). However, looking at the deeper level of the story, Julius's response is different to people he has intimate connections with. He is, for instance, incomprehensively ignorant of the tragedy that his rape of Moji could have caused in the girl's life. He is insensitive to the devastation that he had caused and he is also blind to acknowledge that it is impossible to turn his back on his past deeds and run away without restoring his relationship with Moji.

Finally, the treatment of the rape that Julius may have committed highlights a typical feature of the neoliberal world, namely, accountability. Accountability matters even though it is not foregrounded in the novels, it remains hidden behind veils but it subconsciously controls the behaviour of neocitizens who work consciously to achieve personal success. In the environment of the neoliberal business practice, which seeks protection from local regulation, profit-oriented companies often try to avoid high national taxes by resorting to offshore banks (Harrison 208). Similarly, Julius exemplifies a new neoliberal model of migration: his figure is modelled on the capital committed to endless movement across borders and he strives

to shake off accountability (207). Harrison also states that "[h]is rape accusation is also about transparency and about being accountable" (212). Natalie in *NW* can be mentioned as another example of a character struggling with accountability since she also leads a double life and she is described as someone who exhibits voyeuristic tendencies: "Natalie Blake had a strong desire to slip into the lives of other people" (Smith 283). Her deeds committed in secret are eventually revealed to her husband and it slowly becomes obvious that the entrepreneurial self-actualisation of neocitizenship has an unexpected price.

Characters manage their lives in the freedom provided by neoliberal societies and they flexibly adapt to the circumstances. Their country of origin does not determine their options, as it does not delimit their cultural practices: they are self-entrepreneurs who take advantage of the free mobility offered by neoliberal societies, yet their choices are constrained by the market economy. Interestingly, the novels under scrutiny in this study approach the same subject from different angles.

Neocitizenship in *NW*

Zadie Smith's novel is a social drama of steely grey lives and endless struggles for a little human warmth, and the narrative that distances the characters from the reader portrays the coldness in human relationships. James Wood states that the narrative technique that overwhelms the reader with information beyond control can be viewed as filling a void (Hedin 18), and it creates a bridgeless chasm between the characters and the reader. Bruce Robbins shares this view: he argues that the narrative technique used by Zadie Smith is characterised by "too much information" to spare the readers' feelings (4). He mentions the example of a death scene: Felix's death is communicated in a cold, distanced manner as the narrative offers too much information instead of creating an affective link, inhibiting the reader from connecting to the character emotionally. Furthermore, there are no admirable characters, successful and desired careers, reassuring foreseeable solutions on the horizon, or happy endings in any of the storylines. Instead, examples of abusive personal relationships, substance abuse, stabbing, social strife, desperate struggles on a personal level, and fear of aging dominate the narrative.

Shaw states that the realistic urban environment is an ideal setting to address cosmopolitan issues at the most micro-level of society (6). The London of *NW* is depicted as a microcosm for the transnationalism of the twenty-first century, exposing

the difficulties of practising the world citizen ideals of empathy, tolerance, and belonging (7). The setting of the story is London, a megacity, which is a perfect setting to demonstrate how cosmopolitan ideals come up against neoliberal reality. For instance, Leah's immediate friendly reaction to help Shar is an illustration of the cosmopolitan attitude but later, when the fraud is revealed, she is shattered. This episode shows her as a naïve, altruistic cosmopolitan who is willing to help on the grounds that everybody deserves fair treatment. This way, *NW* displays sunless shades of a metropolis: characters are world citizens but their downfall is inevitable. The characters also exemplify an earlier observation that there is a significant difference between human-centric cosmopolitanism and profit-centric neoliberalism. Leah, for instance, comments on Michel's opinion this way: "you want to be rich like them, but you can't be bothered with their morals, whereas I am more interested in their morals than their money" (Smith 82).

Although neocitizenship is used in a political context in Cherniavsky's book, it is a central concept in this study because political and economic changes always give way to social changes, often reflected in literature. *NW* is a novel that portrays characters who must attain their personal objectives in a rather challenging environment. I call these characters, such as Natalie and Felix, "neocitizens" since their present achievement and private attitude matter in the first place. Cherniavsky refers to this personal feature when she describes "citizen-subjects" and expresses the need for a new alternative descriptor attached to citizens, such as "flexible or entrepreneurial" (23). This is in contrast with the "old," "bourgeois" citizenship, which is based on the idea that people are engaged with issues of equality, civil society (Cherniavsky 23), civic virtue, and the common good. However, the characters in *NW* are seldom depicted as beings preoccupied with such virtues, and even if they are, as Leah for instance, their altruism seems to be unable to survive in the neoliberal environment. Neocitizens are not characterised by their political engagement or relation to the institutions of neoliberal governance (Cherniavsky 23), the focus is achievement based on their own efforts, irrespective of ancestry or physical heritage. In Smith's novel, Natalie, whose real name is Keisha, represents this attitude the most obviously, which is why she can model an entrepreneurial neocitizen.

Neocitizens in *NW* are born in London or soon after their arrival they live as if they had been born there, and they keep or take up the pace of the city. They are not examples of exotic otherness, oppressors and victims, immigrants, or native inhabitants. For instance, Natalie, a black woman and a busy barrister who studied

at a posh university, is trying to maintain the illusion of an enviable, privileged life. At first sight, Natalie is an ideal model of personal and social advancement; she has always been a hard-working girl and she thinks "three years ahead about the important things in life" (Smith 184). She can "sit in one place longer than other children," and "be bored for hours without complaint" (Smith 180), she is determined about her career and even changes her name from Keisha to Natalie (Smith 206). Natalie is "studying for the bar"; she is going to be a barrister (Smith 217) and she hates "holidays preferring to work" (Smith 258), just like Julius in *Open City*. However, in a couple of years, her mindset changes: she earns so much that she has "completely forgotten what it is like to be poor" (Smith 280), and she neither speaks nor understands the language of the lower class anymore. Even though she has reached desirable economic goals and she belongs to the lucky upper-middle class, she is not happy and finds comfort in secret sexual affairs, and finally, she is teetering on the verge of committing suicide.

Leah can be an important counterpoint to Natalie, and she can serve as a positive model of the cosmopolitan disposition despite her unhappiness. The first chapter of the novel focuses on Leah's story, revealing that she was born and raised in a warm family. She has Irish ancestors and a loving and ambitious husband: "Her husband was kinder than any man Leah Hanwell had ever known, aside from her father" (Smith 23). Michel, her francophone husband, and her Irish ancestors are her closest family members and these facts strengthen her self-image as a person who feels at home in a multi-ethnic environment, which is an important feature of cosmopolitanism. She is also a socially conscious person: her job is to distribute funds and this position fits her perfectly. Her hospitality and empathy towards Shar show that she is not just open on the surface, she does not merely pretend to care but it is her natural, innate quality. All these features introduce a person who is open, sensitive and sociable; she could be a happy world citizen, but, unfortunately, Leah is unhappy. Through Leah's character, Smith supplies a perfectly realistic image of contemporary London in *NW*: "The narrative reflects a rational, melancholic and pragmatic glocal environment built on the conflict, diversity, and discord of a future *imperfect*" (Shaw 20).

Both female characters have identity crises, but the crises have nothing to do with abstract ideals. They have identity crises because they have reached a milestone in their lives where they must take account of and evaluate all they have, and eventually rely on something firm so that they can go on. Even though they live in socially

acceptable families with understanding husbands, they are unable to communicate with their spouses to share the unbearable burden they carry. Leah shares with Shar that she is pregnant as it seems to be easier for her to talk to a total stranger than to her husband, and Natalie talks to Nathan after running away from home. Finally, Leah gradually drifts toward a nervous breakdown and Natalie is on the verge of suicide.

It must also be noted that both women have secrets that force them to lead a double life, which culminates in a tension that permanently grinds them until they become a bundle of nerves. Leah has an abortion and uses contraception, despite their agreement to try to have a baby, but she wants to avoid the confrontation with Michel and attempts to maintain the life that she has been content with so far. It is more difficult to find the reason for Natalie's secret life. She has always been a hardworking and ambitious girl, her career is more than successful, she is a perfect neocitizen who has enviably achieved her goals in the unfriendly, cold, neoliberal, result-oriented business life of London. It seems to be incomprehensible why she needs to peep into the lives of strangers and have sexual affairs with people who are outside her class. As can be seen, Zadie Smith focuses on the portrayal of two female characters with different family backgrounds, ethnic origins, professional successes, marital relationships, social standing, and intellectual temper, but both of whom are equally on the verge of collapse. The novel suggests, then, that despite the differences, these women who live seemingly desirable lives in contemporary London tend to hide frustration and unhappiness.

The character of Felix could have been another positive model if his story had not culminated in him being murdered. He can be seen as lucky until "he got deep in the drug" (Smith 128) and lost his family, but after a troublesome couple of years, he has the mental strength to "pick himself up off the floor" (Smith 128). Felix believes that only he has the power to stand up (Smith 133) and that is how he works at a garage now: he has turned his back on drugs, became an apprentice, and he is rebuilding his life from scratch. He meets Grace and feels that his "happiness has finally arrived" (Smith 118) because she proves to be a lifesaver (133). Unfortunately, his dreams fail because he happens to come across two men who end up stabbing him after a feud (Smith 304); thus, much as he is on the threshold of a brand new and free life, his promising future shatters in a moment.

Similarly, Michel is seen as a good man who is full of hope and who wants to move forward, and outwardly, he is on track to reach his goals: his credo is "you

are what you do" (Smith 29). For him, from the very first day he arrived in the UK, it has been very clear that he was going up and climbing the ladder. In France, his social mobility was more limited, but in England, he can move up. He appreciates his opportunity and grabs it without hesitation: "In France, you're African, you're Algerian. There's no opportunity, you can't move! Here, you can move" (Smith 29). Michel believes that the advancement in this country has less to do with skin colour and he says "[he] can trade like anyone" and "it's pure market on there, nothing about skin" (Smith 29). Unfortunately, Leah does not want to have a child and by means of dramatic irony, the narrator informs the reader about her disposition whereas Michel does not know that his plans of having a family are soon going to collapse. In addition, Michel and Leah exemplify another disappointing feature of the cosmopolitan utopia when it turns out that their success also means an alienation from their old neighbourhood which is now seen as dangerous: "It could be said that one of Michel's dreams has come true: they have gone up one rung, at least in the quality and elaboration of their fear" (Smith 92).

The personal failures, the unhappy stories and the ending without reassuring or hopeful future possibilities in *NW* compel the reader to face the unpleasant side of contemporary urban reality. The naked truth shown without hypocrisy to the reader destroys the idyllic image of cosmopolitanism; the characters in the novel do not embody the sunny side of the life of cosmopolitan citizens and even if they have altruistic ideals about hospitality and equality, these fail in the novel. In a conversation, Frank, Leah's father, calls some men they know "Eurotrash brothers" (Smith 226) and in return, Leah calls Frank "Eurotrash" (Smith 226). This passionate outcry reflects a harsh neoliberal perspective that implies a critique of the basic tenets of cosmopolitanism, which are based on the belief that despite profound cultural and social differences, mankind constitutes one community. The reader is forced to be a voyeur as the most intimate, private secrets are disclosed and there is nowhere to run away from them. The characters are frustrated, their dreams fail, and none of them exemplifies an attractive model, thus *NW* can be seen as the critique of cosmopolitan utopia, which, as we will see, is somewhat in contrast to *Open City*.

Julius, a Cosmopolitan of the Twenty-First Century

In Teju Cole's novel, Julius is able to establish a new life on a different continent in New York and to become a successful city dweller, a self-entrepreneurial citizen

with a cosmopolitan mindset who decides freely about his affiliations and solidarity. We might claim that Julius's mind is the open city. The title of this novel can be interpreted in three ways; first, it refers to Brussels during the Second World War when it was declared an open city and thereby exempt from bombardment to avoid its destruction (Cole 97). Second, New York can be called an open city as well because the influx into and the outflow from the city never stop; it is an ever-growing and always-changing dwelling place. Lastly, Julius's life is like an open city because he lives in an open world without borders, as if he were a city with open gates allowing entrance and exit. Correspondingly, Spenser asks what cosmopolitanism is and in his interpretation, Julius is the answer since his sensitive character and open disposition make him a conscious world citizen (4). He has buried his secret imperceptibly, and on the perceptible surface, the doors are open, anybody can walk in and walk out of his world. The novel depicts the steps Julius takes on the way to his self-actualisation: "You have to set yourself a challenge, and you must find a way to meet it exactly, whether it is a parachute or a dive from a cliff, or sitting perfectly still for an hour, and you must accomplish it in a beautiful way, of course" (Cole 197). He never complains but flexibly accommodates himself to his environment which helps him survive both in the Nigerian military school and in New York when he loses his girlfriend or friends.

Julius is a world citizen, and his personal relationships span over races, ages, and continents, and he interprets the terms "we" and "them" in a more conscious and less intuitive way. His free choice about solidarity and affiliation is another interesting issue. Julius's decisions seem to be more influenced by his personal interests and passions than his roots. He listens to European classical music and European radio channels, and he reads famous works of classical English, Greek, and European literature besides "a novel by a Moroccan writer, Tahar Ben Jelloun" (Cole 102). Once as he is watching a film at the cinema, he realises that almost the entire audience consists of "white-haired white people" (Cole 29) and he sits, in a sense, alone.

Moreover, black citizens often expect him to show solidarity on an ethnic basis, but Julius appears less enthusiastic about this point and his manner differs from the classic interpretation of cosmopolitanism in two ways. First, the other characters with African roots are not "quasi-siblings" from a privileged, elite and intellectual world; black characters other than Julius do not fight for the desired equality, and unlike Julius, they are satisfied with their positions. A black cab driver feels honestly hurt because Julius does not express his solidarity toward him (Cole 40). Julius,

on the other hand, is angry and not in the mood for people who try to lay claims on him; he pays the fare and walks home. During a walk in New York, he enters a restaurant, sits at the bar and orders a drink from a waitress. A man sits next to him and initiates a conversation because he saw Julius in a museum a week ago. He tries to be friendly but he starts to wear on Julius and Julius wishes he would go away. He compares this Caribbean man to the cab driver who was making a similar claim: "hey, I'm African just like you" (Cole 53). In other words, blackness is not enough to arouse his solidarity. In the post office, he meets an office clerk who calls him "brother Julius" (Cole 187), and he appears too friendly for Julius's taste. He invites Julius to listen to some poetry together but Julius finds him intrusive and when he leaves the building, he makes "a mental note to avoid that particular post office in the future" (Cole 188). Thus, neither being a poetry lover nor being a black migrant in America awaken his sense of camaraderie.

The second way his case is different from classic cosmopolitanism is that the classical Greek and Roman interpretation of cosmopolitanism advocates for a brotherly disposition. However, three black "brothers," younger than fifteen, rob him and Julius does not try to fight back. Even though the law guarantees the right of citizens to safety, in the crucial moment, surprisingly, Julius withdraws in defeat. The young black men in their teens pass him in daylight and, suddenly, Julius feels heavy "blows on his shoulders" and back and he "falls to the ground" (Cole 212). He shouts but soon loses the will to speak and accepts the blows in silence; his blood is not boiled. Their common African ancestry proves insufficient to prevent an attack as the values of the thugs and Julius's behavioural norms are at an unbridgeable distance. This episode can be read as an instance where cosmopolitanism fails in the novel: Julius, a black man is attacked, robbed, and injured by other black men and he opts not to exercise his civil rights, which would be going to the police. Instead, he remains silent.

Significantly, Julius is a psychiatrist and he is "at the beginning of the final year of [his] psychiatry fellowship" (Cole 3), which becomes significant at the end of the story. The narrative reveals Moji's account who accuses him of having raped her in Nigeria when they were teenagers. It is astonishing that he intentionally chooses this occupation and studies for several years in America for his degree with such a burden in his past. His story is reminiscent of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* in which Humbert Humbert recalls his memory in the prison and says that "[a]t first, I planned to take a degree in psychiatry; but ... I switched to English

literature" (Nabokov 17). Moji claims that "in late 1989 when she was fifteen" and Julius was "a year younger, at a party her brother had hosted" (Cole 244), Julius "forced himself on her" and later Julius "acted like he knew nothing about it, and even forgotten" (Cole 244). Moji's story exemplifies that the victim remembers and the perpetrator forgets. Although he was only fourteen, drunk, and had an immature psyche, it is astounding that he builds a career in his new home that is in connection with mental health: he is trying to help other people, but he is unable to face his own past deeds.

Julius lives on an abstract level of cosmopolitanism, and the unprocessed repression of his violence against Moji in Nigeria remains an irremovable obstacle in the novel that prevents him from putting principles into practice. This drives him to endless wanderings, which is the reason why Vermeulen calls Julius a *fugueur*, a mad traveller who "emerged in urban areas in France at the end of the nineteenth century" (3). They "unaccountably walked away from their lives and, when found, were unable to remember what had happened on these trips" (Vermeulen 3). Dóra Mózes also argues for the indispensable need to address the logical connection between the rape and his impaired ability to connect emotionally to the people who are the closest to him. She suggests that Julius uses a "blind spot" to cover his sin which is why he cannot remember the act of rape (Mózes 17). "Blind spot" is an ophthalmic expression in connection with the function of the eyes, and this can be responsible for when "the vision goes dead" (Cole 239).

The analysis of *Open City* shows a successful cosmopolitan image of Julius on the surface, he is a highly mobile, well-educated, and elite member of American society with an open mindset without prejudice. He performs productive self-realisation, and he can flexibly adapt to new environments because this type of flexibility, which characterises neocitizenship, is rather superficial and does not require deep changes. However, he fails to feel brotherly solidarity with fellow black citizens on the grounds of shared ethnicity, the same way he cannot connect to other migrant characters, such as the cleaning lady in Brussels. He lives alone, unable to connect emotionally in the long run, presumably because he lives in denial. Julius is accused of committing a sexual crime and he chooses an occupation that may help cure and reconstruct his shattered soul. He embodies cosmopolitan virtues, such as freedom in mobility, place of living, profession and making friends, but he is never able to face his past mistake that has left a shameful mark on his life. In the end, Moji says that she does not think Julius has changed at all and warns him that "[t]hings

don't go just because [he] chooses to forget them (Cole 245). She then asks: "But will you say something now?" (Cole 245). Instead of trying to restore his relationship with Moji, Julius immediately jumps to the abstract level, which Vermeulen calls a startlingly inadequate response to Moji's trauma (53): "Camus tells a double story concerning Nietzsche and Gaius Mucius Cordus Scaevola, a Roman hero from the sixth century BCE" (Cole 246). This is the same leap from reality to theory that we could see in the church in Brussels when he aestheticises the cleaning lady as a Vermeerean figure instead of speaking to her. Therefore, there remains a discrepancy between his abstract cosmopolitan ideals and everyday practices.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

Cosmopolitanism needs to be redefined in the twenty-first century for a number of reasons. Firstly, the high mobility of people fostered by neoliberalism invalidate accountability. Second, while the classical definition of cosmopolitanism posits that all human beings deserve fair treatment just like quasi-siblings, recently, the meaning has broadened with an obligation to respect universal and local values. A few characters such as Farouq and Khalil in *Open City* and Felix's father and Michel in *NW* can be called vernacular cosmopolitans in the Bhabhaian sense since they intend to be equal without denying their ethnicities. The reference to Edward Said in *Open City* draws attention to the fact that a one-sided vision may lead to distorted conclusions.

Furthermore, cosmopolitanism appears as an idealistic disposition that advocates humanism whereas neoliberalism supports a profit-oriented approach. The difference between practices and principles can be seen in Julius's life who fails to live up to cosmopolitan ideals because he is in permanent denial and represses his sense of responsibility. His cosmopolitanism is manifested in an open mindset towards strangers, emotional coldness in close relationships, and an escape from the past into elitism and aestheticisation. Leah's shattered humanist ideal, and Frank's angry exclamation of "Eurotrash" also exemplify the unattainable ideals of the cosmopolitan utopia. Simultaneously, neocitizenship appears as a flexible self-actualisation exemplified by Natalie's life who is just as successful on the surface as Julius. Under the surface, however, she hides frustration which makes her seek compensation, showing that it is inevitable to face responsibility in order to live a mentally and emotionally healthy life. Both characters who believe in cosmopolitan ethics

and are more down-to-earth neocitizens chase a mirage and may seem successful on the surface, but they have yet to take responsibility and face their past to be truly successful on a deeper level.

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Bagatelling Stories
in Ali Smith's *Autumn*

ANGELINA LIKHOVID

Abstract: Ali Smith's Autumn, *often called the first ever (post-)Brexit novel, portrays the dystopian reality of the modern UK, overwhelmed by the plurality of narrative voice and the manipulative mass culture of lies. As a way of resistance, Ali Smith restores faith in the capability of storytelling as an art form to connect, communicate and enable change. Stories in* Autumn *become the manifestations of (creative) life force and display an ability to act as self-sufficient agents. Storytelling as an art form appears as a foundation for sustaining life in narratives and people alike as well as a way of connecting people. Interacting with stories is portrayed as an exercise in interpretation, a process of making sense of how and why things happen in the world, a skill essential in (post-)Brexit UK. In the novel, the stories are compared to a home, a safe space for those who were cast out by the discourses of Brexit nationalism and serve as a form of constructive dialogue between past and present generations.*

Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016) is not only the first novel of her Seasonal Quartet series but is also often called the first ever (post-)Brexit piece of literature. Being a symptomatic reaction to the United Kingdom's European Union membership referendum of 23 June 2016, the novel captures a moment of transition that becomes a traumatic event for a country shaken and torn by conflicting reactions and attitudes. The stable and predictable summer of the UK as part of the European Union has become a matter of the past within the timespan of one day, and autumn, which inevitably follows summer days, illustrates the state of the socio-economic challenges brought on by the break from the European Union. "It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times. Again. That's the thing about things. They fall

apart, always have, always will, it's in their nature" (A. Smith 3). The first lines of the novel not only serve as an intertextual allusion to the social disarray and feeling of fear accompanying the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror in Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) (Cox 37) but also compare post-Brexit Britain to the times when "[m]ere anarchy is loosed upon the world" (Yeats). Even though almost a century divides William Butler Yeats's "The Second Coming" (1919) from Ali Smith's *Autumn*, both works depict notes of discord from people believing "themselves to be living through a period of serious decline" (Poplawski 482), a feeling that can be identified as prevalent in the early twentieth century due to the shift from the accelerated development of Victorian society to a more moderate pace of social transformation following that era. A similar feeling permeates *Autumn* as well, which also describes the migration crisis of the 2010s as a regress compared to the advances in post-colonial and migration policies in the 1980s.

The story of *Autumn* unfolds in London in June 2016. It centres around a man named Daniel Gluck, residing in a care home in a state of prolonged sleep. The reader sees him being frequently visited by the female protagonist of the novel, Elisabeth Demand, who reads stories by his bed and shares news from the post-Brexit world. As Kristian Shaw describes it, the "divisive consequences of the referendum are complemented by the collage-like, disjointed temporality of the narrative structure, with brief, fragmentary chapters shifting from Daniel's youth in 1930s Europe to Elisabeth's childhood in 1990s England, emphasising that their relationship '[is] about history, and being neighbours'" (21–22). Daniel, who would frequently look after child Elisabeth, made "lifelong friends" (A. Smith 52) with her, teaching her about the importance of art, painting, storytelling, and reading.

The centrality of Brexit in *Autumn* allows the novel to be positioned as BrexLit, a term coined by Shaw, referring to contemporary literature that responds to the Brexit referendum and/or post-Brexit landscape in an "increasingly fragile and uncertain political climate" (Shaw 15). Reflecting upon how this subgenre emphasises the divided condition of the UK, Shaw highlights how BrexLit is preoccupied with what came after the referendum: "The term BrexLit concerns fictions that either directly respond or imaginatively allude to Britain's exit from the EU, or engage with the subsequent socio-cultural, economic, racial, or cosmopolitical consequences of Britain's withdrawal" (18). The large number of areas of social and cultural life affected by Brexit is mediated in Ali Smith's *Autumn*, which offers the interpretation of Brexit within the contexts of post-truth, anti-immigration policies, historical

cycles and the decline of ethical values (21–22). Shaw also labels *Autumn* as the first post-truth novel, giving tribute to how the novel emphasises the role of right-wing propaganda in the destabilisation of the political landscape in the UK (21).

In contrast to the fragmented landscape of social and political crisis, *Autumn* proposes to turn to the uniting function of art as it "knits together an astonishing array of seemingly disparate subjects, including mortality, unconditional love, Shakespeare's *Tempest* ... free spirits, and the life force of art along with kindness, hope and a 'readiness to be above and beyond the foul even when we are up to our eyes in it'" (McAlpin). Art, then, in Ali Smith's work can be identified as one of the underlying and perhaps most powerful motifs that ties the fragments of post-Brexit life in England together. From allusive references to different genres and pieces of literature to an ekphrastic meditation on the works of British pop artist Pauline Boty, art appears in a variety of manifestations. In Smith's narrative, art is communicated through stories: the story of Prospero facing the difficulty of seeing into men and monsters and the realities of justice; timeless and various narratives of metamorphoses conceptualising trauma and excess; visual narratives of pop art or mundane stories of post-Brexit England.

The art of storytelling is presented in the novel as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon, characterised by difficulty in unambiguous descriptions, at the same time emphasising the changing and adaptive nature of stories. *Autumn* reflects on the struggle of distinguishing between truth and non-truth, reality and fiction in a postmodern manner, which Linda Hutcheon defines as "deliberately self-reflexive and contradictory" (12). Smith portrays Brexit as a dual phenomenon, simultaneously seen as a potentially traumatic event and a process of transition over a certain period of time where the starting and finishing points are unknown: "Here's an old story so new that it's still in the middle of happening, writing itself right now with no knowledge of where or how it'll end" (A. Smith 181). In other words, the novel allows one to ask whether Brexit is a story "so new" that it becomes a starting point, provoking transformations in the UK unprecedented in the past century, or whether it reflects the culmination of an "old" process, already preceded by other processes of change which will naturally continue after it.

This paper aims to explore the communicative and connective functions of art with a focus on storytelling in Ali Smith's *Autumn*. By analysing how the novel uses the postmodern approach to the plenitude of narrative voices and how they manifest themselves within the context of pre- and/or post-Brexit UK, this research

investigates how telling and reading stories become an exercise in (re)creating the world. Stories in the novel become self-sufficient agents and their adaptability allows them to be interpreted as a way of communication, an ongoing dialogue between past and present generations of people.

The Polyphony of Storytelling

It is undoubtedly true that Ali Smith's novels and collections of short stories make a vast contribution to contemporary British fiction and address a large number of contemporary issues, among which Daniel Lea outlines "concerns of human connectedness, technology, and the transformative capacities of language" (397) as the most prominent, though surely, not the only ones. Similarly, it is not only challenging to single out a set of dominant motifs in Ali Smith's literary output, but it is just as difficult to situate her work within one single cultural paradigm. Some researchers tend to argue against her works being purely postmodernist and suggest positioning her fiction within what is now debatably called "metamodernism." Monica Germanà, while acknowledging the legacy of postmodernism in Smith's fiction, asserts that "her writing also departs from postmodernism in a way that ... combines formal experimentation with a strong ethical commitment to distinctly contemporary concerns" (100). For example, Smith's commitment to making a clear ethical stand appears to be quite visible as the reader sees her expressing concerns about the decaying state of democracy within post-Brexit UK: "It is like democracy is a bottle someone can threaten to smash and do a bit of damage with" (A. Smith 112). John Brannigan, talking about Ali Smith's *How To Be Both* (2014), concludes that "her work restores and renews faith in the capacity of art to connect, communicate, and resist authority" (607), creating a clear-cut difference from classics of postmodern fiction. A metamodernist interpretation of *Autumn* is vital to view Ali Smith's work as establishing continuity between the postmodern and postmillennial eras, responding significantly to important issues of our time (Germanà 106).

Having said that, one cannot deny the importance and explicitness of postmodernist elements in *Autumn*. Brannigan, for instance, asserts that Ali Smith's work adopts many of the innovations brought to life by postmodernism, therefore, partially conforming to its definitions (607). Among such elements, one can name the postmodern narrative strategies of fragmentation, the intense use of cultural and literary allusions, metafictional components, intertextuality, and the preoccupation with

the boundaries between the real and the fictional. Given this, the present paper, while acknowledging the metamodern context and nature of the novel, focuses on the postmodern concepts and tools present in the narrative and analyses how they are used specifically in delineating the complexity of Ali Smith's account of storytelling.

Linda Hutcheon, one of the most prominent theoreticians of literary postmodernism, contends in her *Poetics of Postmodernism*: "The perceiving subject is no longer assumed to be a coherent, meaning-generating entity. Narrators in fiction become disconcertingly multiple and hard to locate. ... In Charles Russell's terms, with postmodernism, we start to encounter and are challenged by 'an art of shifting perspective, of double self-consciousness, of local and extended meaning'" (11). Describing how storytelling serves in Smith's works to investigate the nature of human connections, Daniel Lea emphasises the plenitude of narrative voices in her fiction by proposing that "these voices explain the world as it appears to them, but none are allowed the ultimate satisfaction of determining the meaning of another's experience. Instead, Smith relishes the argumentative grist of opposed perspectives, replacing singular with plural truths" (397). Storytelling hence undermines "alienated otherness" and "centralised sameness" by replacing these with the notion of difference, and in the same way singular culture has transformed into plural cultures in the postmodern canon (Hutcheon 12), *Autumn* also features the polyphony of multiple narrative voices.

The polyphony of Smith's novel, however, does not come down to an unintelligible cacophony of voices but, to a greater extent, evokes the concepts of polyphonic novels and heteroglossia, as discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin. Monica Germanà, reflecting upon how the preoccupation with the notions of sameness/difference in Smith's novel contributes to the polyphonic structure of the novel, highlights the "connective simultaneity, whereby the different, previously clashing, voices merge into one choral narrative celebrating diversity in togetherness" (103). This togetherness is born out of the dialogical nature of language in the Bakhtinian understanding which implies the impossibility of any singularity of interpretation: "between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate" (Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 276). Thus, the construction of a linguistic reality becomes a kind of dialogue between the subject and the object, the latter of which already incorporates the concept of otherness. However, one can further develop

this idea by suggesting that such a perception of (linguistic) reality undermines the dual opposition of subjective sameness and objective otherness since subjectivity in this case is determined only by the point of view of the speaker. This becomes particularly visible during the scene where Daniel and Elisabeth play a game of Bagatelle with the story of Goldilocks, which will be analysed in more detail later in the paper. During the game, Daniel challenges his position of a singularising subject in charge of the narrative by presenting Goldilocks from a certain angle "for no reason other than that's what I, the person in charge of the story, have decided that all Goldilockses are like" (A. Smith 121). One can suggest that such an emphasis on the determining role of the speaker's viewpoint implies awareness of the fact that there exists a reality of differing interpretations of the same story, allowing the othered object to become the subject in charge of the narrative.

Recognising the subject in the other becomes a crucial element in the building of the polyphonic novel. Mikhail Bakhtin explores this concept in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984) concerning Feodor Dostoevsky's works, which he considered an exemplary polyphonic body of texts. By the term "polyphonic novel," Bakhtin means "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices ... with equal rights and each with its own world ... not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse" (*Problems* 6–7). The concept of heteroglossia is also crucial to our understanding of the polyphonic novel. The term refers to the varied character of language, implying that instead of being a singular, static construct, language is a multifaceted interaction of diverse voices and perspectives (Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 263). Similarly, Ali Smith's novels, including *Autumn*, give voice to many subjective speakers, allowing them to express their differing visions of the same events, engaging in dialogues with each other, the author and the reader. Importantly, as Daniel Lea puts it, Smith never grants any of the voices the privilege of establishing dominance: "The real point of interest is not the victory of one voice over another but the profusion of different registers, paroles, tones, vocabularies, accents, and pitches that feed into the dialogic ambiguity inherent in communication" (398). In view of this, the potential of *Autumn* as a polyphonic novel rests on embracing diverse voices and perspectives, which produces an affluent narrative tapestry, enabling these voices to engage in dialogical communication without dominance by any single one.

ANGELINA LIKHOVID

"Always Be Reading Something"

The ability to acknowledge the subject in the other and their right to offer a differing story is presented in *Autumn* as a skill that is acquired through reading, making this latter one of the most prominent themes in the novel. The book shares Elisabeth Demand's journey as she attempts to piece together scattered elements of her life and the reality around her shaken by the Brexit referendum. She spends her time next to her lifelong companion, Daniel Gluck, who at 101 years old, finds himself in a prolonged sleep. Elisabeth is reading books in the physical reality by the bed of her friend who, in his sleep, finds himself in the metaphysical space of his memories and consciousness, where images flow into each other, creating the never-ending circulation of stories on different levels. Stories in *Autumn* become manifestations of the (creative) life force, acquiring the power to act as self-sufficient agents, while storytelling appears as the foundation for sustaining life in people and narratives alike.

In his interview with Ali Smith, Karl Anderson describes the relationship between Daniel Gluck and Elisabeth Demand as being "bound by stories they read and the stories they make up together." Reading becomes an exercise in making sense, a process of learning how and why things happen in the world, and this is one of the two main skills Daniel Gluck used to teach Elisabeth: "Always be reading something, he said. Even when we're not physically reading. How else will we read the world?" (A. Smith 68). Reading acquires two possible levels of signification. The first one refers to the interpretation of the world as a collection of stories incorporating a multiplicity of narrative voices. At this point, reading is understood as another form of connecting people and making them listen to each other and can be seen in the novel as making sense of the world overwhelmed by the multitude of perspectives and opinions.

The second understanding of reading as a practice makes it a tool of creativity. This interpretation resonates well with Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976) in which every literary text is considered to be a form of communication while reading is a process of re-creative dialectics:

> In other words, the literary text enables its readers to transcend the limitations of their real-life situation; it is not a reflection of any given reality, but it is an extension or broadening of their own reality.

> In Kosik's words: "Every work of art has a unified and invisible dou-
> ble character: it is an expression of reality, but it also forms the real-
> ity that exists, not next to or before the work but actually in the work
> itself. ... As work and as art, it represents the reality and so indivisi-
> bly and simultaneously forms reality." (79)

Thus, reading in *Autumn* can be perceived as a process of appropriation of a par-
ticular narrative, "the unveiling of the other story, which exists beyond the bor-
der and the surface of things" (Germanà 100), which in Ali Smith's works usually
accounts for the communities of outsiders, outcast by the intransigent immigration
policies. Reading becomes the procedure of fragmenting the given reality of same-
ness suggested by the grand narratives into the polyphony of "characters' differing
versions of the world built around shared events or experiences" (Lea 398). Reading
serves as an opportunity to listen to the plurality of narrative voices momentar-
ily, voices sometimes contradicting each other, but never having the possibility
to establish the dominance of one over the others. For Ali Smith, such an attitude
to reading should be inevitable in post-Brexit UK amidst the visible dividedness
of the nation. As Smith writes, "[a]ll across the country, people felt it was the wrong
thing. All across the country, people felt they had really lost. All across the coun-
try, people felt they'd really won. All across the country, people felt they have done
the right thing and other people had done the wrong thing" (59). The coexistence
of opposing narratives as well as their subjectivity (the factor of intentionality) cre-
ates a certain chaos in terms of which voices to believe and which voices to per-
ceive as the "true" representation of the ruling sentiments of the country since all
of them appear to influence the world in one way or another.

In the introduction to *Telling Truths through Telling Stories*, a textbook for story-
telling classes, Amy E. Spaulding reflects upon the ambivalent nature of truth in/
through storytelling: "Truth, like story, cannot be written in stone, for it dies when
it is solidified. The first person to write down the Veda (Hindu sacred scriptures)
was called 'the butcher of the Veda' because he trapped the words on paper, rather
than letting them be alive and free as sound" (4). The relationship between truth
and storytelling appears troubled in post-Brexit Britain, too: "All across the coun-
try, nobody spoke about it. All across the country, nobody spoke about anything
else" (A. Smith 60). Stories do indeed have intrinsic dynamism, their "life force"
lies in their non-static nature, their ability to adapt to the constantly changing

environment in which they exist. However, Spaulding's claim about a similar fluidity of truth raises the danger of the truth being manipulated for personal aims, of distorted truth being disguised as one more story. Given the political and social context of pre-Brexit UK, one cannot avoid considering the misuse of this quality of adaptability to create what is now called post-truth.

THE TRUTH OF STORYTELLING

Coincidence or not, in November 2016 the *Oxford English Dictionary* chose "post-truth" as the word of the year, providing a definition that emphasises subjective influence in the formation of public opinion when one prefers to present their emotions and beliefs as facts (Barbieri 24; Brahms 2). Investigating the notion of post-truth in the context of its Brexit-related popularity, Yael Brahms offers the following definition:

> a term denoting circumstances in which our ability to clarify reality to understand it and function within it based on facts is weakening as a result of high-intensity interference by four peak waves: the information explosion and disruptive technology; the dwindling of faith in institutions and in "truth tellers"; undermining postmodernist ideas; and bitter political battles. (17)

Indeed, this feeling of loss of faith in politicians, and the rejection of populist speeches is present in the novel and takes shape in the observant words of Elisabeth's mother: "I'm tired of liars. I'm tired of sanctified liars. ... I'm tired of lying governments. I'm tired of people not caring whether they're being lied to any more" (A. Smith 57). The last part of her outcry, however, may imply that the greatest danger of manipulating the truth is that people stop "reading" the world, thereby they rather choose to accept the half-truth offered to them, showing signs of apathy and carelessness, the inability to be involved and to participate in the course of their own life. Interestingly enough, *Autumn* also comments upon how, paradoxically, many people started to research what leaving the European Union actually means only after the referendum: "All across the country, people looked up Google: *what is EU*?" (59). María del Pino Montesdeoca Cubas comments on this level of public negligence, bringing attention to the fact that "politicians are not the only

ones to be considered responsible for the new direction the country is heading to. Ignorance and neglect among part of the voters has also played a key role in the turn of events" (75). *Autumn* also draws attention to how the lack of awareness of the real state of affairs among the voting population created fertile ground for manipulation by the leaders of the Leave campaign. Elisabeth comes across an article titled "Look Into My Eyes: Leave. EU Campaign Consulted TV Hypnotist":

"*The Power To Influence. I can Make You Happy. Hypnotic Gastric Band. Helped produce social media ads.* <u>*Are you concerned? Are you worried? Isn't it time?*</u> *Being engrossed in TV broadcasts equally hypnotic. Facts don't work. Connect with people emotionally. Trump*" (A. Smith 137). The text brings to light the absurdity of how a post-truth approach to storytelling can present irrational, unconfirmed claims as rational and based on facts by seemingly sharing common emotions with people; emotions, one might notice, evoked by the manipulators themselves.

The underlined questions above serve as an illustrative example of creating fake emotionality, not based on facts but through the use of loaded rhetorical questions which, according to Elena Krizhanovskaya, serve as a means of evoking an emotional response to otherwise empty questions and can be used as tools of manipulative influence on the audience (59). Highlighting how rhetorical questions implicitly contain their expected answers, she defines the main function of this technique as "the activation of a mental activity in the recipient of the message in the aspect programmed by the author of the text, a hidden call to action and very often, unfortunately, attempts to offend other participants in the discussion" (59, translation my own). Thus, *Autumn* satirises how Leave advocates played a crucial role in the division of the United Kingdom even before the referendum. By offering potential voters narratives that ostensibly coincide with their emotional state, they created tension and gave space for anxiety, fear and hostility. Interestingly, such narratives do not offer any specifics as to what to worry about or what it is time for, functioning on the level of inarticulate implications, falsely creating the impression of a dialogue to hide what in reality is a monologue.

The scene of Elisabeth reading the article is followed by a description of her mother, who loves watching retro TV shows, "start[ing] the forty years ago dance routine up one more time; the jaunty music begins again" (A. Smith 137). The temporal reference is there by no accident, and the socio-political connotations of the 1970s in Britain allow us to contextualise post-truth as a means of reviving the anti-immigrant rhetoric. In an interview with Olivia Laing, which took place shortly after

the publication of the novel, Ali Smith made this parallel transparent: "Listening to the radio in the run-up to the referendum, she was appalled by the collapse of dialogue, the creep of lies, the resurgence of a kind of bullying language—'go home'; 'we're coming after you'—she hadn't heard since she was a schoolgirl back in the 1970s." The monologising nature of post-truth is highlighted once again when even the dialogical nature of language, its predisposition to acknowledge the subjectivity in another, was abusively manipulated to serve as a provocation. Thus, the novel raises awareness of a person's responsibility to navigate discourses potentially constructed of lies, and, importantly, not to repeat the lies offered. Post-truth and storytelling seem to be two interpretations of the same act of telling something, and the differentiation between the two lies in the speaker's intention to tell the "truths" and the listener's desire to "read" them.

BAGATELLING STORIES

A more optimistic approach to storytelling is expressed in the scene where Daniel Gluck teaches Elisabeth the game of Bagatelle, or to put it more abstractly, the art of storytelling. His words somewhat resonate with Spaulding's claims about the non-static nature of stories: "the whole point of Bagatelle is that you trifle with stories that people think are set in stone" (A. Smith 117). The game of Bagatelle can be considered as the key to understanding the power of storytelling viewed as a means of influencing (physical and/or metaphysical) reality in *Autumn*. Daniel invites Elisabeth to play Bagatelle, a version of which he came up with on the spot and whose rules are very simple: "'How we play is: I tell you the first line of a story,' Daniel said. … 'Then you tell me the story that comes into your head when you hear that first line,' Daniel said" (A. Smith 116–117). A story appears not as a passive object perceived, but as something endowed with agency: an entity which is able to "come into one's head." At one point in the narrative, Daniel compares words, which constitute stories, to "living organisms" (A. Smith 69) which are able to grow from different sources, therefore, illuminating the vitality of stories. From this point of view, the Bagatelle scene can be viewed as reinforcing the impossibility of the petrification of stories. Stories possess adaptability that allows them to further evolve, where both reading and storytelling become the source of life power to serve as a link between past and future, which especially resonates with people's general sentiments and anxiety in post-Brexit UK.

The game of Bagatelle has its own history that, following Daniel's view on stories, is not set in stone either. As Rick Sherin examines, Bagatelle originated from an out-door British game of shooting marbles, which was later adapted for in-door activities at the times of King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette, at the Château de Bagatelle, under whose name it is known today. Bagatelle became a game similar to modern billiards, the essence of which was to achieve the highest score by shoot-ing balls into holes on the board. This, however, was not the last stage of its evolution, and as technology was advancing, the game of Bagatelle evolved into different types of pinballs and, recently, into numerous forms of electronic game-playing (Sherin). While the general idea of the game has remained the same, technological advances allowed new inspiring mechanisms to be incorporated into the game, thus main-taining its popularity through the ages. The particular way of playing Bagatelle suggested by Daniel offers a new take on it, transforming it into a means of commu-nication through retelling old/new plots that link people, pasts, and histories together.

Daniel and Elisabeth play Bagatelle by "trifling" with the widely known, nine-teenth-century English fairy tale of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," which, with some level of abstraction, manifests the changeable nature of stories. The first written version of the fairy tale belongs to Robert Southey, who in 1837 published it under the title "The Story of the Three Bears" in *The Doctor*, and this version of the fairy tale featured a wicked old woman who trespassed into the house of the three bache-lor bears. Although Southey claimed to have heard the story from his uncle, William Dove (Opie 199), most researchers debate the authorship and origin of the fairy tale (Opie 199, Tatar 245). Maria Tatar proposes that "Southey did not rely on oral sources but instead conflated a Norwegian story about three bears with the scene from the Grimms' 'Snow White' in which the heroine enters the cottage of the dwarfs. The little old woman seems to be Southey's own invention" (245). Following this line of thought, "The Story of the Three Bears" from the moment of its crea-tion was an example of the so-called "literary fairy tale" (K. P. Smith 4), which denotes the author's invention or reinterpretation of several fairy tales, the story thus becoming a literary construct. This idea is complicated by the fact that in 1951, a manuscript version of the fairy tale, dated back to 1831, was discovered, and this manuscript described the fairy tale as a "celebrated nursery tale" (qtd. in Opie 199). Thus, the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" becomes a story without any evidence of a fixed date of origin and, in this manner, it serves as a living example of Bagatelling stories.

In addition, having gained popularity and become part of folklore, the fairy tale continued its independent path of development. In 1849, Joseph Cundell decided to change the protagonist from an old woman to a young girl, justifying it by the opinion that children would prefer an attractive child rather than an old woman (Opie 200). Following this metamorphosis, the new incarnation of the female character regularly changed her name and was known as Silver-Hair, Silverlocks, and Goldenlocks, until the British storyteller Flora Annie Steel named her Goldilocks, the name under which we recognize her today (Tatar 246). Along with Goldilocks, the image of the three bears also changed. If in the original version the bears were simply presented as three friends, over time the status of their relationship changed first to brothers and sisters and then to the traditional family model, including father (big bear), mother (medium bear) and child (little bear) (Tatar 246).

Along with the images of the characters, the moral message of the tale has also changed, and as Maria Tatar puts it, "[t]he girl heroines in 'The Story of the Three Bears' fare far better than their aged counterparts in the first recorded versions" (246). While for an elderly woman the punishment for the act of invading the house was death or some other unfortunate fate, Goldilocks either returned home or simply promised to improve.

The message of the story, however, stays unchanged throughout the years, and with Goldilocks/the old woman performing the role of the intruder, "[the fairy tale] suggests the importance of respecting the property and the consequences of just 'trying out' things that do not belong to you" (Tatar 246). What at first glance may seem like a cautionary tale for children about obedience and respect for what belongs to other people, in the context of the novel, the story can take on an additional layer of meaning. Kevin Paul Smith, exploring various forms of intertextual inclusions of fairy tales and fairy tale motifs in the text of postmodern novels, among seven other such forms, singles out "incorporation" as a version of intertextuality, defining it as an explicit reference to a fairy tale in the text of a novel, sometimes even in the form of a brief retelling of the plot (10, 17). When Daniel gives a synopsis of the tale in the Bagatelle scene, adding the last detail about the spraypaint on the walls (A. Smith 117), the novel draws the readers' attention "to the existence and importance of a particular intertext" (K. P. Smith 17) while "the fairytale plot takes on greater importance, becoming a model by which the reader can understand the text" (17). Thus, it can be assumed that the fairy tale can be interpreted on two levels in the novel.

The first layer of interpretation is connected to the direct context in which this fairy tale is mentioned and is related to the game of Bagatelle. When Daniel suggests that Goldilocks sprays her name with spray-paint on the walls, Elisabeth objects that such a detail is impossible since the fairy tale originates from the times when spray-paint did not exist. Daniel responds to this crude factual interjection from Elisabeth with indignation: "Who says? ... Who says the story isn't happening right now?" (A. Smith 117). Elisabeth insists on the temporal anchorage of the narrative while Daniel deconstructs the understanding of a story as existing at a particular moment in time, blurring the line between past and present as well as authenticity and fabrication. Stories, thus, appear to be able to survive from past contexts into the present.

The second layer of interpretation, taking into account the key role of the motif of intrusion in the fairy tale, allows us to consider the significance of the socio-political context of the novel, namely, in the frame of post-Brexit, post-truth, and xenophobic sentiments. Following their argument about Daniel inventing the spray-paint bit, this conversation takes place:

> "So how do we ever know what's true?" Elisabeth said.
> "Now you're talking," Daniel said.
> "And what if, right," Elisabeth said, "what if Goldilocks was doing what she was doing because she had no choice? What if she was like seriously upset that the porridge was too hot, and that's what made her go ultra-crazy with the spraypaint can? What if cold porridge always made her feel really upset about something in her past? What if something that had happened in her life had been really terrible and the porridge reminded her of it, and that's why she was so upset that she broke the chair and unmade all the beds?"
> "Or what if she was just a vandal?" Daniel said, "who went into places and defaced them for no reason other than that's what I, the person in charge of the story, have decided that all Goldilockses are like?"
> "I personally shall be giving her the benefits of the doubt," Elisabeth said. (A. Smith 121)

The key concept of this scene is the "benefit of the doubt" appearing as an opportunity to see the unfolding of another's story beyond what is considered to be set in stone. Ideas circulating during pre-Brexit discussions about immigrants taking

jobs from British citizens (Berberich 4)—similar to Goldilocks "taking" food and housing from the bears—became a component of the discourse of hostility and negative generalisation, established, in Daniel's words, "for no reason other than that's what I, the person in charge of the story, have decided that all Goldilockses are like" (A. Smith 121). Using the example of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," Daniel teaches Elisabeth to challenge "narratorial authority (see Dentith 1995)—where an omniscient narrator guides and effectively manipulates the story" (Berberich 9). In a postmodern understanding, the game of Bagatelle might be an exercise in accepting the coexistence of multiple perspectives and truths. Bagatelling stories, in other words, becomes a useful skill and a means of applying the "benefit of the doubt" method to unveil whether the adaptable and changeable nature of stories was employed to add a new spin to the original story, either as a way of giving voice to another's point of view or for manipulative purposes instead.

Conclusion

Both storytelling and reading in its creative understanding appear as a form of art in the novel, and, as art, they become the very thread that holds together the disparate fragments as well as subjectivities of post-Brexit reality. Stories in the novel are portrayed as polyphonic entities, allowing space for multiple narrative voices, expressing opposing or differing points of view on the world, while avoiding canonisation of any single one as the true or the only one possible. The stories in this novel can be interpreted as both the object and the subject of action, and interactions with them also have a dual nature. On the one hand, stories can be read and, in this case, they manifest a practice of interpretation; on the other hand, once told, they become powerful tools for shaping reality. At the same time, the novel draws attention to the relationship between storytelling and post-truth, namely, the danger of storytelling being misused to create manipulative lies which in the novel are attributed to Brexit supporters. The ability to simultaneously read and tell stories, a skill whose importance is communicated, at the same time, by Daniel Gluck and the overall text of the novel itself, becomes crucial in post-Brexit UK, where the categories of reliability, stability, and hope are appropriated by the perpetrators of the Leave narrative. Stories in *Autumn* acquire agency and performativity; thus, they are not solely dependent on the narrator but possess independence and

the ability to act on their own accord. Stories are represented as adaptive and unable to be subjected to singular, monologising interpretations, which becomes visible through the example of an old English fairy tale, "Goldilocks and The Three Bears" (1837). Retold within the context of the novel, it not only challenges the understanding of stories as existing at a particular point in time but also serves as a form of denial of the narratorial authority which aims to establish the dominance of xenophobic narratives.

Storytelling emerges as the ability of stories to evolve and preserve the multiple "truths" embedded in them while defying the authoritative canonisation of one "truth." The storyteller is the force that can influence the world, already woven from stories, relentlessly evolving and changing with time: "'And whoever makes up the story makes up the world,' Daniel said. 'So always try to welcome people into the home of your story'" (A. Smith 119). In this way, Daniel teaches Elisabeth the art of making sense of the world, the craft of creating and transforming stories. In addition, the story is compared to a home, a place where one can always find comfort, ease and security. In the context of post-Brexit reality, this gives storytelling the sense of a safe space where one can accept the existence of multiple truths and remember exactly how the world works. Elisabeth now has the necessary "benefit of the doubt" (in her mother's words, referring to how she should not agree to be lied to), which is an ability to differentiate between what is true and what is not. She matures to be "ready to bagatelle it as it is" (A. Smith 121), a skill essential in a reality where there is no unifying perspective.

Ali Smith's *Autumn* provides a detailed and authentic portrayal of the state of disunity, disillusionment and disappointment that has been prevalent in the social and political landscape of the United Kingdom before and after the referendum on EU membership. The novel explores the social, cultural, and racial consequences of Brexit, including the resurgence of xenophobic narratives circulating over the past century, fuelled in large part by political lies. Through the use of the postmodern techniques of fragmentation and narrative polyphony, Ali Smith's work reflects upon the shattered reality of contemporary UK, nonetheless, articulating hope that change is possible even during the worst times. *Autumn* offers stories as one of the most powerful tools for resisting the nightmarish environment of contemporary UK, creating a safe, homelike space of hospitality and witnessing.

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Spatial Experiences

Feeling and Transgressing Cities, Borders, and Homes

Review of Ágnes Györke and Imola Bülgözdi (eds.), *Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture: Central Europe and the West* (Leiden and Boston: Brill-Rodopi, 2021)

KATA GYURIS

Cultural geographer Doreen Massey famously argued throughout most of her academic career that spaces are never to be interpreted as static, non-changing entities that somehow surround and encapsulate us without entering into interactions with us. Instead, she envisioned spaces as processes that are "constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and therefore always undetermined) by the construction of new relations" (*For Space* 107). Elsewhere, she also urged readers to conceive of spaces as dynamic, to imagine them as "articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings" (*Space, Place, and Gender* 154). What Massey taps into here is, of course, on the one hand, the long tradition of the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences, paved by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau among many others. On the other hand, by emphasising the significance of "new arrivals" and "networks" of human and possibly non-human connections, she also, rather pre-emptively, references newer directions in the humanities, namely, the mobilities turn, as conceptualised by John Urry and Mimi Sheller, and the affective turn, first discussed by Silvan Tomkins. The reason for this rather theoretical introduction, perhaps

uncharacteristic in a scholarly review, is that Massey seems to be uniquely positioned to help us reflect on the main concerns at the core of the volume *Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture.*

This collection of twelve essays, which are in turn arranged into five separate parts, offers a rare combination of literary and cultural analyses of novels, films, a theatre performance, and a graphic novel. By focusing on both the spatiality and the affective dimension apparent in these different cultural products, the volume does not only showcase the myriad ways in which spaces can function but also discusses the emotions that are incited as we exist and move about in these spaces. Since mobility is a key consideration in the volume, the various chapters are able to offer global—but notably not globalising— perspectives, tackling Central Europe, the general West, and to a lesser extent, the Global South. As the editors of the volume, Ágnes Györke and Imola Bülgözdi, explain in their "Introduction," which serves as a short theoretical treatise on the role of space and affect in what may be broadly defined as diaspora studies, they opted for the term "translocality" as preferable to "transnationalism" since the latter fails to account for the resurgence of nationalistic sentiment in the twenty-first century. This already showcases the topicality and timeliness of the volume, which, other than a collection of individually intriguing treatments of various cultural products, might also serve as a semi-theoretical intervention into contemporary discussions of space, affect, and mobility.

From a theoretical-methodological point of view, this psycho-geographical approach is something that serves as an undercurrent in all the chapters, uniting them into a complex whole despite the varied subject matters of the individual chapters. It is notable that most, if not all, authors also focus on transgression in one way or another, whether it is border-crossing, breaching gender norms, or diverging from expected or normalised paths in urban settings, and that this transgression, in turn, is embedded in spatiality. As the editors also note, what all contributions are essentially interested in are "performative spatialities" that are created through an affective engagement with diverse geographies (10).

The first part, "Edgy Feelings: Translocality, Trauma, and Disengagement," features three chapters, all focused on the ways in which trauma can be intertwined with spatial awareness and unanticipated, often uncomfortable feelings. Pieter Vermeulen reads two recent New York novels (Teju Cole's *Open City* and Ben Lerner's *10:04*) together and shows that beyond its mimetic potential of representing emotions, literature can also generate affect in surprising, and in the case of these two novels,

unexpectedly frustrating ways. Space and affect are drawn together as Vermeulen discusses the tension between fixity and flow, arguing that it is precisely in this porousness that new kinds of connections may be formed—in urban spaces or elsewhere. The same permeability is also reflected in Katalin Pálinkás's excellent contribution, which takes on Lisa Robertson's *Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture*. Like Vermeulen, Pálinkás also focuses on what is malleable, transient, and affectively potent in the city—such as surfaces, rather than monumental buildings—and shows how Robertson acts as both a Baudelairean *flâneur* and a Benjaminian archivist in the city of Vancouver. Perhaps the most surprising contribution in this part on edgy feelings is Miklós Takács's treatment of the theatre performance *Sea Lavender, or the Euphoria of Being*, published in the volume in Zsófia O. Réti's translation. Unlike literature and film, a theatre performance is ephemeral (all the more so since the irreplaceable main performer, Holocaust survival Éva Fahidi died in September 2023); thus, we may argue that recording an affect-focused interpretation of such a performance is a crucial gesture. Weaving together considerations on the genre of testimony and the peculiarities of a dance performance, Takács argues that it is precisely in the porous, in-between affective space of a theatre performance that uneasy—i.e. edgy—feelings can arise.

The second part, "East-Central Europe as a Translocal Space: Gendering a 'Periphery,'" opts for a more unified geographic and thematic focus, and addresses questions of masculinity, femininity, and queerness in a Central-European (Hungarian) setting. The three chapters in this segment align with one another neatly so that the reader is given quite a comprehensive glimpse into the functioning of both socialist and post-socialist treatments of gender roles and expectations in film. What binds György Kalmár's treatment of on-screen masculinities, Zsolt Gyõri's engagement with socialist conceptualisations of motherhood in film, and Fanni Feldmann's focus on queer urban spaces in Hungarian cinema together is perhaps the ritualistic nature of the spaces tackled in all three chapters. Kalmár focuses on "return films" (72) in post-1989 Eastern European cinema, narrowing the scope to what he labels as "retreat films" (73), where the male protagonists embark on "regressive journeys" (73) both in a spatial and a gendered sense. It is these physical returns with clear spatial trajectories that become ritualistic retreats when they acquire an affective dimension in the patriarchal (Hungarian) setting of the films. Similarly, Gyõri's focus on one of the quintessential spatial-architectural symbols of state socialism—the high-rise block of flats—also highlights

the symbolic, ritualistic nature of these spaces: these flats were meant to function as idealised homes and great achievements of the socialist state. What Gyõri shows in his analysis of pre-1989 Hungarian films is that through ritualised and spatialised family practices and (unfulfilled) affective investment in these flats, it is the young mothers of the families who end up feeling circumscribed and who are eventually forced to retreat into a neurotic state. Interestingly, the last chapter in this part chooses to move out of small houses, apartments, and rooms to engage with more public spaces instead, while the author retains a similar interplay between ritual and retreat, adding a different affective dimension—belonging—as well. Feldmann contrasts mainstream Hungarian films that depict queer urban spaces as primarily places of hiding, where the dominant emotion is shame and where real connection is inhibited, with queer historiographic documentaries that highlight alternative subcultures, where real belonging becomes possible.

Parts 3–5 take a noticeable turn towards a more overt engagement with urban studies, treating the city as fertile ground for the formation of new urban subjectivities. The city, in its many forms, has been the object of non-ceasing fascination in literature and culture, and this is precisely the sentiment that Imola Bülgözdi's chapter in part 3, "Translocality, Border Thinking, and Restlessness," engages with. Reading Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, a story of black Americans moving from the South to Harlem in the 1920s to immerse themselves in the captivating world of music and a bustling neighbourhood, Bülgözdi argues that the feeling of fascination is what primarily orders the lived experience of the new black urban translocal subject. This text is paired with Márta Kõrösi's chapter on border thinking in Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis*—an interpretation steeped in Walter Mignolo's decolonial theory that advocates for alternative epistemologies through rethinking the fixity of borders. Kõrösi argues particularly convincingly that the graphic novel with its unique layout is especially apt to re-interrogate assumptions about knowledge and perception while engaging with spatiality in ways a literary text is not able to. In Kõrösi's reading, a "border epistemology" (141–145) emerges in the gutter, the space between panels, and this epistemology can serve as a double critique of patriarchy in both of Marji's homes, Tehran and Vienna. Part three of the volume, then, focuses on migratory, translocal subjects in the city, on the cusp of two cultures and two different affective dimensions, attempting to establish new ways of being and knowing.

The next part, "Translocality and Transgression," combines readings of *Alice in Wonderland* and Nigerian-American author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, both focusing on the affective psycho-geographies of their respective urban or urban-inspired locations. Through Carroll's original tale and China Miéville's urban fantasy adaptation, Anna Kérchy argues that space becomes an epistemologically and metaphysically important signifier, one that helps the protagonists of the novels discover new ways of emotionally relating to their surroundings. What is at the core of this chapter is the myriad ways in which aimless wandering (*dérive* in the Debordian sense), nomadic subjects (Braidotti), and new, unexpected becomings (Deleuze) can contribute to the dynamic, forever unfinished nature of space (Massey). Pairing this chapter with Jennifer Leetsch's essay on urban topographies of love in Adichie's *Americanah* is an interesting choice, but one that makes sense if we consider that this chapter similarly seems to tackle translocality and transgressing or even abandoning set paths—albeit in a lot less fantasy-like environment. Leetsch focuses on migrants and further complicates the notion of transnationalism—addressed by the editors in their "Introduction" as well—arguing that it is affect, specifically the love story at the heart of the novel, that facilitates the constant renegotiations of space. Much like Alice in Miéville's adaptation, Marji in Satrapi's graphic novel and Toni Morrison's characters in *Jazz*, Ifemelu and Obinze also produce what Leetsch refers to as an "affective rewriting/re-inhabiting" (189) of their respective cities.

Part 5, similarly to part 2 on East-Central European gendered translocal spaces, is a thematically arranged block, focusing on crime fiction. "Criminal Affects: Crime and the City" includes two chapters on contemporary variations of the crime novel—closely linked since its conception to urban settings—with unusual and unexpected detectives, whose affective relation to the city space is anything but genre-conforming. Tamás Bényei reads Patrick Neate's *City of Tiny Lights* as a post-9/11 noir where the multicultural and multi-ethnic city's cartography disintegrates as it is slowly transformed into a war zone. This cityscape is dominated by fear, and Bényei argues that this crucial affect is testimony to much more than just the inevitable failure of the noir plot: it would seem that certain strategies of mapping urban spaces will simply prove inadequate in our post-9/11 reality. Just like (urban) crime, fear, and terror, these changes in apprehending and experiencing the city cannot be contained. Coupled with this chapter is Brigitta Hudácskó's treatment of Katalin Baráth's Hungarian middlebrow detective fiction where the figure

of the detective is swapped from gritty masculine hero to Female Gentlemen, fashioned after Agatha Christie's Miss Marple. The similarly eccentric Veron Dávid undertakes numerous (urban) journeys all over the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to map out and eventually to transgress social norms that would circumscribe her position and limit her ability to act as a detective. Although not spelled out explicitly in the chapter, Baráth's novels also tackle the affective and topographical experience of urban migrants, much like earlier chapters on Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, and Adichie's *Americanah*.

Rather than being bound by mere thematic affinity, the editors opted to unveil more subtle connections between the individual chapters by arranging them into creatively envisioned larger blocks. These, in turn, reveal highly original engagements with space and affect, responding to humanities' need to make sense of current issues and debates happening around mobility and migrancy. This volume will be a treasure trove for academics, post- and undergraduate students on the prowl for cutting-edge considerations of the affective potentials of space and place as represented in cultural products. On another level, the volume also contributes to area studies in a significant way: researchers working on the cultural constructions of East-Central Europe should be able to find ample material discussing pre- and post-1989 Hungarian cultural products, interpretations of which are scantly available in English. Finally, to reiterate my initial enthusiasm, the volume may also be read as a collection of semi-theoretical engagements with space, affect, and mobility—and in this sense, a unique intervention into contemporary cultural discourses.

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Embracing Resilience and Reclaiming Happiness

Review of Lindsey Stewart, *The Politics of Black Joy: Zora Neale Hurston and Neo-Abolitionism* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2021)

SALAM ALALI

Affect has always been central to African American representation. Blacks continually contend with assaults on their humanity and the centrality of affects towards reifying it. According to Palmer, "Black affective responses are only legible as signs of pathology, further reifying blackness as sub-humanity as a sign of both excess and lack" (31). The transatlantic slavery and the gruelling existence on the plantations elicited profound sorrow from the enslaved. Thus, the sorrow that found release in the sorrow songs into which Blacks poured their pains and hopes for freedom was the first assertion of Black people's humanity in the face of dehumanisation. As slavery gave way to emancipation, racial oppression morphed from physical enslavement to political and psychological subjugation. The result of this is generations of African American writings that centralise the pathos of Blackness. These writings exist in stark contrast to the minstrel tradition wherein Blacks are derisively portrayed as clowns whose expressions of happiness are synonymous with low intelligence.

Such portrayals made Blacks even more sensitive to the implications of Black affects in racial politics. Thus, when Zora Neale Hurston emerged during the Harlem Renaissance with an insistence on affirming Black humanity by refuting

the conflation of Blackness with sorrow, it roused the opprobrium of leading figures of the Renaissance such as Richard Wright who likened her to the minstrels offering up Blacks for mockery to whites, positing that "her dialogue manages to catch the psychological movements of the Negro folk-mind in their pure simplicity" (25). Her works were deemed apolitical and counterproductive to the representation of the humanity of Blacks. For this, she was not as celebrated as her male counterparts, and she lay in an unmarked grave for decades until she was rescued from Alice Walker from ignominy. In the years following the redemption of Hurston, the theorisation of Black affects and representation has become more nuanced. Hurston's insistence on portraying Southern Blacks as joyful, far from being seen as naïve, is now being interrogated as political sophistication. The emergence of Afrofuturism and similar theories prove that affirming Black humanity does not necessarily have to be sorrowful.

Lindsey Stewart's *The Politics of Black Joy* is a very timely offering that interrogates the concept of Black joy as the key to Hurston's aesthetic of refusal. Therefore, this study aims to critically examine Stewart's theorisation of Black Joy based on Hurston's essays, which she intersects with the coeval in Beyoncé's visual album *Lemonade*.

Critical Reception of Lindsey Stewart's *The Politics of Black Joy*

Although *PBJ* has received minimal critical reception, it is imperative to foreground the critical reception of Stewart's *PBJ* towards highlighting the politics of joy in the African American context. According to Leslie D. Rose, Stewart states that "it's been hard to gauge the reception" of her book. The major critical works on Stewart's work are the review by Deborah G. Plant and Randal Maurice Jelks' "Joy of the Black South: Zora Neale Hurston and the Politics of Black Joy—A Review Essay." Others, like Stephen Pasqualina and John Protevi (who argue that neo-abolitionism cannot be completely off the table), are synoptic mentions of Stewart's work. Plant summarises Stewart's work and notes that it elevates "credible knowledge and philosophy of southern blacks to the arena of public debate and discourse" (411) and extends the scholarship about "Hurston's Political thought beyond … the Harlem Renaissance era" (412). Plant describes Stewart's effort at reading Hurston's "political vision as a remarkable feat" (412) and considers the inquiry "an invocation" (412). Plant's approbation is not surprising, bearing in mind that Stewart appropriates some of Plant's feminist work on individual expression in African American folk

ethos. This prioritises African American culture as a source of theoretical inquiry into racism and gender expression in the US.

Jelks analyses Hurston's commitment to the South, acknowledging that "Black people were symbiotic to the region … the place where Black joy was fearlessly exercised" (92). He states that Stewart's work turns to Hurston because her insistence on southern joy "is disruptive" (96). Jelks posits that Stewarts sees the "real power of Black southern community" (97) in root work that fosters internal self-love and self-regard. Jelks states that Stewart's arguments are "absolutely correct, Black people have every right to 'refuse' engaging with governmental and corporate media outlets in ways that steal their joy and make them objects of pity" (98). However, Jelks differs from Stewart's approach of the "either-or" approach to resistance as simply "seeking recognition from the dominant society" (98) and insists that the inward journey is not in "opposition to structural realities" (98). Jelks conflates refusing and resisting which I agree with. Refusing passively like John de Conquer is an act of passive resistance that Stewart insistently considers refusing. Jelks concludes that Stewart's work is a reminder that Black Americans still have profound work at hand "in refashioning our own narratives communally and individually" (99) to ensure joy and freedom.

These two reviews show approbation and in-betweenness that favour joy and freedom. This means portraying racism can be politicised for personal goals that may undermine or empower Blacks, especially from the gender perspective. Therefore, race, place, and womanhood are connected in appropriating Black joy, although this does not mean that Black joy cannot drive racial freedom. There is a need for liminality, hybridity, or syncretism, which accommodates the two sides of the spectrum: the Black tragedy and Black joy, an approach favoured by the African American ethos.

Black Joy and its Tenets

Stewart's theorisation of Black Joy in *PBJ* connects race (mainly the White-Black taxonomy), place (the North-South division), and womanhood, which excavates the gendering of narratives to relegate women and render them victims. In the introduction to *PBJ*, Stewart reveals that the South has always been associated with Black tragedy in the "national imaginary" (2) of the United States of America (USA) and reifies the argument of place in terms of regionising racism

as a Southern phenomenon. The South as a paradoxical place is simultaneously rendered as a space of Black tragedy or enchantment. The enchantment is conceived as negative too because of the infantilisation of pleasure but Stewart asserts that Black tragedy does not capture the whole story of the South which the northern liberals and their abolitionist compatriots usually focalise. She recounts her childhood that is "sewn with scenes of Black joy" (3) and asserts that many of the Black southern everyday lives do "not revolve around white folks" (3). She complains about the misappropriation of Black joy as enchantment to justify slavery and points out that this occludes the critical power of Black joy in the South.

Stewart also explicates the contradictory representations of the Black South as a Black enchantment that separates it from its tragic status in emancipatory politics and connects these paradoxes to the critical reception of Beyoncé's aesthetics in *Lemonade*. She accentuates the reluctance of many to connect Black southern culture "with Black emancipatory politics in the public sphere" (4) and connects it to the tensions in "the academic recovery of Zora Neale Hurston's work" (5). Despite the contestations, Stewart explores Hurston's fiction, like *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, as valorising intra-racial gender politics that accentuates Black womanhood and contradicts the masculinist Black nationalist agenda of Black tragedy and sorrow. She explains that Hurston and Beyoncé create a Southern Black aesthetic of joy and affect in the public sphere. This reifies the nexus between *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Lemonade*.

Stewarts traces the "political devaluation of southern Black joy" to the abolitionist movement that weaponises the tragedy of slavery for political gains. Albeit the wariness of the misuse of Black joy, she contends that this should not be an excuse to confine Black southern stories to "racial sorrow" (6). She focalises place in the argument of Black joy and Black tragedy by revealing how abolitionists accentuate white supremacy through northern, white political intervention as the only source of southern emancipation. Thus, there is a rivalry between the Southern and Northern writers premised essentially on whether to represent Black southern life as tragic or joyous. She asserts that this is the politicisation of representing Black southern life in the public sphere which necessitates the "politics of joy" (7) as a response.

Beyoncé's *Lemonade* provides Stewart with a contemporary premise for examining Hurston's debates and arguments about Black joy. Stewart analyses the sub-textual theme of Beyoncé's "Sorry" as America's betrayal and posits that the response to it is "southern Black Joy" (27) as reified by Beyoncé's "enthronement"

at the Destrehan plantation and apathetic indifference. She views Beyoncé's joyous bus ride as her participation in root work. Hence, there is a nexus between southern Black joy and the politics of indifference which Stewart focalises in Beyoncé's *Lemonade*.

In Chapter 1, Stewart starts with an epigraph extracted from Hurston's essay "Art and Such" to accentuate Hurston's complaint about the pressure for "African American artists to only represent Black tragedy" (29) rather than Black joy. She states that Hurston criticises this leaning in Richard Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children*. Significantly, Stewart opines that Wright's tragic portrayal is symptomatic of regional dynamics and gendered undertones, which signify the nexus between race, place, and gender (womanhood). Wright's plot satisfies Black male readers; gender, females as victims, and northern neo-abolitionists (place). Stewart argues that Hurston's privileging of broad Black southern life contradicts her contemporaries' expectations and complicates her racial politics. Hurston privileges intra-racial politics that Black joy manifests to correct the erasure of Black women in important spaces. Stewart asserts that Hurston's interventions elucidate the masculinist inter-racial politics of Black liberation movements (Black men against white men) over intra-racial "concerns of gender and class" (32) which characterise womanhood. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* characterises "self-fulfilment, love, and happiness" (32) in Janie's search for Black joy in her marriages to subvert intra-racial, patriarchal oppression.

Furthermore, in Hurston's depiction of Black joy in her works, she foregrounds individual expression and Stewart cites Deborah Plant to substantiate her argument. Plant traces this individual expression to African American folk ethos and Stewart connects it to the individuality of creative expression to reify Black joy as against the sorrow paradigm. Stewart further states that the Black joy represented in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is Hurston's acts of refusal of "southern interracial strife" (33) and dominant racism and sexism. Stewart conceptualises Black joy as acts of refusals that subvert resistance and recognition of racial domination and neo-abolitionist interventions. Root work also contributes to the aesthetic of Black joy through the "African American folklore and cultural traditions" (34) and Stewart employs Wright's John Henry as a trope of resistance that privileges inter-racial and neo-abolitionist impulse and this contradicts Hurston's depiction of John de Conquer who metaphorises refusals in the South through laughter/evasion and the glorifying of self. Black joy, thus, favours indifference to interracial conflicts. In subverting racism as restricted to the South (or a place), Hurston in "My Most Humiliating Jim Crow Experience" contends that racism is national /global to undermine the hypocrisy

of the northern liberals that regionise racism. Consequently, Stewart argues that Hurston's politics of Black joy in the public space prompts refusals to show the limitation of resistance to an "intransigent" (39) racism and de-centres racism by shifting attention to "other aspects of southern Black life" (42) to counter neo-abolitionism and white supremacy. The southern space (place) offers more modes of subverting racism than the north.

Black Joy as Subverting Neo-Abolitionist Mandates

Stewarts notes the setting of Beyoncé's *Lemonade* in different plantations, the absence of whites and the deployment of Black joy through "ancestral communion, feasts, and dancing" (45) which shows the essence of "place" in Black joy aesthetics and the de-centring of racism in Black spaces to privilege intra-racial relations, especially through root work. In Chapter 2, Stewart explicitly conceptualises neo-abolitionism as post-Civil War adherence to representations of Blacks "in terms of tragedy and pity" (47) which Black joy significantly undermines through Hurston's interventions in essays like "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals," "Art and Such," and "The Sanctified Church." However, Stewart focalises Hurston's critique of W. E. B. Du Bois' neo-abolitionist impulse in designating Negro spirituals "sorrow songs." Hurston deploys Black joy to contest Du Bois' representations of southern Black life as sorrowful in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Region, gender, and class connect Blacks and abolitionists in the north seeking to Christianise the South, especially in Du Bois' "Of the Coming of John" another chapter in *SBF*. Stewart analyses Black John as representing the abolitionist agenda of Black sorrow as against the *ab initio* happy Black John of the South. She explicates the connection between region and masculinity: Du Bois presents the North as masculine while the South is childish because of its exuberance and vivaciousness. The corollary is Du Bois' disavowal of Black joy for the political Black tragedy of Black John which Stewart compares to the masculine underpinnings of Frederick Douglas's narrative.

Stewart interrogates Du Bois' Hegelian dialectic conception of African American religion which follows "the transition from 'voodooism' (thesis) to Christianity (anti-thesis) to abolitionism (synthesis)" (55) and reveals Du Bois' manipulation of the dialectics to favour neo-abolitionism. Furthermore, Du Bois characterises the South as feminine while the North signifies masculinity because of its penchant for violence and resistance which connects class to gender in terms of regional

disappointment and inter-racial strife. Stewart also contends that Du Bois employs the "sorrow songs" to "authenticate … the inner lives of Black folks" (60) which originates from Douglas. Stewart states that Du Bois's racial politics exclude Black joy from Negro spirituals, especially secular ones, and derogate root-work practices such as shouting. Such acts are perceived as the political dimensions of neo-abolitionism. She further argues that Hurston deploys her essay "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals" to mobilise elements of Black song-making "as resources for refusing assimilation" (65) and to refuse neo-abolitionist mandates of negatively representing Black southern life and culture.

THE METHODS OF BLACK JOY

Stewart opines that Beyoncé's song "6 Inch" in *Lemonade* employs the blues woman tradition that is immersed in root work and reads the song as a performance of dissemblance that Black women wield in the public sphere. In Chapter 3, Hurston expounds on the methodologies of deploying Black joy and explores them in Hurston's *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"* (1981) and "How it Feels to be Colored Me." Stewart traces the method of ethnographic refusal to Hurston's interaction with ex-slave Kossola (Cudjo Lewis) at *Barracoon* and connects it with Hurston's "ethnographic refusals of personal racial tragedy" (71) in "How it Feels to be Colored Me" to foreground Black joy as an approach to undermine the abolitionist discourse of rendering African American as an "object of pity." Appropriating Audra Simpson's ethnographic refusal in *Mohawk Interruptus*, Stewart argues that Hurston learned the method of ethnographic refusals from her African American respondents to her anthropological work which she documented in her works like *Barracoon*, *Mules and Men,* and *Dust Tracks on a Road*, her autobiography.

Stewart conceptualises two forms of ethnographic refusals in *Barracoon*. The first is discursive refusals which include refusal to alter Kossola's dialect, silences about salient issues relating to root work and subtly remaking the South into "a site of joy and pleasure" (78) by referencing Black southern food like watermelon. The second ethnographic refusal is Kossola's narrative refusal which influence Hurston's refusal of the neo-abolitionist depiction of Black tragedy. Kossola reveals to Hurston the various dimensions of intra-racial betrayal from his sale to white slave traders by fellow Africans to the African American treatment of the *Clotilda* survivors as savages. Stewarts avers that Kossola performs disaffiliation with the state as an act of refusal

of the state's sovereignty and that Hurston may have learned emotional sovereignty (the premise of Black joy) from Kossola's refusals and she translates this to "literary sovereignty" (84) and refusing the meaning of neo-abolitionist conceptualisation of Blackness.

Stewart contends that in Hurston's "How it Feels to be Colored Me," there are four categories of refusals that can be traced to Hurston's Black joy praxis. The first is her rejection of Du Bois's notion of Blackness—especially as rooted in double consciousness—and her metaphorisation of race as an accidental feature. The second is the "joyful tendencies" of Hurston's childhood in the South which contracts Du Bois' racialisation of his childhood and valorises Hurston's "self-consciousness" (91). The third is the repudiation of the pity and pain of slavery and then the fourth is the jazz club scene that excites her womanhood.

The Praxis of Root Work in Black Joy

Stewart contends that Hurston accentuates root work as a cardinal part of Black joy. Using Beyoncé's Formation, Stewart posits that Beyoncé prioritises satisfying the interiority of the self for self-satisfaction and "focuses on how we relate to ourselves" (95), one of the tenets of Black joy. Root work, according to Stewart, exhibits Black Joy by "privileging self-determination" (97) or winning within over resistance which equates to ethnographic thinness. Stewart juxtaposes Hurston's "The Sanctified Church" to Du Bois's "Of the Faith of the Fathers" and notes Hurston's celebration of root-work practices in the Sanctified Church while Du Bois bemoans them. Root-work praxis—such as the ring shout, voodooism, and spirit possession—stimulates the development of an independent Black self and differentiates the Black southern church from their white-assimilationist New England counterparts. She argues that Black joy provides alternative modes of agency that obliterate the single story of white domination and Black tragedy.

In Hurston's "High John de Conquer," Stewart examines diverse hoodoo practices such as conjure, "ancestor reverence and the creation of mojo bags" (103) and their overlapping intersection of the past (the dead) and the present (the living). Root work centralises what one does with oneself after abolition and is emblematic of blending among Black women. Stewart analyses root work in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and evinces two functions of the practice: root work serves as alternative values to the dominant culture and suggests Black emancipation as transcending only

resistance. Stewart contends that John de Conquer symbolises the "winning within" paradigm, "the struggle to define ourselves" (114), an African American folktale and this stimulates Black joy. Stewart also opines that Black Joy offers alternative forms of reading narratives as she dissects "High John de Conquer" as "a meta-hoo-doo tale" (114) that reflects Hurston's personal life and racial politics of conjuring.

Black Joy and COVID-19

Stewart avers that COVID-19 has revealed brazen gender disparities and neo-abolitionist impulses in depicting African Americans in the US media. Such tendencies entail the emphasising of Black New Orleans and the re-inscribing of Hurricane Katrina as well as the representation of the South as backward during the COVID-19 pandemic. These portrayals politicise racism and seek to undermine Black joy, especially in the public sphere. Stewart asserts that deploying Hurricane Katrina during the COVID era and derogating Mardi Gras, a Black southern cultural event, mobilises images of Black suffering that foregrounds neo-abolitionist legacies in the US national imaginary. Hence, Black joy extends Blackness beyond the dominant tragic frames to joyful tendencies that foster healing in a COVID era which subverts neo-abolitionist politics of Black tragedy that seeks white recognition.

In conclusion, Stewart traces the negativities that are symptomatic of blackness to abolitionism and neo-abolitionism and employs Hurston's works to evince Black joy as an alternative mode of agency for rendering Blackness in the public sphere. She believes the politicisation of joy and the contestation between Black joy and Black tragedy persist in the public sphere. Hence, racism is a national phenomenon that neo-abolitionists tend to regionise to the South to valorise gendered narratives of Black victimhood, especially Black women. While Stewart focuses mainly on Hurston's essays in examining Black joy and its contestation of representing Blackness in the US, this study extends the argument of Black joy by interrogating Black joy in Hurston's fiction.

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Tolkien Behind the Iron Curtain and Beyond

Review of Janka Kascakova and David Levente Palatinus (eds.), *J. R. R. Tolkien in Central Europe. Context, Directions, and the Legacy,* Routledge Studies in Speculative Fiction (New York: Routledge, 2023)

ZSUZSANNA PÉRI-NAGY

Thanks to the book by Janka Kascakova and David Levente Palatinus, the vast landscape of Tolkien studies is enriched with a new territory. It adds the new dimension of three Central European countries, namely Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, to the exploration, detailing their efforts in translating, reading, and interpreting the works of the creator of Middle-earth. The volume entitled *J. R. R. Tolkien in Central Europe* offers a diachronic and synchronic mapping of the reception of Tolkien's works by academics, readers, and fandom under the communist regime and in the post-communist times up to the present day. The nuanced differences in the reception of Tolkien's *oeuvre* in these various countries become even more transparent against the backdrop of a rather unified historical-political background of the past and the similarly unified cultural background of the present, characterised by its globalised transmediality, hybridity, and its globalised audiences.

Kasciakova's and Palatinus's Introduction provides us with a theoreticised interpretation of the aims of articles contained in the volume. The authors present the numerous criteria along which the papers offer their diachronic survey of Tolkien

reception in Central Europe as well as the phenomena which define the multi-media hybridity with its reciprocal impacts of the present day. They claim that Tolkien studies were somewhat delayed due to a persevering mistrust in the genre of fantasy, resulting in a lack of systematic mapping of the origins and progress of Tolkien scholarship in Hungary and the countries of the former Czechoslovakia. Thus, the present volume intends to fill this need. The material of the volume is grouped into three main sections: the first focuses on the reception and transla-tions of Tolkien in Hungary, the second contains the articles dealing with the Czech and Slovak scenes, and the third, entitled "Studying Fantasy after Tolkien: Legacies and Contemporary perspective," contains papers about perceptions of Tolkien by the younger generations, along with fantasy literature in multimedia.

In the first section, Gergely Nagy offers a highly detailed overview of Tolkien scholarship in Hungary from its inception to the present day. His first article covers the period up until the twenty-first century, while the second delves into the contem-porary scene. Tolkien's introduction to Hungarian readers did not occur through samizdat manuscripts, as in Russia or other countries of the communist bloc, but rather began as early as 1975, with the publication of *The Hobbit*. As Nagy argues, Tolkien "was not seen as subversive, but he was not fully approved or appreciated either" (13), and initially faced criticism not for practicing a marginal genre but for being perceived as outmoded and too conservative.

Nagy describes the first translations, which paved the way for scholarly work, and continues by enumerating a plethora of criticisms levied against Tolkien. These critiques, for a time, maintained a slightly defamatory tone, with such delicacies of misinterpretation as Ferenc Mezõ's review, which characterised *The Hobbit* as "the spot-on satirical representation of the American way of life" (17) and simi-larly portrayed *The Silmarillion*.

The author proceeds to discuss the challenges of defining the genre of Tolkien's works during these early years, illustrating how Tolkien was initially connected to the science fiction scenery, with fantasy seen as a sub-genre of it. There were also struggles to position Tolkien's works regarding the dichotomy between children's literature and adult fairy tales.

Clear-cut academic articles began to appear only sporadically before the 1990s, a period that Nagy identifies as marking a new beginning in the Hungarian Tolkien reception. This era saw a surge in various platforms where Tolkien was discussed, disseminated, and enjoyed, including clubs, new publishing companies, role-playing

games. Importantly, this period also witnessed a new wave of publishing previously unknown works by the author, such as the *Unfinished Tales*. And, undoubtedly, this is the moment when the Peter Jackson film adaptations enhance the rising of a new fandom, in Hungary as in the other parts of the world.

Nagy argues that, while the first translations were brilliantly made, they contained less fortunate renderings of the proper names, leading to an eclecticism that necessitated urgent retranslation and standardisation of the Tolkienesque terminology, especially proper names. This need was addressed in the twenty-first century, which Nagy defines as the period of expansion in both popular fandom and sound, systematic, and academically based work on Tolkien.

The Hungarian Tolkien Society, founded in this period, played a pivotal role in promoting both popular and scholarly engagement with Tolkien's works. They facilitated new translations, including the *History of Middle-earth* series, and contributed to the solidification and expansion of Tolkien criticism, with such great achievements as Tamás Bényei's survey *Az ártatlan ország*, situating Tolkien into the context of post-1945 English novel and thus contributing also to the canonisation of Tolkien for the Hungarian readership as well. The Society was instrumental in cultivating a new readership and fandom through events such as summer camps and other social occasions which enjoyed a growing popularity, while also infiltrating Tolkien studies into university education, thereby paving the way for young Hungarian scholars to engage in international academic discourse on Tolkien.

After discussing the Hungarian scene, the reader is introduced to the Tolkien reception in Czechoslovakia and its successor states. Janka Kascakova's study provides insight into the phases of encountering Tolkien in socialist Czechoslovakia. Kascakova informs us that this period was characterised by a scarcity of material due to the communist regime's reaction to a Western author deemed problematic for several reasons. Following a detailed overview of the historical context, which might serve as an introduction into the political-ideological background of these years for the subsequent essays on the Slovak and Czech cases, we learn about the initial positive criticism from Viktor Krupa. Krupa acknowledged the merits of Tolkien's work, introducing him to Czech readership through partial translations of *The Lord of the Rings*. However, the full translation was postponed due to the hardening of censorship following the suppression of the "Prague Spring." The first edition of the work in Slovak language occurred in the early 2000s.

Among the ideological objections, there was a persistent notion on the part of communist censors that Tolkien intentionally positioned the realm of the evil, Mordor, to the East, alluding thus to the Stalinist regime. There were also fears that Saruman's ill-treatment of the Shire could be paralleled with the collectivisation of lands under the communists. Additionally, Tolkien's Catholicism was feared as an incitement to religiosity, seen as a threat to the system. Consequently, Tolkien's works were read and disseminated as samizdat. Kascakova recounts the case when Vaclav Havel, later prime minister, was advised to read *The Lord of the Rings* upon leaving prison in 1983. Although many testimonies are lost, surviving ones testify to the enthusiasm and encouragement these texts provided to clandestine readers in communist Czechoslovakia.

The following studies by Tereza Dědinová and the joint article by Jozefa Pevčiková and Eva Urbanová offer surveys of the Czech and Slovak receptions after the 1990s. Dědinová explores the shifts in Tolkien's reception after the communist era, particularly focusing on how new generations encountered Jackson's adaptations before reading the texts themselves, if at all. These generations were indoctrinated into new cultural sensitivities as gender issues, otherness, and environmentalism.

The shift in reception practices is highlighted by first presenting the beginnings, thus the efforts of the communist reviews to interpret *The Hobbit* as anti-capitalist propaganda which obviously failed: during the "Prague Spring" days leaflets with the inscription "Gandalf na Hrad" (meaning Gandalf for president) attest to the clandestine interpretation of the masses and to the encouragement they drew from the work in their fight for freedom and a righteous social and political order. The same attitude is reflected in the reviews of the 1990s, when the country freshly found its independence from communist totalitarianism. Such themes as freedom, personal responsibility, moral choices, hope, and the necessity to stop evil were the ones which resonated with the reader.

Dědinová highlights the emergence of numerous fandom clubs and fanzines, and the appearance of other products of fantasy literature, with *The Lord of the Rings* standing out as a narrative that resonates deeply with contemporary societal issues. The emergence of the digital era and the widespread popularity of Jackson's adaptations have altered the landscape of reception. The article raises the question of whether contemporary audiences delve into the profound meaning embedded within the text or merely scratch the surface. To address this, a questionnaire survey was conducted to glean insights. The findings seem to confirm the hypothesis

that while the digital age may impact reading habits, with some perceiving Middle-earth as merely superficial entertainment, there remains a significant cohort captivated by the inner artistic coherence and relevance of Tolkien's works. Reading about themes such as friendship, courage, resilience against evil, self-sacrifice, and hope evokes a profound sense of inspiration, encouragement, and a peculiar yet enriching feeling of "coming home."

Pevčiková and Urbanová's article, titled "Tolkien in the Slovak Press: Situation after 1990," examines Tolkien's reception in scholarly magazines, fanzines, and in the daily press, as well as internet magazine portals. Following a delayed translation of *The Hobbit* (the first translation was published in 1973, in the year of Tolkien's death, and the complete translation of *The Lord of the Rings* came out only in 2002), a proliferation of reviews and articles followed, primarily focusing on critiques of the translations themselves, in both academic and popular circles.

Regarding criticism of Tolkien himself, surprisingly, it was the popular media, such as *Fantázia* and *Athelas*, along with other internet magazines, some even with a confessional profile, that aired their views on the works, while academic circles remained silent. The authors argue that this silence was partly due to difficulties in categorising the genre itself: either showing disinterest or harbouring a deep mistrust in the literary quality of speculative genres. This led to repeated attempts to redefine the genre of Tolkien's works as a "fairy-tale heroic epic" (106) or as "modern heroic fantasy literature" (107). Particularly noteworthy are cases of over-interpretation, such as allegorical readings linking the work to WWII, and even to "anthrax," the "aviation apocalypse," or to genetic research on aggression (107). Jozef Bobok's criticism of *The Lord of the Rings* as kitsch due to its escapism is also striking.

The Slovak reception by Tolkien-favouring scholarly circles is also peculiar as it focused on the biographical aspect of the Tolkien phenomenon and tried to gain acceptance for him by emphasising not only his academic achievements but also his Catholicism. It is not surprising, then, as the authors demonstrate, that the most vehement campaign to ensure Tolkien a positive appreciation was conducted in Catholic academic periodicals such as *Impulz* (*A Review Magazine for Modern Catholic Culture*). These were the platforms where the comparison of *Harry Potter* with *The Hobbit* took place, to the detriment of the former, with Tolkien receiving higher praise. The article concludes by mapping the fandom with fan fiction, fan art, fan vids, and fan music, along with organising social events such as summer camps, etc. It also

demonstrates how the competition between non-professional magazines and academic publications is neutralised by the presence of "aca-fandom," a term denoting academics who are also fans of popular cultural aspects of the Tolkien universe.

Finally, the last paper of the second section by Jela Kehoe offers a survey of the problems and challenges of translating *The Hobbit*. The author compares two translations, one by Viktor Krupa in 1973 and the other by Otakar Kořínek from 2002, placing them into the context of the Czech translations of both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These translations could be equally read by the Slovak readership and therefore had an undeniable impact on both translators and the audience. Kehoe focuses her analysis on the "knots" or challenges that translators face due to culture-specific phenomena, which manifest in translating proper names of persons and beings, inanimate objects, or place names. Finding acceptable solutions is essential in forming a consistent nomenclature that ensures a smooth and enjoyable reception of the works by several generations.

The author of the paper identifies another challenge faced by Slovak translators, namely, the richness of the original text and the relatively recent development of the Slovak literary tradition. This challenge is evident in aspects such as lexis, grammar, and pronunciation, as well as in the efforts to render the speech of the different races by dialectal variants in Slovak or by using different registers of colloquial speech.

The last part of the volume bears the title "Studying Fantasy after Tolkien" and focuses on the reception of fantasy among teenagers and young adults. In one of the most intriguing papers from the volume, Martina Vránová explores young adult literature and fantastic fiction, examining how the two genres merge in young adult fantasy. The author begins by defining the terms of the genres, highlighting the recent rise in popularity of young adult literature, which has become one of the most successful categories in book publishing, television, film, and computer games since the early 2000s. Vránová draws on concepts from Jungian psychology, cognitive narratology, and Foucault's ideas on heterotopic places as she compares John Green's realist young adult novel, *Looking for Alaska*, with Andrzej Sapkowski's fantasy series, *The Witcher*, and Ransom Riggs' *Miss Peregrine* series, which blends both genres into young adult fantasy. Despite their differences, all three works acknowledge their indebtedness to Tolkien and share essential similarities that contribute to their continued appeal among adolescent audiences.

Vránová refers to Jonathan Stephens' five criteria for defining the characteristics of Young Adult Literature (YAL), emphasising the inherent connection between YAL and fantasy. She writes, "The strong, indeed heroic, characters undergoing an ordeal in a fantastic world in order to emerge as changed individuals make up the most common themes of fantasy" (133), these are also prevalent in YAL. By applying Erik Erikson's developmental psychology to the narrative patterns found in both YAL and fantasy, Vránová suggests that the challenges faced by characters in these stories mirror the challenges encountered by adolescents on their path toward adulthood. Thus, reading becomes a formative experience that aids readers in confronting the challenges of their own lives, while following a parallel path with the protagonists of traditional fantasy, acquiring mental, emotional, and moral maturation. This is fostered by the shared underlying narrative structure of consecutive rites of passage: separation, initiation, and return. As Vránová puts it, "Resolving each of Erikson's life crisis is a reenactment of the archetype of the self as a hero on a quest, which is particularly pronounced in the adolescence" (135).

Another essential dimension of this journey is the transition from isolation to social inclusion. Vránová draws on Thomas Pavel's cognitive narratology to illustrate how fantasy fiction has the capacity to create worlds that are referential and mirror real-life experiences for readers. In doing so, Vránová incorporates Kripke's theory on the construction of possible or alternative worlds, which explains how adolescents can benefit from fictional worlds by safely exploring different constructions of their own identities within them. Vránová also examines the functioning of elements such as travel, the archetypal figures of the Father and the Mentor, and the significance of Foucault's heterotopia in this context. She concludes that "YAL, fantasy and their union in YA fantasy have taken up a role of the disappearing cultural phenomenon of ritual, which is possibly one of the reasons for their immense marketing success" (147).

Nikolett Sipos presents the findings of a survey conducted with Hungarian students from two universities regarding their preferences for Tolkien and his impact on fantasy literature. The survey, conducted online, is described by Sipos as offering an overview rather than being referential. It included both quantitative and qualitative criteria, seeking answers about students' views on the fantasy genre in general, their reading and media consumption habits related to fantasy fiction, and whether they believe Tolkien and other fantasy works should be included in university curricula. The conclusions reveal that *The Lord of the Rings* maintains a preferred

position among narratives such as *Harry Potter*, *The Witcher*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, or *Game of Thrones*. Despite a preference for films over books among the majority, 76% of respondents still read fantasy novels and support the inclusion of the genre in academic discourse.

Finally, David Levente Palatinus discusses the influence of transmediality on the reception and perception of fantasy. The article provides a detailed picture on how fantasy literature evolved into a mainstream cultural phenomenon in the multimedia universe. Palatinus begins with an impressive overview of how fantasy genres both shape and are shaped by the programming policies of various platforms, ranging from traditional ones to streaming platforms and transmedia franchises. These platforms face constraints such as budgetary considerations, a perpetual pursuit of high production quality, and challenges posed by technological innovations. Palatinus argues that these factors are of an ambiguous nature; while they offer a growing array of expressive possibilities, they can also hinder efforts to achieve greater artistic expressivity by prioritising technical brilliance at the expense of artistic quality.

Especially intriguing is Palatinus's exploration of the impacts of hybridity on the reception of fantasy works and the shifting expectations of audiences regarding adaptations. While fidelity to the original text was once the primary criterion for adaptations, recent developments prioritise relatability. Palatinus attributes this shift to the transmediatisation of fantasy works, which has intensified with the proliferation of franchises. According to Palatinus, "transmediality also implies one medium 'imprinting' on the other, in the sense that transmedia narratives encode the specificities of the multiple media through which they proliferate" (167). Participatory audience engagement is further fuelled by social media platforms, fostering fan communities that shape the content and form of fantasy, with streaming platforms playing a facilitating role. Thus, a permanently oscillating reciprocal influence is created. This dynamic results in a continuous transformation of the fantasy genre, reaching new heights of global and multimedia popularity.

The volume explores new territory by studying Tolkien's influence in three Central European countries, a topic previously overlooked. Their common historical past caused similar challenges in the first decades of Tolkien reception in these countries, with local specificities in resisting the ideologically fuelled attempts of blocking the influences of the Tolkienesque *oeuvre* on a readership avid of the encouragement and hope it could offer. It also paints a multicoloured picture

of the reception of the Tolkien legacy in all its forms within a society and cultural context increasingly unified with the rest of the world due to globalisation. Thus, the book is a resourceful reading for scholars interested in Tolkien's legacy behind the iron curtain and in the present states of the former communist bloc as well as for the common reader of general interest. The reading will further convince us of the validity of Dědinová's assertion: "Tolkien's Middle-earth's inner consistency and depth resist the flow of time and-like other classical works of literature-keeps its autonomy and stays relevant for new generations" (75).

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Beneath His Feet

Grounding Rushdie for the Twenty-First Century

Review of Florian Stadtler (ed.), *Salman Rushdie in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023)

JÚLIA TAKÁCS

Salman Rushdie is one of the best-known contemporary authors, owing his reputation not only to his literary prowess but to his simultaneously secretive yet highly publicised persona as well. He has lived his life under constant scrutiny from the public and literary scholars alike as evidenced by the many volumes written to dissect his life, works, and opinions. The new addition to Cambridge University Press's Literature in Context series, *Salman Rushdie in Context,* succeeds in providing a new outlook on Rushdie as a person, as an author, and as a thinker thanks to the diverse array of scholars and topics it involves in the conversation.

In the Literature in Context series, each book focuses on one artist and examines their legacy and *oeuvre* from many perspectives. As *Salman Rushdie in Context* is part of this series, several of its practical characteristics originate from conventions established by preceding books, but in many respects, it differentiates itself due to its subject matter and its editor's decisions.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the book, which is often a hallmark of the Literature in Context series, is its diversity. This diversity is manifold: Florian Stadtler, the editor, compiled a volume of essays penned by scholars from various fields of study and foci from around the world. In the "List of Contributors," every author received a short biography, mentioning their other projects and

writings, which not only showcases their expertise, but also serves as recommendation for further reading. This is supported by the "Select Bibliography" chapter, as well as an "Index" at the very end of the volume, cataloguing recurring persons, themes, and motifs discussed in the essays. Both sections are useful tools for scholarly study, which results in a volume well-suited for students and researchers alike. Due to the lack of space, I am only able to discuss a few select chapters from the collection.

Florian Stadtler, who is simultaneously the editor and a contributor of the work, is a renowned scholar of Postcolonial and Migration Studies. In his introductory essay, entitled "Rushdie's Contexts—Contextualising Rushdie," he establishes the primary goal of the volume as providing a reading of Rushdie that is as thorough and diverse as possible. However, what is important to note about the "Introduction"—which can even seem counterintuitive to the book's objective—is its perhaps intentionally limited scope. Several essay collections in the Literature in Context series refrain from relying too much on the author's biography at the beginning by adding a preliminary chapter of Chronology, but in this volume, the foreword is mostly a very detailed history of the author's life. While Florian Stadtler's preface is highly accurate to its title of "Contextualising Rushdie," as a lead-in to the whole volume, it contains little information regarding most sections of the work, and seems to favour Part I, which engages with biographical contexts. The question arises: if *Salman Rushdie in Context* considers Rushdie's works from many different perspectives, why is this not reflected in its introduction? The answer might lie in Rushdie's signature writing style and his tumultuous public perception. Rushdie's books often showcase first-person narration and rely on biographical details, which can muddy up the conversation around the author's real-life persona. The editor might have chosen to start the volume with an elaborate biography to establish the biographical truths that the following essays build upon.

The book is divided into five parts, each consisting of essays of different thematic blocks, including biographical, literary, historical-cultural, critical-theoretical, and aesthetic-receptive contexts. The work seems to favour historical-cultural analyses over others: there are in total thirteen essays in Part III: Historical and Cultural contexts, as opposed to the three essays of Part IV: Critical Theoretical Contexts. This inequality showcases that, rather than providing a general overview, the volume is more interested in a closer look on the particularities of Rushdie's writings.

Part I: Life considers biographical approaches to Rushdie's evaluation. This section serves as a useful starting point to the volume by analysing Rushdie's identity

as a thinker and writer through others' and his own biographically inspired works. The first chapter, "Salman Rushdie, Biography, and Autobiography" by Pavan Kumar Malreddy, explores Rushdie's representation and self-representation. Comparing an (auto)biography to a Bildungsroman, Malreddy analyses the fictionality of both genres, thus emphasising (auto)biography's consciously and unconsciously thwarted truthfulness. This essay, by highlighting the controversial nature of objectivity, establishes an important cornerstone of scholarly analysis for all following writings in the volume, but especially for other biographically inclined articles, like Anshuman A. Mondal's "Salman Rushdie and the Fatwa."

Mondal's insightful chapter considers the fatwa, which is a monumental part of Rushdie's evaluation, from personal, religious, and societal perspectives. It aptly criticises the simplified assessment of the fatwa, while reminding readers about political performativity on all sides of the conversation. It is important to note, as is stated in the "Addendum" of the volume, that *Salman Rushdie in Context* was in an advanced stage of production at the time of the 2022 attack; therefore, the event is not part of the contributors' consideration, yet Mondal's analysis does not lose any of its complexity without this added context.

Ana Christina Mendes' essay in Part II: Literary and Creative Contexts describes Rushdie's diverse artistry, depicting his multimedia approach to storytelling. In "Salman Rushdie and Visual Art and Culture," Mendes explores Rushdie's use of visual narration, stating that "through the palimpsestic overlapping of trajectories and drawing on the visual to accentuate this imbrication of cultural multiplicities, the novel [*The Moor's Last Sigh*] points towards understanding the Indian postcolonial self as hybrid" (106). Mendes points out the way visual descriptions are used in *The Moor's Last Sigh* as well as in other works by Rushdie, to emphasise the intricacies of intermingling storylines, similarly to the layers of paint mixing and melting together on the canvas in the eponymous painting.

This chapter does not only provide a unique analytic perspective to Rushdie's works, but also demonstrates another noteworthy characteristic of the essay collection: Mendes, as well as many other contributors to *Salman Rushdie in Context,* chose to focus on Rushdie's lesser-known books or projects. Rushdie is mostly known for and even found his way into celebrity territory with *Satanic Verses* and its subsequent fallout. This naturally resulted in a boom in writings on the book's reception and the fatwa, which, although important conversations, oversaturated scholarly study on Rushdie. This is yet another task for an essay collection on Salman Rushdie to tackle, and

due to the diverse writing cast, *Salman Rushdie in Context* succeeds in creating a volume that strives for a more holistic view of Rushdie's *oeuvre*.

Part III of the book is devoted to the historical and cultural contexts of Rushdie's work. "Scheherazade and Her Cousins: Rushdie's Women Handcuffed to Contexts" by Feroza Jussawalla examines Rushdie's archetypal female characters and their inherent connection to storytelling. This essay demonstrates one of the greatest strengths of the volume, which is that its writings are in conversation with other considerations of Rushdie's work. Scholarly analysis does not exist in a vacuum, and by quoting, reacting to, and reflecting on other feminist criticisms, Jussawalla's essay is a balanced and layered approach to the subject matter. For students of English literature, Jussawalla's writing is a particularly noteworthy example of incorporating other critics' knowledge into one's own work.

Many parts of the essay collection are useful guides to students of literature, and most representative of this are essays in Part IV: Critical Theoretical Contexts. The three chapters in this section all elaborate on common theoretical frameworks in which Rushdie's interpreters place his narratives. In Harish Trivedi's "Salman Rushdie and Postcolonialism," staple figures and issues of the framework—Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, mimicry, hybridity—are mentioned, granting easy access to students who seek to learn more about the topic. Trivedi's essay recalls the idea of representation elaborated on by Malreddy in the first chapter, now examined through the lens of postcolonial studies. He astutely criticises the literary world's imposed characterisation of Rushdie as the quintessential postcolonial writer, while sensitively addressing the topic of liminality and otherness both in Rushdie's works and his life. Despite the complexity of the topic, Trivedi's descriptive approach helps in understanding the essay for readers of all levels of knowledge, resulting in an engaging read. In addition, the inclusion of essays from all critical positions is yet another testament to the book's diversity since several works do not (only) praise, but often problematise Rushdie as an author or thinker.

In Part V: Reception, Criticism, and Adaptation, Ursula Kluwick examines Rushdie's image as a postcolonial writer from the perspective of the literary market. In her essay, "Salman Rushdie's Audiences, Reception, and the Literary Market," she explores Rushdie's works from a quantitative perspective with the help of sales figures and publishing records. The topic of representation once again comes up in this chapter, especially through the data gathered from reader reviews on websites including Amazon and Goodreads. Readers' opinions show how the denominator

of a "(modern) classic" is allocated to Rushdie's works, making a case for their inclusion into modern canon, thus appearing as books that are "important to read." Phrases like this can also be observed in both positive and negative reviews, in which Rushdie is either praised or criticised for the complexity of his language—with reviewers referencing it either as an intellectual exercise or as mere self-importance. These opinions bring up the question of accessibility, and whether its presence or lack thereof can positively influence the popularity of an author. The creation of an atmosphere of intellectual exclusivity, either in an affectionate or derogatory sense, seems to be an important contributing factor in Rushdie's perception in both academic and non-academic circles.

As it can be deciphered from this short overview, there are some common themes in the essays of *Salman Rushdie in Context,* including reflections on postcolonialism, canonisation and self-canonisation, objectivity and subjectivity. The recurring topics work to the book's advantage by showcasing the varied methodology and writing styles of the contributing writers, thus truly providing an interdisciplinary experience. Salman Rushdie is a writer about whom much has been written over the years; however, this does not mean that there is no place in literary criticism for a work like this one. An author's image continuously changes and evolves throughout their life and even after their death; therefore, the discourse around them does so as well—and this book, thanks to the work by its editor and contributors, showcases how we read and understand Rushdie in today's day and age.

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The Grassroots of *Urningtum*

Review of Douglas Pretsell, *Urning: Queer Identity in the German Nineteenth Century* (Toronto–Buffalo–London: University of Toronto Press, 2024)

ZSOLT BOJTI

Although he was not first to advocate the decriminalisation of same-sex desire, German lawyer and journalist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895) is often called the "first theorist" of the subject due to his neologism "urning" and the model of the "third-sex" for same-sex-attracted men. There has been some excellent work done regarding this crucial period in the history of sexuality, such as *Ulrichs: The Life and Works of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Pioneer of the Modern Gay Movement* (1988) by Hubert Kennedy, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (2000) by Harry Oosterhuis, *Peripheral Desire: The German Discovery of Sex* (2015) by Robert Deam Tobin, *Vita Sexualis: Karl Ulrichs and the Origins of Sexual Science* (2016) by Ralph M. Leck, and *Violent Sensations: Sex, Crime and Utopia in Vienna and Berlin, 1860–1914* (2016) by Scott Spector, to name a few. Many scholars usually focus on prominent scandals and "elite writers" of the period and, as a result, little has been said about the grassroots of this modern gay movement in the nineteenth century. It is this lacuna in criticism that a new book *Urning: Queer Identity in the German Nineteenth Century* (2024) addresses based on indispensable primary sources published in *The Correspondence of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 1846–1894* (2020) and *Queer Voices in the Works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing, 1883–1901* (2023), both translated and edited by the author of the monograph under review here, Douglas Pretsell.

It has become almost customary to start a book like this one with notes on terminology when writing about various nineteenth-century neologisms and their respective theories to avoid the troublesome anachronism in light of our contemporary understanding of gender and sexuality, often incomparable with pre-Stonewall sexology. As indicated by the title's use of the German term "urning" instead of the English "uranian," this monograph puts sexological terms back to their historical context and builds the narrative from the ground up. This does not mean that Pretsell disregards or shies away from acknowledging and addressing domineering terminology and criticism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Also indicated by the title, the book makes use of the term "queer" in a genealogical and more expansive sense, and the introduction addresses Foucault's *History of Sexuality* head-on. Evidently, prior criticism also had to face Foucault one way or the other. For instance, Oosterhuis pointed out a problem in Foucault's narrative, namely, that the people behind the case studies of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* were not merely passive patients internalising the notions of *Scientia sexualis*. Tobin intelligibly, though with somewhat undue modesty, tiptoed around Foucault as if walking on eggshells, and Leck in the afterword to his monograph virtually attacked Foucault, which was extremely thought-provoking but may have been done with dubious vehemence. Pretsell, on the other hand, by carefully contextualising both the ontological turn in the nineteenth century and Foucault in the twentieth, elegantly accommodates the French philosopher's findings in his own introductory material. What follows is divided into two parts: the first is about Ulrichs's active years until 1870, and the second discusses the newfound agency of the urning community between 1871 and 1897.

Chapter 1, "The First Urning: Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 1825–1895," offers a short biography of Ulrichs and details how his coinage "urning" came to be that was followed by the development and expansion of his theory. The next chapter, "From Page to Personhood: The Transmission of *Urningtum*, 1864–1868," gives an account of the grassroots responding to Ulrichs's pamphlets. It is a simple and logical yet largely overlooked step in the narrative regarding the nineteenth-century history of sexuality: thanks to Ulrichs, there was an intense network in the making, and Pretsell provides three defining characteristics to the urning identity and a ninefold character typology of *Urningtum*, "the totality of the urning world" (33n*): the ordinary urning, the consummate *Weibling*, the discreet professional, the isolated

urning, the married man, the social cross-dresser, the ambient *Mannling*, the soldier, and the blackmailer.

The third chapter, "Two Trials: Sensation, Horror, and the Urning in the Public Sphere, 1867–1870," turns to two urnings who were the first, after Ulrichs, to identify themselves as such in public, although with troublesome public ramifications, given their scandalous trials. Chapter 4, "Sins of the City: Karl Maria Kertbeny and the Social Cross-Dressers, 1865–1880," focuses on Ulrichs's pen pal (and competitor?), Károly Kertbeny, who coined the term "homosexual," and correspondents in London and Vienna who wrote to Ulrichs about cross-dressing in these large cities. The design of the chapter is clear: it is about men who did not receive Ulrichs's ideas without reservations, given their own sense of gender and sexuality. The chapter, nevertheless, leaves a few things to be explained or desired. Kertbeny championing his masculinist approach and his notion of super-virile homosexual men socialises rather awkwardly with accounts of cross-dressing on page. Also, his role in the history of sexuality seems to be somewhat downplayed. A few more paragraphs would have been appreciated, comparing Ulrichs's and Kertbeny's strategies in detail and outlining that the two most probably had different understandings of what was at stake when writing about same-sex desire in 1869. However, it is also clear by chapter 4 that Pretsell would not deliberately neglect a more detailed account of these questions if not by design, which suggests that it is only the purpose which the chapter serves in his narrative that did not allow him to elaborate further, and there are publications to come concerning the subject for which the readers should keep their eyes peeled.

Part 2 starts with the extraordinary story of Jakob Rudolf Forster who studied under Ulrichs, took what he learned back to Switzerland, and tried to build an urning community in Zurich despite all adversities and adversaries. Then chapter 6 revolves around the new classificatory science of sexualities in *Psychopathia Sexualis* by Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the people behind the book's case studies, and these urning men's "agency in the psychiatric engagement" (116). Although this agency has been established in criticism with different words to the same effect, the analysis that enfolds here quantifies the weight of—what Pretsell calls—dissenting autobiographies in shaping, if not almost redefining, Krafft-Ebing's views on same-sex-attracted men over the many editions of his pivotal study. The chapter concludes that "[t]his was the result of a continuous campaign started by Ulrichs in 1864 and extended by his followers to 1892" (133), which might suggest to some readers that

it was Ulrichs who set the wheels in motion, although it might be safer to say that he oiled the wheels.

The next chapter, "Belling the Cat," changes the standard narrative about the Berlin police which is thought to have miraculously reformed itself against blackmailers *vis-à-vis* urning men between 1878 and 1897. The chapter argues that it was the campaign tactic and police liaison of Adolf Glaser, a secretive and elusive figure of the archives, that changed the game. Chapter 8 discusses another example for the transnational promulgation of Ulrichs's ideas, and focuses on English poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds and his struggles with reconciling his sources (Plato, Whitman, and Ulrichs) so that he can arrive at a sex-positive view of his sexuality. The concluding remarks of the monograph close its narrative with the end of the urning age when, in 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld's Scientific-Humanitarian Committee was founded on largely masculinist ideas.

It would not do justice to *Urning* if it were called another "welcome addition" to literature about Ulrichs and the history of sexuality. Especially since, despite that there has been rather extensive criticism about the subject, the monograph takes the risk of presenting a narrative that might seem introductory at first sight. But this risk pays off especially well and serves the purpose of the book, which has much to offer for both novice and more advanced readers about the nineteenth-century history of same-sex desire. The former will enjoy the intelligibility and ease with which the monograph builds its narrative from the ground up, despite the puzzling complexity of the subject matter at hand, based on its carefully selected, evaluated, and analysed primary sources. And the latter will definitely learn a lot about the largely overlooked grassroots of this modern gay movement in the nineteenth century, and chapters 5 and 7 in particular will colour this picture of the period for them with nuanced and riveting stories that changed the game. I am absolutely positive that Douglas Pretsell's *Urning: Queer Identity in the German Nineteenth Century* is a must-have in libraries and university syllabi on the history of sexuality, and that this monograph will be a cornerstone in criticism about same-sex desire in the nineteenth century for many years to come.

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Breaking Barriers

Sarah Edwards's and Sarah Osborn's Extraordinary Journey in The First Great Awakening

EMŐKE ÁGOSTON

Abstract: This study examines the contribution of Sarah Pierpont Edwards and Sarah Osborn to the Great Awakening, a religious spiritual awakening, which happened in the Colonies in the eighteenth century. Sarah Pierpont Edward's name was overshadowed by that of his husband, who was a representative theologian during the First Great Awakening period. The second subject of this study, Sarah Osborn, was unknown until Catherine A. Brekus shed light on her contribution to the rise of evangelicalism. Since her presence as a female missionary and former boarding school director is of great importance, this paper will empathetically highlight these aspects of her life as well. In the midst of changes in the church and society, women were experimenting with different ways of voicing their thoughts. As a very significant change in attitude, the Quaker leaders allowed women to preach. Aside from the reaction of the communities of Sarah Pierpont Edwards and Sarah Osborn, this study will thoroughly elaborate on their personal lives. Their personal spiritual pilgrimage serves as a cornerstone of the present study. However, as their narratives are one-sided, we have to take into consideration the reception of their memoirs, letters, and diary entries. Amongst others, there were two important male characters in their lives, namely, Jonathan Edwards, the husband of Sarah Pierpont Edwards, and Joseph Fish, a minister, and a spiritual guide of Sarah Osborn, whose reconstructed opinion about the above-mentioned women will be detailed. In the midst of eighteenth-century societal constraints, Sarah Edwards and Sarah Osborn emerged as groundbreakers, defying traditional gender roles and laying the path for women in religious discourses. This article delves into their spiritual journeys, with a special emphasis on their resilience, intellectual capability, and firm commitment to faith.

Hidden in the annals of history, the pivotal role of women in the eighteenth century's religious revivals and the growth of modern Christian denominations have been largely overlooked. From Martin Luther's courageous companion Katharina von Bora to the unsung heroines of the Great Awakening, countless brave European and American women defied expected societal norms to spread the Gospel. Based on their memoirs, this article sheds light on the lives of two remarkable women, Sarah Pierpont Edwards and Sarah Osborn, who challenged expectations and left an undeniable mark on their communities. This article offers a new perspective in understanding of women's religious enthusiasm and experiences in The Great Awakening era, more specifically in the lives of two evangelical women, Sarah Pierpont Edwards and Sarah Osborn.

As we delve into their personal narratives, we uncover the sacrifices, resilience, and profound devotion that fuelled their remarkable journeys. Sarah Edwards, an intellectual female and equal partner in religious dialogues, defied societal expectations with her devotion to God. On the contrary, Sarah Osborn, a self-made woman thrust into adversity, exhibited a rare blend of feminine and masculine attributes while supporting her family, her boarding school, and herself. Examining the pre-Great Awakening era and the revolutionary changes it brought, we witness a brief window of opportunity for women to emerge as influential voices in religious experiences—an opportunity previously denied to them. Through their own eyewitness accounts, we gain a glimpse into the profound spiritual changes of their time.

In a society that strictly confined women to prescribed social spheres, these women fought against exclusion and restriction, indirectly challenging the *status quo*. A juxtaposition of the lives and roles of Sarah Edwards and Sarah Osborn and the influences on their thinking helps in redefining our understanding of the role of women in religious history. However, it is crucial to mention that while Sarah Osborn's memoir is available in its original version, in the case of Sarah Piepront Edwards, her original memoir survives in two altered versions. The first was made by her husband, who rewrote it so that it fits the norms and expectations of their contemporary society. The second, on the other hand, was made a century later, by her great-grandson Sereno Dwight.

WOMEN AND RELIGION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Although women were doomed to silence, they were allowed to pray, to read the Bible—if they were literate—and to attend churches. John Calvin viewed women as human beings primarily driven by sexual desires. Puritans can be seen as the equivalents of Calvinism on the American Continent. Protestants encouraged women to marry in order to avoid sexual immorality. As far as we know, Puritans emphasised the importance of personal devotion through reading the Bible, which resulted in a shift in women's roles. As a consequence, the Puritan woman was able to interpret the Bible for herself and to use the knowledge she had already acquired, in due time and with due vocabulary. As a notable instance, we have the mother of Reverend James Hillhouse (1687–1740), a pastor in New England, who was praised for being an honest Puritan woman and who found the time and place to preach to her family and friends. Regardless of their differences in doctrine, the Anglicans, Puritans, Presbyterians, and Dutch Reformed all seemed to agree on their perception of women: based on the well-known letter of Paul to Timothy they disapproved of women speaking.

Both Sarah Osborn and Sarah Edwards lived through the First Great Awakening, which happened in the American Continent, in the Colonies, as they referred to it. Martin E. Marty highlights that The Great Awakening "might be seen as conservative revolution, but a revolution it was" (81). Interestingly, The Great Awakening makes room for two distinct factions within American Protestantism, namely the "New Light" and the "Old Light." These factions emerged during these religious revivals in the eighteenth century. The New Light movement represented the more fervent and emotional side of the Great Awakening. Its proponents embraced the revivalist spirit and believed in experiencing a personal, emotional, and transformative relationship with God. They welcomed the use of emotional expressions during religious gatherings and often supported preachers and evangelists who played a significant role in spreading the revival. The Old Light faction, on the other hand, opposed the intense emotionalism and dramatic conversions associated with the Great Awakening (1730–1740). They were typically more conservative and adhered to traditional religious practices. Old Light ministers believed in maintaining a more structured and hierarchical form of worship and were sceptical of the emotional excesses that characterised the New Light movement. Therefore, these two opposing perspectives on the Great Awakening contributed to the division

within American religious communities during that time, reflecting the broader impact and significance of the revival in shaping the country's religious landscape.

The prospect of women was undoubtedly restricted to domestic spheres in the Great Awakening. They were allowed to contribute to the well-being of their families, and in the case of religious discourses, to the well-being of their religious communities. However, ambiguity concerning the soul was beginning to emerge. Isaac Backus (1724–1806), a churchman, referred to his soul as a "she," like many other evangelicals, which contributed to a new common language, the conversion narrative. Conversion was a figurative rebirth in Christ for both women and men. Despite how the revivals softened gender inequalities, they did not totally abandon them. Although there were resemblances between men's and women's conversions, the narratives vary in minor but significant ways. Two significant alterations should be addressed. Prior to listing the alternations, it is necessary to elaborate on the meaning of conversion narrative. William James referred to conversion as a conscious change in the life of an individual as a result of one's transcendental experience (Stevens 5).

Primarily, the language that women use within historical narratives often offers insights into societal dynamics and perspectives. Female narration tends to use passive and submissive language and predominantly first-person narration. For instance, Mercy Holmes, a commoner wrote that "I was bro't to see yet..."; while Abraham Choate, also a commoner, stated that "the decision to be saved was his own" (qtd. in Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims* 39). Mercy represents herself as a passive recipient, being actively converted by God, meanwhile Choate was an active agent in the process of conversion. The narration highlighted an inherited, conventional role of women as being the bearer of the greater original sin. A frequently quoted passage from the Bible was Isaiah 1:6 in which one female laments upon her sin: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and purifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." The complexity of this quote from Isaiah leads to the second alternation, which is the negative attributes that women used in their self-expression, such as, "polluted, infectious, leper," or at other certain points as being "poor," "vile," and "worthless." These attributes correlated well with Brekus's idea who further contributed to an understanding of women as both physically and intellectually inferior to men (Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims* 30). This was even further strengthened by one of the most influential theologians in the Great Awakening, Jonathan

Edwards. He wrote about virtuous women in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (Edwards 149). His philosophy was based on biblical foundations; thus, he was sceptical of issues of feminine inferiority and original sin. He referred to women as "frivolous girl" and their conversion left him surprised ("I was surprised with the relation of a young woman, who had been one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town" [Edwards 149]). As previously stated, Evangelicals assumed that the souls of women are easily swayed by both Christ and the Devil, thus their portrayal of the soul as a "woman" was an allusion to women's physical, spiritual, and intellectual weaknesses. Bathsheba Kingsley is a primary example of this; it was believed that her body and mind were enticed by Satan's schemes, since she was "brawling" from town to town. Finally, the recorded sources indicate that women frequently associate Satan with bodily features such as a roaring lion or a beast, whereas men rarely or never refer to this attack occurring physically, rather, than as a mental attack (Brekus, *The Religious History of American Women* 29). Sarah Osborn frequently used the allusion of "lion" to refer to Satan, as it appears in a diary entry from 1767, "Thou canst rescue them out of the paw of the lion of hell. Regardless of the similarities and differences, at the moment of reversion in Christ, gender is no longer existing" (15).

Were There Any Exceptions at All?

It was a generally acknowledged truth that women in the eighteenth century were prohibited from institutional authority; however, researchers have highlighted the importance of the Quaker community as a counter-example. Quakers granted women the liberty to speak, and to occupy leading positions in their communities, since they thought that in the moment of conversion, gender was not significant. Quakers were a group of religious reformers who sought to blur the lines between *clergy* and *laity* by experimenting with new models of liturgy, worship, and other religious practices (Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims* 29). George Fox (1624–1691), a significant Quaker leader, suggested that religious authority is unnecessary and that one should experience God without mediation, which seemed to be an innovative approach in the eighteenth century. Quaker rituals were different from Anglican and Puritan rituals in various ways; they argued that individuals could experience God on a personal level. However, Puritans refused to embrace God's revelation as the source of inspiration, especially women, who were regarded as a bodily

weaker gender. Their personal experiences would have been unacceptable since they did not have the physical power to countenance the Holy Spirit's presence. Thus, the explanation for the denial of women leaders is simple: Quaker women challenged the patriarchal system's traditional inequity in church roles. A traditional Puritan woman was seen as "intellectually and physically inferior to men" and "they tried to control every facet of their behaviour, not least of their speech" (Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims* 30). Later in her commentary, Brekus refers to historians in this discipline, who found that Puritan doctrines were "irredeemably misogynistic" (30).

These above-mentioned instances revealed that there were substantial disparities in the treatment of female missionaries between Puritan churches and women in Quaker communities. As previously proposed, the evidence demonstrated that women in the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries endured oppression, and those who had the courage to question the traditional inequalities, such as Quaker women, immediately drew the attention of church authorities and were treated with contempt. Thus, only those women who held positions in society received acceptance, after questioning the clergy's unshakable authority. Generally, the right to the freedom of expression was curtailed by authority.

The Agitative Spiritual Journey of Sarah Pierpont Edwards

Sarah Pierpont Edwards's life and transformative journey exemplify an exceptional woman whose devoted dedication and spiritual maturation were deeply intertwined with the prevalent currents of her era. Sarah Pierpont Edwards (1710–1758) emerges as an oasis of inspiration amidst the tumult of the Great Awakening. Her narrative, like those of others, captures the dynamics of gender, commitment, and religious reform.

Sarah Pierpont Edwards's devotion—of all major female missionaries—was amongst the most influential in the early eighteenth century. She was the daughter of a clerical family and the wife of the prominent preacher, Jonathan Edwards. The difficulties of the Great Awakening left significant traces in both Sarah Edwards's and Jonathan Edwards's lives. They confronted the challenges of the new Awakening together. Jonathan Edwards graduated from Yale in 1723, at the age of nineteen, and served as a preacher in New York for a year. He took a position at Yale and moved to New Haven, where Sarah Pierpont lived. It is possible that he met her during his student years when he was around sixteen. She caught

the attention of Jonathan Edwards, which is proven on the cover of a Greek grammar book as follows: "They say there is a young lady in [New Haven] who is loved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight; and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on Him…" (qtd. in Minkema et al. 495).

They married on 28 July 1727, and in the same year, Jonathan became a priest in Northampton, following in his grandfather's footsteps. Their marriage was "an uncommon union,"[1] since they both had an immediate intellectual and spiritual connection. During their lifetime, the Great Awakening spread across the American colonies, which influenced the development of Sarah's character. She was described as a "meek and quiet spirit," who "talked freely and solidly of things of God, and seemed to be such a helpmeet for her husband" (qtd. in Minkema et al. 505) by George Whitefield (1714–1770). Whitefield played a pivotal role in catalysing the religious fervour that characterised the Great Awakening. His spiritual landscape was irrevocably altered by his trip to North America, and his sermons struck a profound chord with people. Given George Whitefield's cross-colonial reach, it is worth investigating whether his teachings had a direct impact on the spiritual development of well-known individuals such as Sarah Edwards and Sarah Osborn. Whitefield's impassioned sermons captivated diverse audiences, sparking a profound religious fervour that reverberated across the colonies. George Whitefield had a significant influence on the American Great Awakening, influencing the spiritual climate and leaving a lasting mark on colonial culture. Whitefield united different colonial communities, sparked huge conversions and spiritual awakenings, and generated a wave of religious passion that transcended geographical borders through his impassioned preaching style and frequent journeys across the colonies (Smith 81–82).

Sarah herself had an awakening in 1742. According to her spouse, at this point in her life, she possessed "extraordinary views on divine things" and deep "religious affections" (Minkema etl al. 510). Unable to sleep one night, something suddenly changed, she felt cut off from God and experienced an incredible delight, God's immediate presence, as she put it in her diary entry from 1742, which is the primary concern of this article. After a week of intense agony and ecstatic religious experiences, she started to overcome an overwhelming sensation of melancholy.

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1   See *Marriage to a Difficult Man: The Uncommon Union of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards* (2004) by Elisabeth Dodds.

During a week of similar experience, at certain points, she felt sick and was hardly able to stand without assistance. Feeling both "melted" and "overcome" at the same time, Sarah Edwards details it in her memoir entry as follows: "I never felt such an entire emptiness of self-love or any regard to any private selfish interest of my own. It seemed to me, that I had entirely done with myself... The glory of God to be all, and in all, and to swallow up every wish and desire of my heart" (S. Edwards; ch. 2). This "entire emptiness" was a conversion that led from her old identity to a greater blessing, as she referred to it. Essentially, the reason for her transformation was her liberation from anxieties and temptations as she was transforming to a "holy vessel of Christ" (Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims* 43). For that reason, she was able to overcome her concerns about her role in religious gatherings since she was about to lose herself in the process. Mrs. Edwards had contrasting beliefs to the earlier Old Light tradition, which was not concerned with the bodily manifestation of faith as it was present in the new wave. She embraced a heart-centred religion—which might have been influenced by Jonathan Edwards's views on faith—that valued the body's role in revivals, and actively participated in church life, despite societal norms. Her personal life remains enigmatic, but she was praised for her sincere devotion and commitment as a wife.

The memoir of Sarah Edwards covers the challenges of the Great Awakening, her contempt for visiting Ministers, and her daily struggles, as neither the congregation nor the people of Northampton greeted her with open arms. Some parts of her personal narrative had been recently acquired by Kenneth Minkema and his fellow colleagues. Until that point, there were only two manuscripts available: the first was Jonathan Edward's revised version, in which he rewrote her narrative in the third person to protect her from any unpleasant reaction and misunderstanding in the community. The other text was published in the nineteenth century, by Sereno Edwards Dwight, who in *The Works of President Edwards* incorporated the first-person narrative of Sarah Edwards. However, as Jennifer Adams notes in the preface to the 2010 edition of *In Love with Christ*, there are striking differences in "the manner in which the narratives" are presented. The period of the Second Great Awakening (1800–1830) was the time of the second republication and alternation of Sarah's detailed experiences by her grandson Sereno Edwards Dwight, who decided to elevate Sarah Edwards as a representative of genuine female self-sacrifice. Sereno rewrote her experiences from a nineteenth-century perspective, portraying her as a typical nineteenth-century female, appearing as one of the "protectors

of virtue" (Minkema et al. 513). Among slighter alterations, the most significant was the removal of "agitation," although Sarah herself used this expression sixteen times. As suggested by Adams, there are two reasonable explanations for this removal. One possible reason could be the perspectives on female self-sacrifice, which did not allow hesitation in the mind and, therefore, absolutely denied the agitation of the body. The other reason might be that Serano suffered from a chronic illness that left him physically disabled, which may have contributed to his lack of insight into the bodily aspect of experiencing God's presence. Serano notes, however, that Jonathan Edwards might have altered a few details of Sarah's account while copying her manuscripts. Regardless of her numerous spelling errors and irregular style, Sarah was an outstanding female writer, and her writing style did not require extensive proofreading. Her style, along with her spirituality, is characterised by a language of sensation that could refer to her own personal voice or Jonathan's choice, but the latter remains disputed.

As Minkema, Brekus, and Stout assert that identifying Sarah Pierpont Edwards' unique narrative voice is challenging for a variety of reasons. Though Jonathan's narrative skills are well-known, it is difficult to trace them in Sarah Edwards' reworked collections. Nevertheless, his alternations served no other purpose than to remedy spelling and grammatical problems. Such alternations were "lively sense of things" or "clear" (S. Edwards; ch. 4).

Unlike the members of contemporary spiritual movements like The New Light Movement—which was a movement inside the Baptist congregation—she never claimed that she had received direct revelations from God. She highlighted the necessity of analysing the nature of the heart since it is the source of all knowledge. Edwards prioritised experiencing God through the senses—especially the heart. Commentators of the time had strong opinions about female enthusiasm, for instance, an Anglican minister noted that "women, children, servants, and Nigros [were] become (as they phrase[d] it) Exhorters" (qtd. in Minkema et al. 506). As a result of the continuous debates about "enthusiasts" or "exhorters", Jonathan Edwards in the *Faithful Narrative* introduces two women's spiritual experiences from Northampton as examples of true Christian *female piety*. Piety is seen as a strong religious belief manifested in one's lifestyle. According to recent academic discoveries, Sarah Edwards was the *inspiration* for *female piety* that Jonathan Edwards detailed in the *Faithful Narrative*.

In the introduction of *Feminine Spirituality in America*, Amanda Porterfield argues that "Sarah Edwards assumed the fortunes and dilemmas of public virtuosity … In time of spiritual crisis, she explored both the power and the painful contradiction of that role" (39). She later assumes that both Sarah and Jonathan Edwards's narratives provide a genuine insight into the relationship between the ongoing social and religious experiences. Porterfield attributes Sarah Edwards's success as a writer to her ability to withdraw from society occasionally. In her narrative, in 1742, she shed light on the main reason why she preferred solitude over hypocrisy, "how great a part of Christianity lies in the performance of our social and relative duties to one another" (S. Edwards; ch. 2).

As the daughter of a minister, Sarah's perspective on the unity of body, soul, and inherited sin was influenced by the theories of John Calvin, and the Puritans, who considered the body to be evil, but they recognised the importance of incarnation by admitting that the body was the temple of the Holy Spirit. Through these serious agitative periods that Sarah Edwards detailed, she developed a "new sense" or "sense of the heart," as Jonathan refers to it: "divine and supernatural light which gaze the enlightened a spiritual understanding that was deeper than the knowledge that came by merely intellectual cognition" (qtd. in Minkema et al. 496). However, this "new sense" contains several influences that cannot be disregarded.

Interestingly, Sarah transformed her physical body in unity with the divine; in which the divine presence is the Light in her sinful nature. Her physiological agitations were regarded as a source of new religious identity and leadership, and this was described as a metamorphosis by Minkema and his fellow researchers, who referred to it as Quietist "enthusiasm" (502).

Constructing Female Voice: The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Sarah Osborn

Sarah Osborn (1722–1796) had a unique narrative voice that depicted daily obstacles and significant historical events, such as the French and Indian War, from the perspective of a schoolteacher. Her memoir contains insights about her conversion. The first written record from her memoir was a letter written on 5 May 1742 to a Congregational minister, to whom Osborn confessed a sin: she had stolen money from her parents in order to escape with her first husband, at the age of seventeen. Unfortunately, her father died before she could confess this, so instead she confided in her mother (Brekus, Introduction xxvi). At the age of twenty-nine, she

married her second husband, a tailor, Henry Osborn. He was a widower and had three children, while Sarah Osborn was twenty-nine years old and had a son, who was ten years old. Sarah Osborn's memoir consciously or perhaps unconsciously encapsulates different secular and religious trends of her times.

Sarah Osborn, from Newport, was no longer willing to surrender herself to Puritan doctrines; therefore, her narrative chronicles the emergence of evangelicalism through her own experiences in the period of great revivals. At the age of twenty-nine, Osborn began writing her memoir in chronological order. Her challenging life circumstances included a "turbulent childhood," "suicidal crisis," and the loss of loved ones, as well as poverty and chronic illness, all of which contributed to her spiritual enlightenment (Osborn 15). Despite the trials, she never faltered in her faith and was able to attract new "enthusiasts" with her unique style of articulating her religious convictions to the world.

Additionally, she sought to obtain a greater understanding of her own spiritual pilgrimage, which was primarily affected by the ongoing spiritual awakening, and economic problems as well. On the one hand, the spiritual rebirth in the Great Awakening, the convergence of Calvinism and Protestant Reformed doctrines that resulted in evangelicalism had transformed and inspired her to lead a devoted lifestyle. On the other hand, as a teacher with a dozen students, she encountered financial challenges on a regular basis. Consequently, she wrote a memoir to remind herself of the wealth that came from God and to develop her Christian identity through writing. Reading Osborn's memoir is challenging. Even though she was literate, she never used proper punctuation and, at certain points, the text is similar to a stream of consciousness. Osborn made an effort to find significance and connection between ongoing wars, slavery, and God's will. Her testimonies were published both in her lifetime and posthumously in 1755 by Reverend Samuel Hopkins in *The Nature, Evidence, and Certainty of True Christianity* as setting an example of a devoted life. He also published parts of her memoir, and some of the letters written to Miss Susana Anthony.

Among the foremost, Sarah Osborn formed the "Religious Female Society" during the First Awakening decade in the 1740s, which became the cornerstone of Newport's First Church. This group of women sustained Clap's ministry and later served as the centre of the Great Awakening revival in the years 1766 and 1767. Under the name of "Religious Female Society," her organisation welcomed men and women, African Americans, slaves, and Baptists into her home.

Interestingly, in one of Osborn's letters from 1767 to a minister in Connecticut, called Joseph Fish, she defends her public leadership of worship and study groups. In spite of her declining health, groups and individuals continued to gather at Sarah Osborn's house even after she had stopped leading devotional groups and attending church (Hambrick-Stowe 408). In 1758, the first African American woman was baptised in the First Congregational Church, as documented in the Church's archive. The "Religious Female Society"—in those times—was unprecedented and unique. The primary aim of these "gatherings"—as she called them—was to pray and praise God in the community. However, as time passed, Sarah Osborn started to share her thoughts on the Bible. Her house also served as a shelter to people from marginalised members of society, including women, children, black slaves, people from different congregations, youngsters, and adults, fundamentally anyone but white clerical men. In the first part of the memoir, it is evident that Sarah Osborn considered slavery as the will of God, yet she encouraged Afro-American slaves to convert to Christianity. She later recognised that there was something wrong with slavery after seeing Christianity as a representative moral model. She based her views on the biblical story of Moses, who led the Israelites out of captivity to the Promise Land. Citing the words of Paul the Apostle that women must "keep silence in the churches," many disagreed with Osborn's praying groups, since church elders thought that she stepped beyond her position by sharing her own interpretation of the Bible. Even her close friend, Joseph Fish, believed that she "had stepped beyond her line" (Osborn 241).

As it appears, both Sarah Edwards and Sarah Osborn were subjected to the wrath of their communities because of their activities. In her previously mentioned letter, she eventually asks related questions from Joseph Fish, such as "Would you advise me to shut up my mouth and doors and creep into obscurity?" In these disputes, she seems undecided. "Sometimes I am tempted thus to do, but hitherto I dare not" (241). Another cause for public criticism was that she welcomed persons from practically all social spheres and religious denominations, including Baptists, who advocated for extreme ideals by stating that infant christening is not in biblical law. Soon after, during the British occupation in Newport, Sarah was left alone after the death of her husband Henry. Osborn, in her letters—dictated to someone since Osborn became blind and unable to walk in her last years—to Hopkins and Joseph Fish, close friends of Sarah Osborn, appears as a faithful soldier of God, who believed

that the war was nothing, but God's will. Osborn left her possessions to the First Congregation Church in Newport.

Sarah Osborn's personal narrative details mostly school curriculum, prayers, and all the activities that contributed to her relationship with God. Therefore, it is no wonder that her narrative relies heavily on biblical imagery. These form two major motifs emphasised throughout her memoir. First is *the bride and the groom*, which, according to Northrop Frye, is one of the primary images used to emphasise the unique kinship between Christ and his followers (lecture 5). Second is the *shepherd*, which appears as the protector of her soul. When Osborn uses biblical imagery, her narration abruptly shifts from third to first person, implying a more intimate experience, as it appears in the following excerpt: "And now thou hast in infinite wisdom bereaved me of my shepherd, I would give myself wholly to thee, thou great shepherd and bishop of souls. O, be thou my all" (Osborn 80). Osborn's memoir writing was a process of self-discovery and revelation of God's profundity, with the plotline revolving around the concepts of "sin" and "redemption" (Osborn 5).

She attempted to reconstruct a linear written record of her life; however, her memoir contains several omissions and information that she was ashamed to discuss; for instance, her son's death. Samuel's sudden death at the age of eleven left a significant mark on her life since he was not willing to repent of his sins. Osborn was afraid for his soul since she "could discern no evidence of a work of grace wrought on his soul, for which I did plead from day to day" (Osborn 69). In spite of her bleak mental state, this was the moment when she felt the closest presence of God. Similar to Sarah Edwards, Osborn also gives an insight into a "sense of his goodness to me in a thousand instances" (68). As a soldier of God, she felt compelled to preach the Gospel, but due to her gender, she was unable to do so without incurring the wrath of her community.

Unlike Sarah Edwards, Osborn was a well-known writer during her lifetime. The publication of Sarah Osborn's experiences, as well as her character, was a unique and integral—albeit anonymous—part of the history of female writing and Christian history. Regardless of her position, Sarah Osborn and his husband Henry had serious financial problems, as they could barely pay the bills of the boarding school that they ran together. Osborn referred to herself in their situation in a letter written to Joseph Fish in 1759, as "a poor, overloaded, weak animal crouching under its burden" (165).

Since Osborn believed that women were subordinated to men, she might have consciously tried not to have a male voice. Jonathan Edwards, in *The Miscellanies,* clearly divided the attributes of men and women, "man had been created to be strong in body and mind, with more wisdom, strength and courage," while women were naturally "weaker, more soft and tender, more fearful, and more affectionate, as a fit object of generous protection and defence" (vol. 13). Women were taught that they needed constant protection and were created to seek the help of men. Therefore, it appears that Osborn cultivated a mere "affectionate" female voice under the influence of her fellow friends, Elizabeth Bury and Susana Anthony. They shared a genuine and powerful bond and sent letters to one another. Even their writing reflected the social inequalities between women and men. As female believers, they were limited, as seen by their self-portraits, which included the usage of terms like "weak," "child," and "feeble."

Brush Hindmarsh concludes that the collective conversion experience was transformed into an individual conversion experience; it stood against the Puritan commonwealth (74). The autonomous individual, according to Enlightenment philosophers, had the liberty to choose his own government, seek his own financial interests, and worship as he saw fit, as Sarah Osborn's narrative shows: "I'll tell you truly what God has done for my soul" (Osborn 111), or "God the Father manifested himself to me," or "God made with me an everlasting Covenant" (xxii).

After all, throughout the second part of the eighteenth century, both industry and agriculture, as well as demographics, underwent substantial changes. People began relocating to new areas or abandoning towns in search of new opportunities. In the climax of these changes, humanitarians were the ones who built hospitals for the sick, cared for women and children, and overall, the ones who attempted to make the best out of the worst. Meanwhile, the government turned a blind eye on these issues. Thus, the eighteenth century's first half can be separated into two distinct periods. The first half is defined by an anti-humanitarian attitude, while the second half seeks to restore it, as evidenced by thinkers from many sociological strata, such as churchmen, economists, poets, and writers, who applied a humanitarian approach to jail reforms and slavery (Klingberg 262–263). What the Humanitarians and the Evangelicals had in common was their belief in the essentially good human nature, although it must be noted that evangelicals also considered human nature to be originally sinful. Regardless of the difference, the aim was common: to create a better world to live in. Therefore, Evangelicalism might

have been influenced by the spirit of humanitarianism, though it had a different approach, that is the preaching of the Gospel to people. It placed the major focus from the external to the internal, heart-centred world.

Based on the previously listed influences, one could conclude that Christianity was transformed in numerous ways by Enlightenment ideas, but most notably by liberal Protestantism and Evangelical Protestantism, which focuses heavily on personal experience. These ideas constantly appear in Osborn's memoir by her strong drive to understand and justify the ongoing warfare between the Indians and the French troops, she concluded it as a direct attack on God's Promised Land. Based on the book of Revelations, Osborn and many of her contemporaries saw the Catholic Church as the "beast" who wanted to destroy the continent. Though women were allowed to write epistles, journals of their everyday life, these were merely for the sake of their own amusement. The personal experiences of Sarah Osborn were published both during her lifetime and after her death, which made her break with the constrains of women's writing traditions.

Conclusion

Through hardships, both Sarah Edwards and Sarah Osborn demonstrated persistence and set models to the forthcoming generations of women. They indeed paved the road for female preaching in America by setting an example. Catherine Brekus states that "historical change always emerges out of the hopes, and strivings of ordinary people" (Preface xi), as it happened both in Sarah Edwards's and Sarah Osborn's life. Fear of the community's judgment motivated Edwards to establish a self that is proper in any social context, parallel to being subjugated by the Holy Spirit. Based on my research and Jonathan Edwards's opinion, that women are naturally weaker, I am convinced that Sarah Edwards broke with the constraints of traditional femininity both intellectually and physically. Without a doubt, both Sarah Osborn and Sarah Edwards were regular people with noble objectives.

Sarah Osborn was an integral part of the "Old Lights," while, based on her experiences, Sarah Edwards was connected to the "New Lights." On the one hand, in Sarah Osborn's case, this split is explicitly discussed in a letter to Joseph Fisch. She regarded the New Lights as "disorderly people" and considered that this new approach would "open its door to disorders and confusion" (Osborn 211). On the other hand, Sarah Pierpont Edwards advocated for a heart-centred religion.

Based on the definition of Catherine A. Brekus, the representatives of the New Light wing of evangelicalism, did not deny logic and rationality; thus, they acknowledged that preaching needed to touch both the heart and the intellect. Based on Brekus's opinion, Sarah Edwards, by prioritising individual religious experiences over religious dogmas, could be associated with the New Lights of evangelicalism. However, their narratives required further investigations; thus, it is crucial to mention the contemporary influences since they had significant roles in their religious devotion.

Based on secondary literature, and on their own narratives, I concluded that the roles of women were mainly restricted to the domestic sphere. However, both Edwards and Osborn went beyond the established constraints of women in the eighteenth century. According to Sarah Edwards's written records, her husband conversed with her on an intellectual level frequently. Therefore, the role of a simple representative of female piety was imposed on an equal partner. In contrast to Sarah Edwards, Sarah Osborn did not get a proper education, but her circumstances and devotion to God moved her toward self-improvement. After her first marriage resulted in her poverty, she started teaching and appeared as an exceptional preacher who—with her love and will to spread the Gospel—attracted to her home lot of people on a weekly basis. On one side, there was a mother, who was desperate to keep her child alive and maintain a family, on the other side, a strong character, who was not fearful of the reception of her actions since she served God. The paper reveals a limited window of time when women took advantage of possibilities to become prominent voices in religious realms by highlighting the complex relationship of gender relations during the era prior to the Great Awakening. The flexibility and adaptation of gender roles in religious contexts is demonstrated by Sarah Osborn's capacity to move between masculine and feminine traits while carrying out responsibilities, such as being the spiritual leader of a religious community and a boarding school.

Since the primary sources were strongly subjective, it was necessary to take into consideration their contemporaries' perspectives about them. As I looked deeper into Sarah Edwards's narrative, I became convinced that she was even stronger than her husband described her. His admiration for Sarah Edwards is excessive and appears to be genuine in his letter to his father. Like Edwards, Osborn also had positive male validation in her life, embodied in her friendship with Reverend Samuel Hopkins, who testified to Osborn's undeniably humble faith in his letters.

The validation of men, in this regard, in the eighteenth century was unprecedented. Both Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Hopkins encouraged them to be careful with their actions. Considering the above, it might be possible to conclude that they were indeed unconventional representatives of female devotion to God, and indeed paved the road for female preaching in America by setting an example. The study questions conventional narratives of religious history that frequently exclude or ignore the contributions of women by contrasting the lives, roles, and influences of Sarah Edwards and Sarah Osborn. It highlights the need to recognise women's agency and influence and calls for a re-evaluation of their place in religious movements. The two women's voices, although very different in their ways of expressing themselves, are intertwined in their strong religious affections, the women's perspectives offer a window to get an insight into female self-expression in the eighteenth century.

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"Theotormon hears me not"

Shaming Women in Eighteenth-Century Rape Trials

NOÉMI PINTÉR

Abstract: In the eighteenth century, rape trials were scenes of obscene shaming of violated women. English rape law supported the rich and the male; therefore, single women were at a disadvantage from the beginning. This phenomenon was commented on and challenged by writers at the end of the eighteenth century, including William Blake. This paper interprets Blake's narrative poem Visions of the Daughters of Albion *as a literary case study depicting the rhetoric of shaming. To show how language was used as a tool for shaming in a courtroom setting, I analyse the script of a trial from 1793. William Blake, by giving voice to her violated female character, Oothoon, used poetry and art to envision how women could refuse to be seen as objects defined by their chastity or the loss thereof.*

Sexual violence was ubiquitous in the lives of women in the eighteenth century. Because of the attention rape cases received, a new moral consensus was forming in the public mind: virtuous women do not seek danger; they stay at home, where it is safe. For working-class women—especially single women—this was not an option, naturally. Those who were sexually assaulted found themselves trapped. An honest and reputable woman was not supposed to speak about sexual matters; therefore, seeking justice was often seen as a risk that might not be worth taking (Clark, *Women's Silence* 2–3). Those who took the risk and spoke up found themselves in extremely difficult situations. Mary Block's compelling study of rape law in early modern England has shown that it was "a legal culture that tolerated inordinate levels of male violence against women, even from men they did not know.

The doctrines and criteria that constituted the common law of rape created extraordinary standards that, when coupled with popular attitudes towards women, made conviction for rape exceptionally difficult" (25).

Language and the narrative techniques used by men in the courtroom put women into an even more vulnerable position, forcing them, after a physical assault, to endure mental aggression. The questions the violated women were asked seemed more like an attack than an attempt to deliver justice. As I intend to show in this paper, courtroom language was used to shame women and to lecture them on how to avoid further violent encounters. This is also reflected in the literature of the period. In her novel *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799), Mary Hays shows the predicament of the victim with unflinching realism. Mary, the protagonist, abducted and raped, defiantly claims her liberty after her violation: "I demand my liberty this moment; I insist upon being suffered to depart. No one has the right to control me. I will appeal to the tribunal of my country; I will boldly claim the protection of its laws, to which thou are already amenable. … I will go. Who dares to oppose me?" (41). Importantly, Mary is a single woman and an orphan, belonging to no male relative, and as Clark points out, "in the eyes of the law sexual assault was only significant when it involved the 'property' of a man—a virgin daughter or a wife. The law of rape, in fact, had evolved to protect theft of female sexual property, not to protect [women] themselves" (*Women's Silence* 47). When Mary suffers sexual assault from a man, she swears to seek revenge. She is confidently facing her assaulter, stating that it is her right to get justice; however, her rapist knows very well that her effort will be met with obstacles. He even lets her know as much: "To whom and where would you go, foolish and unhappy girl?—Let no passion and woman's vengeance blind you to the perils of your situation! … To what purpose, then, these pathetic appeals and unavailing recriminations? … Who will credit the tale you mean to tell?" (Hays 42).

Hays's novel formulates the sordid reality. If a single woman decided to prosecute her assaulter, she probably failed to get the justice she had sought.[1] The system did not help women who pressed charges because, as Clark points out, "the definition of rape was culturally constructed, … it was publicly constructed by men and for men" (*Women's Silence* 24). Meanwhile, rape was defined as a serious crime:

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1   "Gregory Durston examined records from London's Old Bailey Court from 1700 to 1800 and found only forty-five convictions out of 281 indictments for rape" (Block 28–29). For Mary Hays's re-evaluation of rape, see Janczer Csikós ("Reflections" 80–81).

> According to English law at the time, rape was a felony, punishable by death and without the benefits of the clergy, and is often described as "heinous," "atrocious," and "detestable" crime. Simultaneously, however, the same texts tend to undermine the seriousness of rape by emphasising its rare occurrence and the difficulties of securing reliable proof, as well as advancing a view on sexual assault as a venial offence, an understandable failure to control "what nature on all sides promotes." In addition, juries tended to remain unconvinced by women's testimonies, even when the crime resulted in bad injuries, making rape the crime that had by far the lowest conviction rate of all prosecuted crimes in the eighteenth century. (Olsson 141)

While in theory rape was initially considered to be almost as serious a crime as murder, in practice the legal procedure was far from fair, and justice was rarely attained. The difficulty of providing conclusive evidence as well as the fact that rape was seen as an instinct rather than a morally questionable, conscious act made juries less likely to believe women when they came forward with rape charges; therefore, a crime that had been considered among the most heinous of them all ended up having the lowest conviction rate.

In short, rape law in eighteenth-century England did not serve to protect women. It was to protect the property of men, and thus, protected men's honour, because, as Clark states, "the loss of a woman's chastity was believed to damage her father or husband's honour and financial interest" ("Rape" 2). Eighteenth-century English rape law did not know what to do with a raped woman who had no husband or father. Such women were no one's property, so according to the law, no one's honour, or interest had been violated. The most problematic part of English rape law was that it "did not adequately define 'rape' or explain what was necessary to prove it" (Block 23). If the violated woman proceeded with the courtroom hearing, she most likely found herself facing a barrage of questions that were hardly necessary to aid her cause. Women were taught that speaking about sexuality was shameful and dirty; often they could not put into words what happened to them, which only made their plight more difficult, as it was assumed that a chaste woman could not describe sexual acts. Furthermore, it made an enormous difference whether the woman was a virgin or had sexual experience before. It was believed that "a woman with a less than perfect reputation simply could not have been raped, since her sexual experience

meant that she was already, in a sense, considered communal property" (Cogan 379). Since only chaste women could have been raped, a violated woman already started with a disadvantage in the courtroom (Clark, *Women's Silence* 8).

Like many of his contemporaries, most eminently Mary Wollstonecraft in her novel *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* (published posthumously in 1798), William Blake in his 1793 poem *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (VDA) created a fictitious courtroom to highlight and expose the harsh rhetoric with which violated women were treated. In what follows, I will present the characteristic features of an eighteenth-century rape trial through a specific court case, then proceed to analyse Blake's poem as a literary case study in the rhetoric of shaming. I will use the Old Bailey transcript of a rape that occurred in 1793 to examine "the eighteenth-century courtroom as a place of a 'second assault' where alleged rape victims were 'violated first by the actual, physical act of rape and then by a legal system that does not take them at their word but demands further proof'" (Krueger 152).

<center>"Because I was ashamed"—The Rhetoric of Shaming</center>

In 1793, Sarah Tipple, an eighteen-year-old maid, accused John Curtis of raping her. The script of the trial can be found in the Old Bailey's online archive (*Old Bailey Proceedings* [*OBP*]), which contains the trials conducted at London's criminal court between 1674 and 1913. Tipple was at a disadvantage from the very start; she was the servant of John Curtis, a wealthy man she had just accused. Sarah Tipple did not have a husband or a father in London; she was on her own as a working-class woman. Because of what is now referred to as the "blackmail myth," juries easily could have had the impression that Tipple's accusation was baseless and that she only wanted to extort money from Curtis. The "blackmail myth" was "the assumption that the complainant in a rape prosecution is quite likely to have made her charge from motives corrupt, vindictive, or otherwise dishonest" (Simpson 106). This idea is reflected in the interrogator's questions in the courtroom: "You ever applied to your master for money?"; "Did you ever send to your master for money?" The presumption supports the ill-perception of rape at the time: a single woman could only want money out of a wealthy male, thus turning the accusation over and making the accused man the victim. In this case, the prosecutor is already labelled as a liar or a malicious mastermind, positioning her in a disadvantageous situation from the start.

According to the official document, John Curtis "in and upon Sarah Tipple, spinster, violently did make an assault, … and violently and feloniously did Ravish and carnally know" her (*OBP*). In this case, the word "ravish" is used instead of "rape"; with this, Sarah Tipple's accusation was deflated from the start. As Mary R. Block points out, "rape referred to the forcible violation or defilement of a female. … Ravishment referred to abduction or elopement. Both rape and ravishment entailed a seizure or taking of a person, but … ravishment was not gender specific. While either male or female could be ravished, only a female could be raped. … Ravishment did not necessitate a sexual violation or even sex" (24–25).

The attitude with which the reported crime and the violated woman were treated clearly shows that it was rather Sarah Tipple who was on trial and not John Curtis. She was asked whether she had shown any signs of resistance, to which Tipple answered yes. Throughout the trial, most of the questions were aimed to find out how she resisted (or did not resist). The questions she was asked correlate to the idea of the "rape myth" or "the myth of the unrapeable woman," according to which "it was physically impossible for a single man to rape a conscious, 'genuinely' resisting woman because she always had the power to avoid being penetrated as long as she remained resolute in her defence" (Olsson 142). So, rather than asking Tipple whether she consented or not, assumptions were made based on one-word answers. She was asked more than once whether she resisted or not:

> What passed then, did you make any resistance?
> —Yes.
> How did he manage to keep you down on the bed, did you resist?
> —He forced me down, and he laid on me in such a manner
> that I could not get away.
> Did you make all the resistance in your power?
> —I resisted as much as I could. (*OBP*)

Tipple answers these questions positively, stating that she resisted as much as she could. However, given the "myth of the unrapeable woman," her unsuccessful resistance was presumed to be consent. To further investigate whether or not she resisted, the barrister directly asked her whether she fought back or used physical violence against her attacker:

> Did you slap his face?
> —I did not.
> Did you pull his hair?—I could not get away.
> Did you kick him at all?
> —I kicked him all that lay in my power. (*OBP*)

Paradoxically, these questions were all aimed at finding out what the *woman* did and how she hurt or attempted to hurt her rapist; whether the rapist used any other forms of physical violence was never asked of her. With this “rapid-fire rhetoric,” the barrister had a further intention as well: by asking very similar or even identical questions repeatedly, the courtroom challenged the violated woman’s coherence of her claims—one slip or a small discrepancy could have been enough to challenge her trustworthiness (Krueger 152). The question of whether she was physically fighting back may also be interpreted in another way: considering how her answers were mainly negative, it could easily have been stated that she simply did not do enough to protect herself from the advances of the assaulter, hence providing evidence that she did, in fact, consent to the sexual act.

However, she was not only interrogated about self-defence. Tipple had to describe how she was allegedly raped, giving explicit details of the assault:

> He entered my body; he took and threw on the bed, and I called for assistance; I skrieked [sic] out once, and he put his hand and cramed [sic] the sheets into my mouth; as soon as he came into the room he bolted the door; he never spoke to me at all; he threw me on the bed without speaking to me; he put his private parts into mine.
> …
> What past after he put his private parts into your’s? How long might he be in that situation? How did he force himself on you? Did you see him take down his breeches?—He did that after he put his hand to my mouth, and then he forced his private parts into mine, and something warm came from him. (*OBP*)

Eighteenth-century rape trial scripts testify that there was a great interest in minute details. This, Clark explains, was “derived from a patriarchal concern with chastity: what mattered was whether penile penetration and ejaculation had occurred,

and the hymen broken, thus damaging the victim's value as sexual property" (*Women's Silence* 55). Tipple was also asked about the venereal infection she had contracted as a result of her rape and how she had treated it:

> Did you complain to her of your parts being sore?
> —No, not at all.
> In short they were not sore?
> —Yes, very bad indeed.
> Did you shew them to anybody?
> —No, not at all.
> What did you do to alleviate the pain?
> —I did not do any thing at all. (*OBP*)

The need to recall her traumatic experience, along with questions aimed to find out whether she was a virgin or not ("you was [sic] quite a maid at this time?—I never knew a man before" [*OBP*]) only added to her shame, as she clearly states in her answers: "Now my girl, how came you tell me a minute ago that you did not know how it [his hands] was employed, because I put it to you several times?—Because I was ashamed" (*OBP*). Her declaration reflects the norm that chaste women could not speak about sexual matters—by retelling her sexual assault in such detail, she would be branded as unchaste. Paradoxically, her purity would also be questioned by the very fact that she could describe the sexual act; an honest and reputable woman could do no such a thing because she lacked the knowledge of such matters. By talking about her violent encounter in such explicit detail, she would be tainted, because "a rape victim's honour, no matter how she struggled, was thought to be irrevocably tarnished according to bourgeois values. … the injured lady may be chaste as unsunned snow, she will never more be considered as immaculate" (Clark, *Women's Silence* 29). While this statement refers to women of a higher rank, it is important to see that the problem of sexual assault exceeds class; if a woman was raped, whether she was of the higher or lower classes did not matter. Rape is a gender matter of all things, and the shame that it brings with itself affects women regardless of social status.

Tipple evidently felt impure because of what had been done to her and coarse for discussing such experiences. Her shame, thus, serves the purposes of her interrogator; by admitting that she was ashamed, she passively takes responsibility for

what happened to her (at least partially). Indeed, the barrister used her vulnerability against her, twisting her words in a way that would disprove her claim of being raped. The inquiry about how Tipple's petticoats were held up is a particularly good example of how her claims were discredited:

> What kept your coats up?
> —He took his knee up when he unbuttoned his breeches; he was
> on the bed and my coats kept up.
> Did they keep up of their own accord or did you keep them up?
> —He kept them up to be sure.
> Now, how did he keep them up, he had not three hands, had he?
> —No.
> Now, let us dispose of the two; how did he keep them up?
> —I cannot tell. (*OBP*)

Even though Sarah Tipple stated that it was John Curtis who held her petticoats up, all the while kneeling upon her and making it impossible for her to resist, the logic of the investigator was clear: if the alleged rapist was using one hand to hold her down and another one to hold up her petticoats, then how could he unbutton his trousers? Clearly, he was implying that Sarah Tipple held her petticoats up willingly, hinting that she might have consented to the advances of John Curtis. Another possibility is that judges (and often the public at large) simply enjoyed the game of shaming and liked hearing specifics of the assault:

> Judges and counsels would subject a victim to rigorous cross-examination, questioning her as to how her assailant could stop her mouth, hold her hands, pull up her petticoats and pull down his breeches all at the same time. In part, this curiosity stemmed from crude prurience; rape victims sometimes faced laughter from the galleries when they attempted to testify and transcripts of rape trials were sold as titillating literature. (Clark, *Women's Silence* 54)

By toying with the plaintiff, the trial became more exciting and entertaining also for lawyers and jurors in the courtroom. The attitude here is clear: she was never taken seriously. While Tipple had hoped that the law would protect her, the men

of law made a fool of her for their own amusement. Using the language of conde-scension and mockery, the barrister provoked and humiliated Tipple ("Now, how did he keep them up, he had not three hands, had he?"; "Now, let us dispose of the two; how did he keep them up?"). The style and tone of these questions sug-gest that the violated woman and her claims are not taken seriously—subtly pre-dicting the verdict of the trial.

Even though the violated woman was not asked whether she consented or not, she still had to prove that she did not consent to the sexual act, and she had to give further justification why she put herself in a position where she could be attacked (Krueger 152). Her lack of self-defence could undermine her claim of not having consented, and it could also serve as an excuse for attack and humiliation.

> Will you tell us how he managed to bring his private parts to your's, can you account how he did that?
> —No.
> Did you cross your legs?
> —No.
> It did not occur to you that that would be a good way to stop him; did you keep your legs a little wider that usual?
> —I don't know that I did.
> Don't you know that you did not?
> —I don't know that I did not. I should have thought keeping the legs close would be the best way to prevent him; … (*OBP*)

Inquiring whether she kept her legs closed or whether she widened them insinuates again that Tipple, in fact, may have welcomed Curtis's approach. The barrister not only questions her credibility, but he also lectures her on how she should have defended herself: "I should have thought keeping the legs close would be the best way to prevent him." The demeanour of the investigator illustrates the popular belief that the prevention of rape lay mainly on women; if women did not try to avoid sexual violence with all their strength, men could not be held entirely responsible, as it was generally agreed upon that men had the right to appropri-ate the female body. Rape was not necessarily the result of urgent sexual desire; "rather, men who raped believed that sex involved the 'taking of women'" (Clark, *Women's Silence* 7), an action to which they thought they had the right. According

to eighteenth-century English rape law, it should have been Sarah Tipple's obligation to avert the assault, which she failed to do; therefore, referring back to the "myth of the unrapeable woman," Sarah Tipple was not resisting hard enough or genuinely enough the advances of John Curtis, and so she consented to the sexual act.

The verdict of the trial was "not guilty" (*OBP*), but not because there was evidence that rape did not occur. In fact, it is never explicitly stated whether the jury believed Tipple's accusation or not (although it is safe to assume they did not think John Curtis guilty). The decision arose from a seemingly irrelevant detail: Sarah Tipple said she did not know anyone in London, whereas it turned out during the trial that she had a relative in the city. With this, the original question of whether she was raped or not seemed to become irrelevant, revealing that throughout the trial, she was the one under interrogation. Since the cross-examination aimed to prove that she was lying, we may conclude that it was Sarah Tipple who was on trial rather than John Curtis. She was never asked if she consented or not, and the fact that the perpetrator was violently assaulting her did not seem to interest the jury. The goal of the questions asked of her was not to prove that she was raped; it was to prove that she was not raped. Justice was not sought for her but for him. The person whose fate was in question was John Curtis. Tipple's trial is a clear example of "how lawyers manipulated a rhetoric of resistance to evince prosecutrices' sexual blameworthiness" (Krueger 153).

The language and rhetoric used against Tipple support the idea that women and their sexuality had to be kept under close control. A wealthy pub owner in the eighteenth century was worth more than a working-class single woman. Sarah Tipple did not belong to any man legally; therefore, providing justice for her was in nobody's interest. Not only did she have to endure the indiscreet questioning of the court, but she was mocked and ridiculed by the very system she had hoped would protect her. Her example shows how patriarchal society felt entitled to women's sexuality, and how they used women, and their shame, for their own validation.

"Rend away this defiled bosom"—Blake's Fictitious Courtroom

It was common among writers and poets of the late eighteenth century to revolt against the constraining ideas of the time, and especially social injustices. In his narrative poem, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, William Blake radically challenges the beliefs of his own time and depicts male sexuality as "overwhelmingly violent

and non-consensual rather than pleasurable" (Cogan 378). The poem tells the story of Oothoon, the "soft soul of America" (pl. 3.4), who, after plucking the "flower" of sexuality (pl. 3.13), embarks on a journey to experience sexual love with her beloved Theotormon. On her way to him, she is brutally raped by Bromion, after which neither Theotormon nor Bromion wants her; she is shamed by both of them, branded as impure and adulterous. In William Blake's time, the forceful and violent nature of male sexual contact was more normalised than it would be today (Jackson-Houlston 161). However, Blake recognised the oppression of women and challenged the way female sexuality and rape were perceived. Through Oothoon, he interrogates the way violated women were treated and denounces the ideas of "the patriarchal culture that condemns any form of female sexual liberation, even when it results from assault" (Krueger 149). Blake creates a courtroom setting in which his characters resemble figures in a rape trial:

> Although Blake does not strictly structure *VDA* as a legal proceeding, the poem reflects some of its techniques. A trial's major figures are present in a fictive courtroom—the cave. We hear from a prosecutrix, Oothoon; a defendant, Bromion; and a representative of the family/patriarchy, Theotormon, who has had his property-to-be/lover pilfered. We are introduced to a judge, Urizen … , who functions doubly as a regulator of crime and punishment for perpetrators and victims. In the Daughters of Albion a group of peers/courtroom audience hears Oothoon's tale. We might interpret the Daughters as rape victims who echo Oothoon's sighs because they identify with her. (Krueger 155)

The language used by the male oppressors in Blake's poem is harsher and more immediate than in actual, real-life rape trials, yet the resemblance is indisputable. Oothoon is called derogatory names, is held responsible, and is treated as a property rather than an individual.

At the beginning of the poem, Oothoon is depicted as an ideal woman. The text repeatedly mentions that she is a virgin ("I trembled in my virgin fears" [pl. 2.4]), who is presumably loved by Theotormon. Yet she is also disruptive, as she is confident in her sexuality and free of shame: "I loved Theotormon / And I was not ashamed" (pl. 2.1–2). On her way to meet Theotormon, she is raped by Bromion.

The word "rape" is never used by Blake; he refers to Oothoon's brutal experience as "rent her with his thunders" (pl. 3.18). Krueger suggests that by staying away from the word "rape," Blake might imply that Oothoon was either not forced into sexual intercourse or, which is also my contention, he draws attention to how language can be used to confuse societal beliefs about sexual violence. Given that "to rend" means to take or tear something violently, the question of whether rape actually happened should not be under dispute. Importantly, Oothoon does not belong to any man: she has no father figure, and she is not the wife of Theotormon; thus, it is almost certain that during an actual trial, Oothoon would have received the same treatment as Sarah Tipple. Janczer Csikós's interpretation supports this idea:

> Oothoon, though a daughter in name, does not belong to either father or husband so the violence against her, in effect, would not be regarded as a punishable crime. Without the support of a trustworthy male, Oothoon's case would have been met with suspicion, especially because not only Oothoon's body, "her character" also is ruined by her rapist. ("Or wert thou" 45)

Since Oothoon is only a "daughter" in name and does belong to any authoritative male figure, she is no-one's property. Thus, technically, nobody's rights have been violated, no man's property was damaged. Moreover, her rape seems to fit the "myth of the unrapeable woman,"according to which an honest, respectable woman cannot be raped. Oothoon's suggested pregnancy ("and protect the child / of Bromion's rage, that Oothoon shall put forth in nine moon's time" [pl. 4.2–3]) would have further discredited her in the courtroom, as it was believed that rape cannot result in pregnancy. According to the medical jurisprudence of the day, "pregnancy was commonly taken as absolute proof of consensual sex since conception was thought to be inconceivable in cases of rape" (Cogan 378).

In the eyes of society, the sexual assault she experienced turns the ideal woman into a fallen woman. Oothoon "the mild" (pl. 3.9–10) becomes Oothoon "the harlot" (pl. 3.20), a turning point that depicts how language and rhetoric could overturn women's reputation within a short time: "Bromion speaks to Oothoon, saying to her in plate 4, 'thy soft American plains are mine and mine' and suggesting that her body is 'stampt with [his] signet.' This imprint lays hold of her first sexual experience and forever brands her with rape, a mark that society will associate with

sexual ruin and dishonour" (Krueger 158). As a single woman, Oothoon should have stayed "inside," where she would have been safe; by "going out" to meet her beloved, she willingly put herself in the position of being attacked and raped, a situation to which today's society would say that she was "asking for it" (Janczer Csikós, "Or wert thou" 45). Krueger also supports this reading:

> Women were instructed constantly to guard their bodies and sexuality, and any slippage in conscientiousness of this self-protection was used against them in the court and by society at large. In building a vision of Oothoon as errant, first wandering, then flying hastily to see her lover, Blake's words echo the sentiment of society: Oothoon was not aware of her surroundings, and thus she is culpable for the attack. (157)

Oothoon's condemnation resonates with the ideas of the time: she rushed to her lover, naked and carefree, putting herself out in danger. In this sense, Bromion cannot be blamed for raping her; she did not guard herself; in fact, it could easily seem as if she purposefully "gave" herself for rape.

Immediately after her physical violation, the rapist shames her verbally: "Bromion spoke. behold this harlot here on Bromions bed" (pl. 3.20). The assailant insults her, putting the responsibility on her as, presumably, he is sure that Oothoon brought her rape upon herself (Ostriker 157). In theory, rape laws did not exclude harlots from prosecuting rape, as pointed out by Janczer Csikós: "And although, theoretically, even a harlot had the lawful right to prosecute for rape, in fact if a woman did not behave in a pure and sexless manner, she had only herself to blame for inciting the 'artless sincerity of natural passion' in men, in other words she invited rape" ("Or wert thou" 45). Janczer Csikós states that because Oothoon willingly set out on a journey to find Theotormon and make love to him, she was assumed to have made herself available to rape voluntarily. This could add to the idea that men generally believed they had the right to female sexuality; in the eyes of Bromion, Oothoon was already "free prey," and thus, his action could not be seen as rape. From this point of view, only a very small number of rape cases could be recognised as "genuine"; if a woman left her assigned "space," she was already inviting sexual assault.

Oothoon does not stay silent but voices her pain and ill-use. However, her woes fall upon deaf ears. Even her almost-lover, Theotormon, turns out to be a passive

listener; in fact, it is Oothoon who comforts him amidst his lamentations: "Why does Theotormon sit weeping upon a threshold; / And Oothoon hovers by his side, perswading him in vain" (pl. 4.23–24). It turns out that Theotormon does not cry for Oothoon and her pain; he cries for himself and the stain that has fallen upon his honour. In this sense, Oothoon is only a passive participant in the game of two powerful males. We may suspect that Bromion did not rape Oothoon out of desire but rather to make Theotormon jealous, an aim that is achieved, as stated in plate 4: "he [Theotormon] rolld his waves around, / And folded his jealous black waters round the adulterate pair" (5–6). This section of the poem shows how Theotormon refuses to hear Oothoon but has no problem listening to Bromion, substantiating the idea that Bromion's assault was not the result of sexual desire but that of male rivalry ("Now thou maist marry Bromions harlot, and protect the child / Of Bromions rage, that Oothoon shall put forth in nine moons time" [pl. 4.2–3]). Bromion took something that belonged to (or rather, would have belonged to) Theotormon, making Theotormon the violated party and not Oothoon. Even if "officially" or legally she does not belong to anyone, Oothoon is still defined by the men around her rather than existing as an individual in her own right.

When the question of honour comes up, it is posed at the male character; however, when it comes to culpability, Theotormon points to Oothoon by calling them an "adulterate pair" (pl. 4.6)—it is clear that he finds Oothoon just as guilty as Bromion, if not more so. He does not listen or even look at her ("If Theotormon once would turn his loved eyes upon me" [pl. 5.16]), and the corresponding image (pl. 6)[2] clearly shows he is only concerned about himself. Ultimately, it is Oothoon's immodesty that makes Theotormon turn away from her—she was raped and turned into "damaged goods" because she was ready to fully live up to her sexuality. As Ostriker argues, "[Theotormon] cannot look Oothoon in her intellectual and erotic eye as she maintains her spiritual virginity and offers him her love, not only because she is damaged goods but because she is taking the sexual initiative instead of being 'modest'" (157). Theotormon, who represents traditional values and male pride, cannot handle Oothoon's free sexuality. He is shown weeping, head bent down, while Oothoon is observing him from above, naked, with chains around her ankle—a tiny yet very important detail, depicting how Oothoon is trapped by force in a vulnerable position. Theotormon is fully clothed, and Oothoon is fully naked, revealing the power dynamics between them. Oothoon's nakedness shows how exposed to the violence

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2   See in *The William Blake Archive* here.

of the patriarchal system she has become. She is abandoned both by the rapist (who did not want her in the first place but used her as a tool in male rivalry), and by the man she loves. In the eyes of her beloved, she became damaged goods, which an honourable man could not have possibly welcomed (Krueger 160).

Oothoon is a victim of a conflict between males, both physically and mentally; after her brutal rape, she must endure objectification and shaming. To visualise male oppression, Blake depicts Oothoon on plate 5 lying on a phallic-shaped cloud, limbs spread out, while an eagle is devouring her.[3] The eagle belongs to Theotormon ("And calling Theotormons Eagles to prey upon her flesh" [pl. 4.15]), so she is now victimised for the second time, not only by individual men, but by male oppression and the patriarchal system in general, which objectifies the female body. This claim may be substantiated by the fact that Theotormon never accuses or even criticises Bromion for his sexual violence, as pointed out by Kruger: "he [Theotormon] laments the destruction of his vision of treasured chastity and the depreciation of his prospective property. Theotormon's testimony only bears witness to his selfish patriarchal sense of honour" (160). It is not the act of rape that sends him into ordeal; in his perception, it was his sense of masculinity that had been raped, not Oothoon herself. This makes Oothoon, and thus, all women, an object through which male pride is validated. However, Oothoon defiantly "wishes to have sexual experience without guilt" (Connolly 53). She rejects the idea that her sexuality is defined by her previous violent encounter, and demands it back. By depicting her lying on a phallic symbol, *VDA* may suggest that despite her rape, she is ready to experience sexual love again and to "engage in joy" (Janczer Csikós, "Or wert thou" 51).

By giving voice to Oothoon as if pleading before a court, William Blake takes issue with the patriarchal ideology of his time. She demands her right to her own sexuality and wishes "to cleanse her body and clear her name of the crime committed against her" (Krueger 159). She does not see herself as the men around her do—dirty and shameful—but calls with a "holy voice" to the "kings of the sounding air" (pl. 4.16) in order to "rend away this defiled bosom that I may reflect / The image of Theotormon on my pure transparent breast" (pl. 4.17–18). The word "rend" is used here again, the same word that was used earlier to describe her rape. Just as her honour was forcefully taken away, Oothoon now wants to forcefully take it back, even if it means that she must break with the views of society (Krueger 159). She refers to herself as "holy," thus elevating her purity to a sacred level that cannot

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3   See in *The William Blake Archive* here.

be questioned by any man-made law. According to Kruger, Oothoon "describes the symbolic process of salvation that she wishes to receive from the court and society" (159). I would argue that "salvation" is not the right word here, as it would imply that Oothoon is guilty. But she calls herself "holy"; she refuses to be viewed as a sinner (even if in the eyes of society, she had "sinned" and deserves to be punished). Therefore, it is not "salvation" she is asking for, but rather acknowledgement from the other party (i.e. the patriarchal system) that she was never the one to be blamed. She refers to herself as "pure" numerous times, even explicitly directing her words to Theotormon: "Arise my Theotormon I am pure" (pl. 4.30). Theotormon himself is a victim of an ideology, which "glorifies male aggressiveness, as much as … feminine purity" (Ostriker 157). Oothoon's statement is rhetorically immensely important. She calls out the patriarchal system and interrogates the ideology according to which women and their worth are defined by their sexual purity. By referring to herself as pure and demanding the removal of the stigma falsely placed upon her, she refuses to be defined by her traumatic experience, and by extension, she also challenges the system that put her on trial and shamed her for something that was beyond her control.

Through the figure of Oothoon, William Blake exposes the fallacy of the rhetoric of rape trials and the way rape victims are handled. Instead of enduring the flood of questions and the humiliation violated women had to face, Oothoon dares to ask back: "How can I be defiled when I reflect thy image pure?" (pl. 6.17). By being the one asking the questions, she overturns the trial. She becomes the interrogator, while Bromion and Theotormon (representatives of the patriarchal system that had violated and shamed her) are now the ones to answer. Her lamentation makes the audience question why women must answer and take responsibility for a crime that was committed against them. It raises the question of why it is not the violent man who is being held accountable for a crime he committed. Oothoon's questions are left unanswered, just as she remains a fallen woman in the eyes of a society that is invested in the upholding of male hegemony. This is a system that allows language to be used to shame and humiliate others, even in a legal setting, by using derogatory terms, asking double-edged questions, and forcing the victim into vulnerable positions where everything they say will be twisted in a way that their statements can be used against them.

Oothoon's futile demand to be heard as well as her entrapment in a system that does not acknowledge her are depicted in the frontispiece of *VDA*.[4] The three main characters of the poem—Oothoon, Bromion, and Theotormon—are seen in a cave, physically all so very close to each other that it is suffocating, yet they are very far away from each other. The isolated cave only strengthens Oothoon's status in a world ruled by men. She is positioned between the two male figures, chained to her rapist, showing that she physically belongs to him (Connolly 17), yet her head is posed towards her almost-lover, Theotormon. Their positions represent the mental state they are in, as Tristanne J. Connolly pointed out: "Bromion bound and raging, Oothoon bound yet graceful, suffering, not seeing her binding as a necessity, and Theotormon wound up in self torment" (17). The cave they are in could also symbolise a mental space: since the shape of the cave resembles a skull, the three figures inside it may represent the ideas and perceptions of womanhood that dominated society. Connolly's claim that Oothoon's body language suggests that she should not be punished further underlines that Oothoon does not think of herself as a sinner; her anguish does not stem from a sense of impurity but from unjust treatment. Bromion does not look at her, but into the distance. Theotormon too ignores her, as he is seen bending his head into his folded arms, presumably crying over his honour, which had been stained when Oothoon was raped. Oothoon is the one positioned the lowest, with her head bent down and her arms painfully twisted and locked behind her back. The image reflects how she is forcefully subjugated by patriarchy, which shames her and handles her as an object.

Conclusion

Eighteenth-century rape trials did not provide justice for women, but as we could see from their rhetorical manoeuvres, their main aim was to ensure that men and their properties would be safely protected. Both the trial of Sarah Tipple and William Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* demonstrate how language was used to shame women, whether by asking humiliating and exposing questions ("did you keep your legs a little wider than usual?") or using insulting terms ("harlot"). Single women who decided to seek justice and prosecute those who did them wrong found themselves faced with a grim reality: the system they believed in put them in vulnerable positions, while the judges and juries used their power to publicly

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4   See in *The William Blake Archive* here.

humiliate those seeking legal redress. Like the heroine of Mary Hays' novel, single women who decided to prosecute found themselves up against a system built upon male authority.

Hays' character did not legally prosecute her assailant but merely voiced the idea, only to be crushed by her rapist and the patriarchal society she lived in. Eighteenth-century courtrooms often turned into a crime scene for women: after being physically assaulted, the violated woman had to endure psychological assault by a courtroom of men. Unlike the heroine of Mary Hays, Oothoon does raise her voice in "court," and thus, William Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* may be seen as a poetic response to trials like Sarah Tipple's. By examining both cases—one legal and the other literary-fictional—one might raise the question of whether it was worth trying to pursue justice. What awaited the prosecutrix was most likely more shame, but this time in front of an audience, which contained the possibility that one's name and dignity will forever be tainted. In his narrative poem, William Blake not only exposes the fallacy of the system, but he also envisions a future where women will have the courage to publicly denounce it. He depicts Oothoon's ordeal as a communal experience to which the daughters of Albion—and thus, all women—can relate: "The Daughters of Albion hear her woes, and echo back her sighs." Blake uses literature as a mirror through which he reflects on the atrocious realities of his age while lending a powerful voice to those who cannot express their pain so that their complaints might be heard.

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"Blest Contemplation's Placid Friend"

The Moon as a Mighty Confidante in the Works of Romantic Women Poets and Beyond

ORSOLYA ALBERT

Abstract: The article inspects the unduly overlooked literary output of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century female poets, focusing chiefly on the innovative aspects of their Moon representations. The lunar poetry of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Helen Maria Williams, Mary Tighe, and Felicia Hemans relies partly on past conventions while bravely departing from traditional representations and seeking new directions. In their works, the Moon becomes the site for synthesising not only the past and present but also light and darkness, reason and fancy, beauty and sublimity, science and myth, coldness and congeniality. The pieces seem to fit neatly into the concept of Feminine Romanticism, as coined by Anne K. Mellor, espousing a deconstruction of hierarchies between the subject and Nature. However, the analyses of the Moon motif in these poems may shed light on how Mellor's framework could be reconsidered and extended.

It would prove to be an exceedingly difficult endeavour to find an image as pervasive in literary works and as multifaceted as that of the Moon. Departing from the celestial body's classical associations with the goddess Diana or Artemis, and hence with femininity, chastity, and, quite paradoxically, fertility, one can trace its trajectory throughout diverse epochs and survey its numerous successive connotations with mysticism, superstition, the passage of time and changes in mental and bodily functions. Although lovers furtively dash to their secret appointments under the cover of the night, many refrain from placing complete trust in moonlight due

to its perceived volatility: "O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon, / That monthly changes in her circled orb" (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* 2.2.109–110). Her unreliability propelled the Romans to call her an outright liar, the *Luna mendax* (Jensen 95), while the eighteenth-century Lunar Society, constituted by the preeminent figures of scientific thought, relied on her guidance on their way home from their secret meetings (Mheallaigh 14). Despite her changing nature, the women poets of the early Romantic and Romantic period to be discussed in the present study depict the Moon as a sisterly, soothing associate; she is not the witness of the *rendezvous* but the one with whom a clandestine meeting is arranged.

The primary undertaking of this article is to scrutinise the thus-far relatively neglected lunar poetry of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century female poets, pinpointing the correspondences and differences between their portrayals of the Moon. The scope of the essay extends to the works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743–1825), Charlotte Smith (1749–1806), Mary Robinson (1757–1800), Helen Maria Williams (1759–1827), Mary Tighe (1772–1810), and Felicia Hemans (1793–1835), but writings of earlier and later authors and even of various genres receive a mention to contextualise the pieces. Arguably, the image of the Moon prevalent in the poetry of these women writers is created via a juxtaposition of contrasting characteristics that may co-exist without negating one another. The paper will explore how the representations of the Moon may destabilise the light-darkness dichotomy by blending the qualities traditionally associated with the elements of the dualism. The Moon inspires both the faculties of reason and of imagination in the course of the persona's nocturnal excursions; in addition, she is conceived to be simultaneously beautiful and sublime in the Burkean sense, a gentle companion who also happens to be the cold and mighty Queen of the Night. Though evidently entrenched in the neoclassical and earlier representational conventions, their utilisations of the Moon trope are not devoid of innovation since the Moon's special status as both a cherished confidante and an unfathomable entity is unique.

By virtue of the celestial orb's affectionate yet cold disposition, these lunar poems form part of Anne K. Mellor's suggested alternative canon of Romanticism, Feminine Romanticism. The representative works of Feminine Romanticism reject rigid hierarchies and treat Nature with familiarity and intimacy (3). Albeit the "ecstatic experience of co-participation in nature" erases fixed binaries, Mellor's definition conveys the impression that there is a tension between the perception of the natural world as an "overwhelming power," engendering the Burkean sublime, and

the Feminine Romantics' genial, caring Nature (97). This dichotomy can dissolve when the speaker is simultaneously alarmed by the enigmatic aura of the astronomical object and comforted by her amiability.

One can maintain without hesitation that Western systems of thought are structured by the light-darkness binary, with a clear preference exhibited for daylight. Jacques Derrida considers the light v. darkness opposition "the founding metaphor of Western philosophy as metaphysics" (27). The beginning of the Gospel of John immediately comes to mind as a testimony to how light is conventionally assigned a positive value, signalling presence and life, while darkness is associated with absence and death. Additionally, light renders things visible and knowable, hence "the Enlightenment yearned for the splendour of the sun" (Brown, "Romanticism and Enlightenment" 41), while darkness is equated with ignorance, superstition, and religious mysticism.

Ruth Salvaggio offers a feminist critique of the Enlightenment by calling attention to how in hierarchical systems of representation, "phenomena that proved difficult to control—madness, fluidity, colour, shade, and darkness—took on a feminine demeanour" (x). The fall of dusk often demarcates the limits of the comprehensible, and it is no coincidence that in Greek mythology, the dominion of the night is ruled by Nyx. As the female embodiment of the threat of primaeval darkness, she represents the antithesis to the masculine vitality of the day (Bronfen 20). Numerous efforts have been made to terminate the hitherto unrivalled reign of light; Martin Heidegger found that it is imperative to "learn to acknowledge the dark as something unavoidable" since "the dark is the secret of life," essential for what he calls the "unconcealment of truth" or *Aletheia* (qtd. in Burik 355). The mildly glowing Moon in the poems to be analysed can function as a liminal "conceptual space" where the ostensibly contradictory qualities of the light v. darkness dichotomy exist side-by-side (Mheallaigh 3).

Jennifer Keith contends that, more generally, a sense of intense isolation permeates the poetry of the late eighteenth century, provoking an interrogation of the viability of past systems and models, and manifesting itself in "a poetic vision where social, poetic, and metaphysical comforts drop away" (272). The end of the eighteenth century is also the time when a "revolution in female manners" unfolded,

demanding the acknowledgement of women's rationality and right to equal treatment (qtd. in Mellor 33). Various groups of female intellectuals devoted themselves to the improvement of women's lives, pressing for economic and educational reforms (Mellor 39). Yet, the literature of the period is frequently discussed in negative terms, inserted into a narrative of development as a "miniature dark ages," after which Romanticism shines forth (Keith 271–272). Marshall Brown's *Preromanticism* (1991) utilises the prefix as a marker of distinction, an indicator of a failed innovatory project, and Keith sets out to apply a similar classification in her own account of the era (271–273). The selection of lunar poems perused in this essay could defy both of these suggested approaches due to their inventive and reconciliatory aspects.

Journey by Moonlight

As darkness falls, the personae of the many poems written by women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries retreat to the tender night, contemplating the trials and tribulations of the day by the comforting moonlight. During these solitary saunters highly suitable for self-scrutiny and cogitation, the speakers withdraw from the diurnal spaces and gain access to a "countersite" to the day, a Bakhtinian chronotope (Bronfen 110). In the nocturnal scenes of the poems, time and space become inseparable (Bakthin 84); it is only by the "pale beam" of the Moon that the speaker in Charlotte Smith's piece "alone and pensive" "delight[s] to stray" ("Sonnet IV" ll. 1–2). Elisabeth Bronfen underlines how the night is simultaneously "another way of reckoning time; a time that cannot be reckoned; a time of reckoning" (xi). With the setting of the sun, a territory becomes accessible where time appears to pass differently; the meticulously ordered and partitioned hours of the day are replaced by a fluid temporality which may bewilder the senses. This period perceptibly cannot be accounted for within the conventional chronological frame. Consequently, the chronotope of the night is ideal for intense and undisturbed meditation, facilitated by the stimulating company of the Moon. The nocturnal spacetime is also fit to be regarded as "bounded and unbound; a sanctuary, a promise, and a chance" (xiii). Even if the arrival of the dawn is inevitable, the soothing darkness seems to surround the subject, thus providing an opportunity for introspection and to beseech the Muse. Nevertheless, parts of the nocturnal landscape are bathed in "soft and shadowy colours" of the moonbeam, resulting in a "chequer'd scene" where light and shadow coexist (Barbauld, "Verses Written in an Alcove" ll. 3–4).

Contemplation in the company of the Moon is far from being a static activity in these poems. Indeed, nightly perambulations or, to borrow Amato's expression, "noctambulations" (165) constitute a special category of leisurely, pensive walks. A more general taste was developed for solitary strolling in the era, evolving from a merely pragmatic undertaking into a "'poetic' mode of locomotion offering a sense of communion and an elevated state of mind" (Amato 103). Undisturbed by daylight struggles, one can explore the time and terrain of seemingly endless possibilities. The case of the female noctambulator deserves special consideration since nightly walks could be seen as subversive when embarked on by women. Walking was generally held to be a masculine activity; nocturnal walks for women were not only perilous but also discouraged and heavily judged because of their sexual connotations (Solnit 234–235).

In Anna Laetitia Barbauld's "A Summer Evening's Meditation," the vibrant rays of the "sultry tyrant" impede contemplation and, therefore, the composition of poetry, while the "more grateful hours" of shielding darkness and the gentle glow of the stars and the Moon facilitate such endeavours (ll. 1–2). When the sight of the dazzling Sun ceases to torment the onlooker, the stars "with mild maiden beams / Of temper'd light, invite the cherish'd eye / To wander o'er their sphere" (ll. 4–6). The wanderer's progression is, therefore, synchronous with the movement of her animated stare directed at the sky, which may now travel without hindrance. Therefore, the journey of the speaker is both terrestrial and cosmic. By drifting through the landscape without a clearly defined destination, the mind is also permitted to wander and conquer uncharted areas. From the kinaesthetic energy originates a form of creative exuberance at every step.

The interconnectedness of the mental and physical activities of the female walker in particular leads Mellor to the conclusion that this way, a "subjectivity-in-process" is born, a form of "embodied consciousness" (160). Rambling and reflection may allow the surpassing of confines and engender a "union with self, nature, and others" (Amato 102). As it will be demonstrated later on, the speakers' non-hierarchical engagement with the elements of the landscape results in a shared sense of empathy, chiefly catalysed by the Moon; nevertheless, the inherent otherness and inscrutability of the natural objects remain respected.

"BLEST CONTEMPLATION'S PLACID FRIEND"

Reason and Fancy

Interactions between Fancy, Reason, and Contemplation are frequently featured in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century poems written by women. Fancy suffered from a poor reputation in the period because of its supposed connection with revolutionary fervency; female poetry was perceived as especially susceptible to being perilously fanciful (J. C. Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry* 112). The superfluity and rebelliousness of Fancy are generally embraced in the inspected lunar poems; nevertheless, Fancy is often accompanied by Contemplation and Reason, which alternately concur, facilitate, or sometimes regulate the free flow of imagination. What is vital for the present study is that Fancy, Contemplation, and Reason become feminised alike as a consequence of their common tie to the Moon.

Mary Wollstonecraft, in her *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution* (1794), depicts rationality as both feminine and Moon-like: "Reason has, at last, shown her captivating face, beaming with benevolence; and it will be impossible for the dark hand of despotism again to obscure its radiance, or the lurking dagger of subordinate tyrants to reach her bosom" (qtd. in Mellor 68). From the middle of the eighteenth century, more and more periodicals were published to cater to a growing female readership, acknowledging "women's rational capacity and fitness for intellectual pursuits" (Batchelor 33). *The Lady's Magazine* emerged as one of the most prominent periodicals in the late eighteenth century, introducing on its pages "every thing that can improve and embellish the Female Mind, or be esteemed a Branch of Female Education" ("Address to the Fair Sex" 3). Fascinatingly, in its earliest issues, the magazine featured numerous pieces by a contributor called "The Female Rambler" seeking to instruct women on "how to travel through the world" and drawing attention to the limitations on female movement (Batchelor 54, 56). Kinesthetics and cogitation once again appearing as intertwined, it is hardly surprising that on the occasion of moonlit walks, the celestial orb becomes "Blest Contemplation's placid friend" (Robinson, "Ode to the Moon" l. 2).

Although contemplation was normatively assessed to be a masculine occupation, a gradual shift occurred in its perception during the eighteenth century (Browning 404). In Mary Darwall's "The Pleasures of Contemplation," deep reflection is enjoyed primarily in the company of feminine astronomical objects:

> QUEEN of the halycon breast, and heavenward eye,
> Sweet Contemplation, with thy ray benign
> Light my lone passage thro' this vale of life,
> And raise the siege of Care! This silent hour
> To thee is sacred, when the star of Eve,
> Like Dian's Virgins trembling ere they bathe,
> Shoots o'er the Hesperian wave its quivering ray. (ll. 1–7)

While "Sweet Contemplation" is directly linked to the Moon due to her "ray benign" and as a queen of the "heavenward eye" in Darwall's work, Barbauld's Contemplation is more closely connected to the female walker who can finally depart from home as the night begins to fall, and can immerse herself in uninterrupted ponderings:

> … 'Tis now the hour
> When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts,
> The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth
> Of unpierc'd woods, where wrapt in solid shade
> She mused away the gaudy hours of noon,
> And fed on thoughts unripen'd by the sun,
> Moves forward; and with radiant finger points
> To yon blue concave swell'd by breath divine. (ll. 17–24)

The "solid shade" of the woods or her cave is wrapped around Contemplation almost like a nightgown or a shawl. Just like the persona, she is forced to spend the hours of daylight inside, in the enclosed, private sphere of the grotto, and muse away the time when the circumstances are not yet provided for the free flow of ideas. Only at the dead of night, the "the noon of thought" (l. 51), can Contemplation finally make her departure from the shadowy shelter, and subsequent to an unsatisfying meal consisting of "thoughts unripen'd by the sun" (l. 22), she entreats the speaker to indulge in an uninhibited study of the sky and the crescent Moon as "wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars" (l. 52).

Rational reflections are habitually invoked by the experience of the changing nature of the Moon in these poems. The speaker is reminded of the ephemerality of life, the materiality of the body and its inevitable physical deterioration. Charlotte Smith's "Sonnet XLIV. Written in the Church Yard at Middleton

in Sussex" confronts the reader with the shocking sight of the human remains which were washed out by the forceful flood engendered by the Moon: "Lo! their bones whiten in the frequent wave; / But vain to them the winds and waters rave" (ll. 10–12). The spectator of this arresting scene is prompted to consider her own impermanence and feels envious of the deceased, being exhausted by the storms of life. On account of her seemingly supernatural powers and repeated disappearance and re-appearance in the sky, the Moon becomes the herald of mortality in Mary Robinson's ode as well:

> And as I mark, thy faint reclining head,
> Sinking on Ocean's pearly bed;
> Let Reason tell my soul, thus all things fade.
> . . . .
> Those eyes, that beam with Friendship's ray,
> And glance ineffable delight,
> Shall shrink from life's translucid day,
> And close their fainting orbs, in Death's impervious night. ("Ode
> to the Moon" ll. 31–33, 55–58)

The parallels drawn between the reclining head, the closing eyes of the moribund and the dimming light of the orb are especially striking. The Moon as an ocular metaphor, originating in ancient times, is admirably versatile, interpretable both as an emblem of sympathy, a tearful eye beaming with the rays of Friendship, and as a *memento mori*, the closing eyes of the dying (Mheallaigh 24). The Moon's operation as an effective reminder of mortality also derives from its fashioning in Western imagination as a heaven-like location where "the wretched may have rest" and "the sufferers of the earth perhaps may go, / Released by death" (Smith, "Sonnet IV. To the Moon" ll. 8–10). In antiquity, the Moon was commonly equated with the Elysian fields where those favoured by the gods dwelt after their retirement from their terrestrial existence (Montgomery 14). The mythological envisioning of the heavenly orb as Elysium arguably coincides with later Christian conceptualisations of the Moon. Identified conventionally with Mary, the "Queen of Heaven" in Christian iconography (Otto 283–284), and with Queen Elizabeth from the 1580s (King 43), the celestial entity is endowed with qualities such as chastity, gentleness, benevolence, and serenity. Similar to the attitude of the speaker

in "Sonnet XLIV. Written in the Church Yard at Middleton in Sussex," the persona of "Sonnet IV. To the Moon" expresses her longing for the "benignant sphere" and that "I soon may reach thy world serene, / Poor wearied pilgrim—in this toiling scene!" (ll. 10, 13–14). Such desire resembles a longing to reunite with the mother.

The light of the Moon conjures up memories of things past, "of the years that for ever are fled" and "of joys that have vanish'd; of hopes that are dead / Of friend- ships that were, and are not" (Tighe ll. 21–24). The sense of the tragic distance and inaccessibility of the lost time is intensified by the failing light of the Moon and the concomitant mournful aura permeating the nocturnal scene. The presence of the "melancholy orb" allows one to succumb to nostalgia and "mourn that hope to me in youth is lost" (Williams ll. 2, 12). Of considerable importance may be that Sappho, "the first poet of the Moon" (Mheallaigh 4), also accentuates the contrast between the permanence of the persona's solitude and the advancing of time, accom- panied by the changeful phases of the Moon:

> Well, the moon has set
> And the Pleiades. It is the middle
> Of the night. And the hour passes by,
> But I sleep alone.

Sappho's significance in the development of lunar poetry is undeniable since she renders the symbol of the Moon ever more intricate by bestowing new qualities upon it (Mheallaigh 24). Approaching the already familiar topos from a uniquely female perspective inaugurates new layers of meaning, such as the interplay of the Moon's gazing eye and female desire, and, one may add, the link between the passing of time and female experience (Mheallaigh 24). Daniel Robinson high- lights in his seminal work *The Poetry of Mary Robinson: Form and Fame* (2011) that Mary Robinson was commonly referred to as "the English Sappho" because of her attempted revisioning of the figure of the Sapphic poetess in her sonnet sequence entitled *Sappho and Phaon* (111–112). The connection between the transience of life and the female poet's temporary reputation is one of the central concerns of these sonnets. The Moon bears witness to the self-destruction of Robinson's Sappho in "Sonnet XLIII" and "XLIV. Conclusive" of the cycle; accordingly, a paral- lel is drawn between the poetess' professed passing into oblivion and the fading of the Moon. Naturally, waning is always followed by the period of waxing and

thus all hope should not be abandoned; this way, the periodical change of the orb is both disconcerting and comforting.

The "transitory beam" of the Moon, however, while leading to the recognition of existence's finitude as "all things fade" (Robinson, "Ode to the Moon" l. 33), can also pacify the speaker "with FANCY's aëry dream" (l. 22). The "moonlight composure" that steals over the mind of the speaker in Mary Tighe's "To the Moon" is simultaneously "poetical, pensive, and sweet" (ll. 19–20). Moonlight can, therefore, enkindle both sweet obliviousness to day-time troubles and a pensive mood. Enraptured by the mysteries of the night sky, Barbauld's speaker is "seize'd in thought" while, at the same time, "on fancy's wild and roving wing [she] sail[s], / From the green borders of the peopled earth (ll. 71–72). Nonetheless, the nocturnal scene also offers complete escape from the worries of the day. The landscape of Barbauld's "Verses written in an Alcove" turns into the land of fairies where "pining grief and wasting anguish" "never keep their vigils" since "care was only made for day" (ll. 15–16, 12). The persona of Mary Robinson's "Ode to the Moon" is similarly absorbed in a fantastical vision by the moonlight:

> And oft, amidst the shades of night
> I court thy undulating light;
> When Fairies dance around the verdant ring,
> Or frisk beside the bubbling spring,
> When the thoughtless SHEPHERD'S song
> Echoes thro' the silent air. (ll. 7–12)

Robinson's "thoughtless shepherd" is unconscious of the way the melody is composed and how it departs from his lips, with the notes bubbling up like the spring beside which the fairies perform their unfettered movements. The mild light of the Moon awakens Fancy and "can visionary thoughts impart, / And lead the Muse to soothe a suff'ring heart" (Williams ll. 13–14). Composition, requiring Fancy, is assisted by the inspiring beams of the Moon. Felicia Hemans also finds that the moonlit scene is the ideal location and time to encounter the Muse:

> COME, gentle muse! now all is calm,
> The dew descends, the air is balm;
> Unruffled is the glassy deep,

While moon-beams o'er its bosom sleep

. . . .

Oh! at this hour, this placid hour,

Soft music, wake thy magic pow'r! (ll. 1–4, 9–10)

Music and magic conjured by the placid Moon liberate the self from the constraints of daylight. These instances of self-abandonment could easily be labelled as Dionysian; accordingly, they can produce a harmonious collaboration as the "estranged, hostile or subjugated nature again celebrates her reconciliation with her lost son, man" (Nietzsche 26).

Mary Robinson points out in the Preface to *Sappho and Phaon* that there exists a tension between the all-consuming, Dionysian devotion and the rational, Apollonian aptitude for poetical form. Robinson writes that the story of Sappho "presented to my imagination such a lively example of the human mind, enlightened by the most exquisite talents, yet yielding to the destructive controul [sic] of ungovernable passions" (6). Both the Apollonian apprehension of *techne* and restraint required to apply poetic structures and the Dionysian liberation of poetic imagination, the thoughtless, formless song, are instigated by the sight of the Moon. Intriguingly, in a later commentary on the sonnet, William Wordsworth conceives of the poetic form as an instance of "intense Unity" which resembles less an architectural structure with distinct partitions and more like an "orbicular body,—a sphere" (qtd. in Curran 40).

Therefore, both the Apollonian stasis and the Dionysian dance-like, cyclical appearance and vanishing of light likewise characterise these configurations of the Moon. As Sappho in Robinson's *Sappho and Phaon* prepares to leap into the foams of the sea from the Leucadian cliffs due to her unrequited love for Phaon, evening steals over the scenery and Sappho's "glowing, palpitating soul" greets "returning Reason's placid beam" with a sigh of relief as it can "calm rebellious Fancy's fev'rish dream" ("Sonnet XLIII" ll. 9–10, 12). Similarly, in the conclusive "Sonnet XLIV," the Moon as "Celestial Sympathy, with humid eye, / Bids the light Sylph capricious Fancy fly" (ll. 2–3). The cosmic wanderings of Barbauld in her "A Summer Evening's Meditation" end with the retreat of both faculties as "fancy droops, / And thought astonish'd stops her bold career" (ll. 98–99). Consequently, moonlight possesses the power to alternately bring about the unregulated flight of fancy and the reawakening of reason, the undisturbed state of inspiration and

the sensible realisation of evanescence, being both the locale and the catalyst for the unification of impulse and rationality.

<div align="center">THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL</div>

The apparently irreconcilable aesthetic categories of the sublime and the beautiful, as defined by Edmund Burke, also dwell side by side in these poems. The reunion of these two qualities is inherent in the Moon's identification with Diana, the graceful yet dangerous huntress. Charlotte Smith's persona in her “Sonnet XLIV. Written in the Church Yard at Middleton in Sussex” acknowledges the arresting abilities of the “mute arbitress of tides” (l. 1), paying homage to Shakespeare's “governess of floods” (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.103). Her power is sublime since it is astonishing and unsettling, fitted “to excite the ideas of pain, and danger” (Burke 36):

> Press'd by the Moon, mute arbitress of tides,
> While the loud equinox its pow'r combines,
> The sea no more its swelling surge confines,
> But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides. (ll. 1–4)

The observer is situated close enough to the scene to be affected by its destructive potential but keeps the distance to evade actual danger, which results in a mixture of joy and dread, hence the sensation of the sublime (Burke 47). Burke's development of the idea of sublimity relies greatly on what he describes as sympathy. Albeit the feelings of the other are transferred to the spectator, he finds alleviation in the awareness of his own freedom from such emotions; quite shockingly at first glance, he writes that “I am convinced we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others” (41–42). An inquiry into what exactly Burke means by “delight” here divulges that it is fused with the distress of the other and consequently is of utmost importance for sympathy since “the pain we feel, prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer” (43). By contrast, the speaker in Smith's “Sonnet XLIV. Written in the Church Yard” wishes to eradicate this distance and longs for a complete identification with the other, the remains of the corpses washed out by the flood: “While I am doom'd—by life's long storm opprest, / To gaze with envy, on their gloomy rest” (ll. 13–14). Macabre perhaps the spectacle, yet the beholder pays heed

to the mingling of the bones with shells and seaweed as feasible instances of unification and accord (ll. 9–10). The following section will elaborate on how this depiction of unison may align with Mellor's Feminine Romanticism.

The ambiguous status of the Moon is a principal source of its sublimity. The motif of the Moon is customarily linked to obscurity, being sometimes visible and then invisible, near but unreachable (Burke 58). Burke comments on these protean features and explains how "a light now appearing, and now leaving us, and so off and on, is even more terrible than total darkness" (77). The Moon's contemporaneous "greatness of dimension" and remoteness on the night sky is confusing and stir up a sense of awe (66). Encountering such a phenomenon upsets the belief in the dependability of sense perceptions, leading to a re-evaluation of what one has hitherto accepted as real on the basis of empirical evidence (Mheallaigh 52). This observation may also provide grounds for questioning Enlightenment's unwavering trust in sensory experience. Nonetheless, the Moon owns "softer virtues," which are ascribed to beautiful objects and are deemed to be feminine by Burke, such as "easiness of temper, compassion, kindness" (100). The gentleness, benevolence and the moderate light of the Moon are accordingly acclaimed in the selected poems; it is salient that these properties are normatively associated with the eighteenth-century cult of modesty (Backscheider 199). Moreover, these qualities are inherent in her role as a willing auditor and confidante since during the pensive occasions spent in her company, she "sheds a soft calm upon my troubled breast" (Smith, "Sonnet IV" l. 6). Even if the Moon of the Romantic women poets is usually a "mild maiden," quite aggressively, she "seems to push / Her brother down the sky" (Barbauld ll. 4, 9–10). The staging of this conflict supports the theory that her mildness does not thwart her assertiveness. Additionally, McCarthy detects a Miltonic vein in Barbauld's apprehension of space as a "womb of chaos" (l. 98) and applauds her as a daring appropriator of Milton's sublime, which is now exploited to introduce "a women's universe" (94–95).

One cannot help but wonder whether Burke's description of the physique of a beautiful woman could be analogous to the almost voyeuristic gaze with which a scientist may observe the celestial body, beholding "the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix or whither it is carried" (105). Therein lies the spectator's capacity to assert his position of supremacy and overpower nature "by framing, manipulating and consuming it" (Hitt 130) or,

in the words of Mellor, to "penetrate, possess and interpret" it (21). Aphra Behn's play *The Emperor of the Moon* (1688) satirises exactly this strange fascination via Doctor Baliardo's obsession, scrutinising the surface of the orb constantly through his telescope. With the persistent striving to map the body of the Moon, the discipline of selenography points to a similar direction. Yet, this intrusively inquisitive gaze is perhaps returned as a result of the Moon's recurring depiction as a human face or eye, enabling a reciprocity of looks. From another point of view, it is in the Moon's power to defend herself against such unwelcome attention because of her unattainability. Mheallaigh goes as far as to declare that a "(female?) fantasy of panoptic control" may emerge as the stare of the sublime Moon-eye reaches into the soul of the subject while she retains her elusiveness and evades human surveillance (26). Additionally, Widger argues that the female walker can substitute "looking down upon nature" by "looking around" (16); this "eco-ethical gesture" can entail the acknowledgement of the restrictedness of her perspective and the ultimate inaccessibility of the astronomical object, as it shall be discussed later (4).

Science and Myth

Conventional identifications of the Moon with Greek and Roman lunar goddesses abound in the Romantic poetry composed by women. She is persistently apostrophised as the "PALE GODDESS of the witching hour" (Robinson, "Ode to the Moon" l. 1) or the authoritative "queen of the silver bow" (Smith, "Sonnet IV" l. 1) and pictured as "DIAN's bright crescent" (Barbauld l. 7). Yet, one would not be misguided to argue that these poems also engage in a dialogue with the scientific discoveries of their age. Richard Holmes states that the end of the eighteenth century marks what Samuel Taylor Coleridge dubbed as the second scientific revolution; in this "age of wonder," a reciprocity existed between science and the Romantic movements. Moments of scientific exploration were often interpreted as events of Romantic revelations when one could glimpse into the underlying order of things. Müller proposes that the interrelatedness of all-natural forms (*Wechselwirkung*) was foregrounded in scientific discourse with the advent of Romanticism (3).

Already at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Edward Young exclaims in his *Night Thoughts* that "an undevout Astronomer is mad" (qtd. in Browning 398). In his pivotal work about the Romantic sublime, Thomas Weiskel mentions how divine features were granted to outer space with the rise of astronomy; the aim

was to save God by making him "marry the world of appearances" (14). The surveillance of the night sky with the hope that its workings may be brought to light is necessarily paired with a religious appreciation for the perplexing phenomena, believed to be testimonies to the deity's might and unfathomable nature. Primarily writing about the cosmic voyage genre but perhaps considering astronomical literature more generally as well, Browning emphasises how the readers of these works are encouraged to raise "the question of how one should negotiate the relationship between religious devotion and a pursuit of scientific knowledge, and how one should understand the relevance of gender identity to this question" (404). Importantly, scientific knowledge became more widely accessible in the period, and numerous books sought to instruct not only men but also women and children on multiple topics within a variety of disciplines, usually in a dialogic form. Elizabeth Carter, a Bluestocking who was famously well-versed in an astounding number of subjects, translated Francesco Algarotti's *Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy Explain'd for the Use of the Ladies* (1739) (Browning 402) and Jerome de Lalande's *Astronomie des Dames* (1785) also sought to impart knowledge of the night sky on the same audience.

Bearing in mind Charlotte Smith's keen interest in biology and familiarity with the Linnaean taxonomy (Bailes 235), her capacity to represent lunar phenomena in an accurate and detailed fashion could hardly be a coincidence. Smith does not simply rely on the classification system designed by Linnaeus, but she also criticises its artificiality (Bailes 238). This attitude may manifest itself in her "Sonnet XLIV. Written in the Church Yard," which successfully documents the Moon's influence on tides without demystifying and renouncing the figure of the queen of the night. She manages to faithfully report on the conjunction of the equinox with the rise of waters and ponder about the implications of the event for her own destiny. The idea that the same natural forces control and shape the life of the observer yet again reinforces a feeling of unity.

Browning relates Barbauld's "A Summer Evening's Meditation" to the tradition of cosmic voyage literature popular at the beginning of the eighteenth century and even insists that Barbauld rather successfully "out-Miltons" her forerunners (397). Nonetheless, she not only evokes the stars' roles as celestial moral guides and the figure of Milton's Eve, but also appears to participate in the scientific dialogue of her age. The inspiration for the trajectory of her interstellar voyage may have been Fontenelle's *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, of which Barbauld was an avid reader during her formative years (McCarthy 94). The work seeking

to promote science among the uninitiated is divided into six parts or nights; during each of these nights, a dialogue commences about the different planets and other spectacles that the universe may disclose to the naked eye. The second and third nights focus specifically on the Moon and its assumed habitability, affirming that "the moon is an earth too," and that its residents are likely to worship the Earth just like we admire the Moon (Fontenelle 41, 53). Nevertheless, the theory according to which the Moon has no light of her own is upheld in the book, and she is the dutiful servant of those who wish to travel by night, contributing to the "pleasurable accommodation of man" (44). Such theorisation about plurality and the debatable status of Earth as the only planet suitable for the sustaining of life brings to mind William Herschel's fascinating, although fallacious proposition, raising doubts about the centrality of our globe: "Are we not a larger moon to the Moon, than she is to us?" (qtd. in Holmes). The scientific interests of the women poets are thus immediately detectable in the poems, yet they do not lead to disenchantment, and the traditional allusions to mythology are preserved.

Closely monitoring the eclipse of the Moon and her capacity to govern the waters may unveil to the spectator the hidden truths of Nature about the rhythm of life and transitoriness, in line with the pursuits of Romantic science. Yet, the great revelations characteristic of numerous poetic pieces of the Romantic canon perhaps never did come; some of the selected poems seem to problematise the construction of Nature's role as a source for transcendence, judged to be potentially exploitative. They are more likely to respect the Moon's and the infinite sky's ultimate unknowability. In Hitt's view, the nocturnal meditational piece of Barbauld calls for ethical engagement with nature which necessitates humility on the part of the sky-gazer; Barbauld thus criticises the overabundance of the Wordsworthian "egotistical sublime" (142).

"Celestial Sympathy"

Anne K. Mellor's Feminine Romantic tradition, functioning as a "countersite" to mainstream Romanticism, is chiefly characterised by a "cooperative rather than possessive interaction with a Nature troped as a female friend or sister" (3). The possibility to position the lunar poetry of Romantic women authors within this framework deserves some consideration. While Mellor maintains that the primary connection between the subject and Nature is that of kinship, arising from

a kind of synergy and compassionateness, a thorough examination of the trope of the Moon in these poems may reveal that the appreciation for benignancy and softness does not preclude the due veneration of the Moon's majestic forces and her possible nonchalance. It is despite this purported detachment that women poets decide to entrust their accounts of struggles to the celestial body.

Under the dark veil of the night, the boundaries between the human and non-human become undetectable as identities intermingle, sympathy and affinity prevail. In Smith's "Sonnet III. To a Nightingale" and Robinson's "Ode to the Nightingale" and "Second Ode to the Nightingale," the speakers identify with the eponymous bird as they are all "Pale Sorrow's victims" (Smith, "Sonnet III" l. 9). The poems undoubtedly echo the myth of the mutilated Philomel who was transformed into a nightingale; both Robinson and Smith seek to stress how the poet and the bird unite in their song about shared misfortunes, addressing the Moon and inspiring empathy in the whole of Nature:

> In snowy west, I tell my pains
> Beside the brook in icy chains
> Bound its weedy banks between,
> While sad I watch night's pensive queen,
> Just emblem of my weary woes:
> For ah! where'er the virgin goes,
> Each flow'ret greets her with a tear
> To sympathetic sorrow dear (Robinson, "Second Ode
> to the Nightingale" ll. 41–48)

Significantly, the whole of Nature, "each flow'ret" responds with "sympathetic sorrow" to the Moon. In "Ode to the Moon," Robinson's Moon herself becomes a "languid eye" who "sheds its soft tears upon the painted vale" (ll. 17–18). Charlotte Smith's persona also wishes to participate in this unity infused with sympathy, seeking to join in with the nightingale's song and share with the Moon her own "tale of tender woe" (ll. 2, 10). Myers acutely observes that Smith strategically emulates Petrarch in her sonnets "to elicit from readers an intellectual and emotional reciprocity missing from her immediate circumstances" (241). Mary Darwall's earlier address to Contemplation also speaks about this experience of being attuned

to one's environment: "All Nature joins to fill my labouring breast / With high sensations…" (ll. 8–9).

The feelings of sympathy and empathy conferred principally on the Moon but flowing through the entirety of the nocturnal scene, being responsible for the special rapport between the different life forms, may be rooted in the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility. The poetry of sensibility emerging at the end of the eighteenth century valued exactly this "willingness and ability to respond to others," indicating a "rare emotional capacity" (Spacks 249). Additionally, sensibility entailed an apprehension of social injustices because of its concern with the suffering of the individual, resulting in a "symbiosis and the tension of the social and the personal" (Spacks 250). Regardless of the highly introspective stance of their speakers, Curran finds that Smith's pieces are imbued with a "conversational intensity" (31).

Mellor agrees that dualisms in Feminine Romanticism are resolved through a form of collaboration and unity. Borrowing Carol Gilligan's theory of the ethics of care, she asserts that Romantic women writers refuse to construct a truly threatening Other. By dismissing "oppositional polarity," they attempt to establish a non-hierarchical structure of sympathy and likeness (3). Noctambulation by moonlight, as defined at the beginning of the paper, is therefore key for the shaping of female subjectivity: "Feminine Romanticism was based on a subjectivity constructed in relation to other subjectivities, hence a self that is fluid, absorptive, responsive, with permeable ego boundaries. This self typically located its identity within a larger human nexus, a family or social community" (Mellor 209). Indeed, the speaker of the poems comes to being via walking by and engaging with the parts of nocturnal Nature, experiencing a reciprocal understanding and compassion.

However, the present assortment of lunar poems also shows the potential to somewhat challenge the framework established by Mellor. In Mellor's view, part of the undertaking of the female Romantic poets was to domesticate the sublime of the male tradition. The feminised nature into which the poets of this canon readily venture is "not an overwhelming power, not even an all-bountiful mother"; rather, the female speaker "feels comforted, even addressed by, female nature, with whom she communes either in words or in song" (97). Mellor thereby aspires to construct a dichotomy between sisterly intimacy and awe-inspiring otherness. The analysis of Moon poetry performed in this essay may offer ample evidence for quite the opposite, namely that these two qualities could be co-present in the Nature of Romantic poetesses, encapsulated in the image of the mighty sphere of the night. She listens

attentively, and her presence can pacify the disquietude presiding over the subject's mind, while her sublime supremacy is also praised. The alternation of her phases makes her a harbinger of mortality, a fact that does not prevent the persona to value her mildness and cordiality.

Quoting passages from Dorothy Wordsworth's diary, Mellor contends that she absorbs the "expanse of nature without the terror of the Burkean sublime" (161). The impressive number of moonlit walks recorded in the journals of Dorothy Wordsworth are indeed usually categorised as "pleasant" or, when she aims to dramatise the significance of these wanderings, "very pleasant" (Wordsworth 39). Conversely, the account of a night walk on 18 March 1802 included in *The Grasmere Journal* clearly displays the traits of Burke's sublimity. The Moon is obscure, as it is overcast, but then emerges again from behind a mountain, and the walker cannot suppress her desire to vocalise her simultaneous unrest and reverence: "O the unutterable darkness of the sky & the Earth below the Moon! & the glorious brightness of the moon itself!" (81). The sight of the Island house illuminated by the "bright soft" moonlight and surrounded by the impenetrable blackness urges the spectator to pronounce that it "needs must be a holy place." Wordsworth declares that she "had many many exquisite feelings" and avows that the experience "made me more than half a poet" (81). Accordingly, she cannot settle down for reading but has the irresistible impulse to write as soon as she arrives home from the stimulating excursion, which enterprise, unfortunately, she "gave up expecting William" (81). Other instances of the Moon's yearned companionship from the journals are relatively easy to locate; after a strenuous visit from Thomas Wilkinson who bombarded Dorothy Wordsworth with questions, she confesses that "[she] was glad when he left [her]" because "[t]hen [she] had time to look at the moon while [she] was thinking over [her] own thoughts" (84).

Even though in lunar poetry, the Moon is repeatedly likened to a personified friendship whose "mild and genuine ray / Through life's long evening shall unclouded last" (Smith, "Sonnet XXVIII. To Friendship" ll. 5–6), her distant and cold mien is equally recognised. It is not uncharacteristic of the poets discussed here to paint the "Night's regent" as uncaring, beaming "at the tumult of the troubled earth," and hence being "unvex'd by all their conflicts" (Smith, "Sonnet LIX" ll. 6, 8, 14). These portrayals of discord between the speakers' and the Moon's emotional states may indicate the speakers' acceptance of the ultimate unknowability of the celestial object. In spite of the presumed dispassion of the Moon, the speakers of these

poetic pieces decide to open their hearts to the caressing but cold beams of Cynthia. Nor is it rare that they question this contradictory attraction to the remote orb, only to restate their intention to treat her as their closest associate while showing respect for her autonomy and otherness:

> What is it that gives thee, pale Queen of the Night,
> That secret intelligent grace?
> Or why do I gaze with such tender delight
> On thy fair, but insensible face?
> What gentle enchantment possesses thy beam
> Beyond the warm sunshine day?
> Thy bosom is cold as the glittering stream,
> Where dances thy tremulous ray.
> . . . .
> Then still I must love thee, mild Queen of the Night!
> Since feeling and fancy agree,
> To make thee a source of unfading delight,
> A friend and a solace to me. (Tighe ll. 1–8, 29–32)

There is a discrepancy between the face of the spectator, turned towards the celestial orb and glowing with an expression of sympathy and hope, and the blank visage of the Moon looking back at her without any trace of sensibility. Mirroring in psychology refers to the mimicry of the other's nonverbal signs with the hope of establishing a rapport; Gordon explains how "facial empathy uses our own face as a mirror of the other's face" (730). The ancient visualisation of the Moon as a mirror reflecting the surface of the Earth may not be accidental and could perhaps be evocative of an analogous underlying gesture (Mheallaigh 198). In the case of Tighe's poem, mirroring malfunctions because the Moon does not reflect the emotions exhibited on the observer's face. Refraining from the choice to force her emotional state on the Moon, the speaker decides to trust her as a friend, undeterred by her resistance. The effect that the Moon exerts on her is a form of enchantment that sunlight lacks and which the persona simply cannot grasp as it seems to be antithetical to her coldness. Instead of the chain of calculated, rational arguments, here it is "feeling and fancy" which have the last word on the matter. Smith also unabashedly confesses her love to the night and to its empress, the Moon:

> I love thee, mournful, sobersuited night,
> When the faint moon, yet ling'ring in her wane,
> And veil'd in clouds, with pale uncertain light
> Hangs o'er the waters of the restless main. (ll. 1–4)

Conventionally negative epithets, like "mournful" and "sobersuited" become the objects of fondness in Smith's sonnet. Nor does the speaker shun the obscure atmosphere created by the lingering, "uncertain light" of the "faint moon."

Conflicting qualities like darkness and light, the Moon's gloomy shadow and the soothing rays are juxtaposed and equally cherished by Helen Maria Williams's "Sonnet to the Moon." To be more precise, the poem is authored by Williams's heroine Julia and is included in the volume *Julia, a Novel; Interspersed with Some Poetical Pieces* (1790):

> Come! and o'er earth thy wand'ring lustre shed,
> Thy deepest shadow, and thy softest light;
> To me congenial is the gloomy grove,
> When with faint light the sloping uplands shine;
> *That gloom, those pensive rays alike I love*. (ll. 4–7, emphasis added)

Exalting both the "deepest shadow" and the "softest light," the "gloom" and the "pensive rays," the speaker recognises the Moon's convoluted character. Backscheider's succinct appraisal of the work chimes in with Hitt's discussion about the capitalisation on nature as a locus for apotheoses: "Williams is replicating the movement of many of Smith's sonnets but without the kind of revelatory moment common to the sonnets of Wordsworth and Keats" (351). The intentional election of certain genres, most often the sonnet form by the women poets of Mellor's canon is argued to disclose their repudiation of the eighteenth-century rigid hierarchies between literary forms (Mellor 11). "A self experienced in relation to other selves" becomes accessible resulting from these choices, which remains unavailable "to the self-absorbed, often abstracted meditations of either the epic poet or the odal hymnist" (11). Sonnets about night passages and odes written to the Moon can once again unite both of these attitudes as the persona's introspective stance does not inhibit her openness to her surroundings.

Just how inclined these women poets were to enter into a respectful relationship with the Moon is perceptible in their sometimes undeniably unique employment of lunar imagery as indicated by the preceding sections. Their renunciation of hierarchical structures and discomfort with applying polarities are exemplified by their portrayal of the Moon as a complex entity, encompassing both light and darkness, beauty and sublimity, being seemingly within reach but proving to be unattainable. Informed in their work not solely by mythology but perhaps also by the breakthroughs of contemporary science, these women poets of Romanticism chose to make equal use of traditional representations and innovative perspectives.

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Reading Habits and Stylistic Discrepancy in *Northanger Abbey*

The Evolution of Catherine Morland

REBEKA SIMON

Abstract: In the past decades, scholarly discourse surrounding Northanger Abbey *has predominantly favoured a two-part structural division, attributing stylistic disparities to the novel's extended composition and publication process. However, a more intricate perspective emerges from a division into three stylistically unique sections. This reflects more closely the different stages of Catherine Morland's development and the impact of her reading habits within varying narrative contexts. While the novel explores the activity of reading books, it also delves into questions of interpreting and comprehending the world. Catherine's fascination with Gothic novels serves as both a narrative device and a thematic exploration, reflecting her vivid imagination and the tensions between fiction and reality. This essay contends that the trichotomous division offers a more nuanced perspective on the interplay between narrative structure and character evolution. It emphasises the role of reading habits in Catherine's growth and underscores the transformative potential of literature in shaping perspectives, shedding new light on the novel's narrative style. To investigate the stylistic changes of* Northanger Abbey *and their correlation with Catherine Morland's development, this essay utilises a blend of quantitative stylistic analysis and close reading, highlighting how Austen's narrative technique reflects and shapes the protagonist's journey.*

Since the second half of the twentieth century, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* has been analysed in terms of a dichotomous division of its structure. This

structural framework was first introduced by Andrew Wright in his work *Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Structure* (1953). Wright's dichotomous structural paradigm not only lays bare the thematic and stylistic intricacies woven by Austen but also accentuates the adroit fabrication of the narrative as a whole. This bipartite framework is most often seen as reflecting the intricate interplay involving a reciprocal critique between the Gothic and the satirical elements inherent to the narrative. Accordingly, the novel is usually divided into two distinct halves, each marked by different settings and narrative styles—one exhibiting a pronounced satirical intent at certain junctures and the other a distinctly novelistic disposition (Kearful 514). These stylistically different parts are usually thought to be woven together by thematic and structural elements, which lend coherence to the whole (Glock 36). Marilyn Butler also differentiates between the Bath scenes and the chapters taking place in Northanger (xviii), while Laura Baudot has described the two components as an "*Evelina*-esque comedy of manners" and the exploration of Catherine's "Gothic fantasies" (330n11). By the 2010s, a consistent approach to *Northanger Abbey*'s structure has emerged, dividing the novel according to its two volumes and highlighting the stylistic changes between them. More recently, *Northanger Abbey* has also been identified as a bridge between Austen's juvenile and mature works, where the "primary story involves a naïve country girl" and a "unifying framing device" in the form of the Gothic parody (Hemmingway). However, an alternative perspective emerges if we consider the division of the novel into not just two but three stylistically distinct sections, which coincide with Catherine's changing reading practices and character development. To substantiate this claim, I have divided *Northanger Abbey* into what I believe to be its three main structural units, thus subdividing the section generally referred to as Northanger chapters into two parts. The first nineteen chapters take up the first part, which may be identified as domestic fiction, the second part starts with Volume 2 Chapter 5 and ends with Volume 2 Chapter 9, while the last part covers the final seven chapters. To justify this trichotomous division, I examine the stylistic changes between the different segments, the related question of genre and Catherine's character development, together with her changing reading habits. I argue that this new take on the novel's structure puts more emphasis on the Bildungsroman-like aspects of Catherine's journey.

STYLISTIC VARIETY IN *NORTHANGER ABBEY*

Jane Austen's creative process in crafting *Northanger Abbey* unfolded over a long time, starting approximately in 1798–1799 and undergoing revisions until at least 1816, when she ultimately claimed authorship of her work (Todd 26). Indicative of Austen's sustained composition, beyond the alteration of the protagonist's name, is the addition of Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) into the so-called "defence of the novel" section in Volume 1 Chapter 5. Thus, the question arises whether we may identify stylistically distinguishable segments in the novel. In my analysis, I will combine stylistic features with genre identification because the two are closely related to each other. The investigation relies on easily accessible browser-based digital tools such as Voyant Tools and Lexos. What I propose is a new approach to genre through a form of stylistic analysis; however, one that does not seek to arrive at a definitive classification of the novel's genres. Rather, it aims to explore how certain stylistic elements reflect various generic influences.

As a first step, I looked at the average words per sentence metric because it provides insight into the syntactic complexity and structural intricacy inherent within the text. Here, what we can observe is that if we think about *Northanger Abbey* in the dichotomous division, then Part 1 has a shorter average sentence length (20.5), which reflects a preference for simpler syntactic constructions and more concise expression.[1] The "Northanger Part" contains significantly longer sentences (25.1). However, when we look at this metric in terms of the trichotomous division, we find that Part 2 (24.4) noticeably falls behind Part 3 (25.7), which signifies that the last seven chapters of the novel have a propensity towards even more complex syntactic structures. Vocabulary density, as quantified by the ratio of unique words to total words in the text, offers a glimpse into the lexical diversity of the corpus. These pieces of information would be lost without looking at the novel in terms of three stylistically different parts. Part 1 demonstrates the lowest vocabulary density (0.099), indicative of a narrower range of lexical items and a propensity towards simpler language usage. Looking at the difference between the "Northanger Part" and Parts 2 and 3 only shows slight differences, as the later parts of the book have a higher vocabulary density than Part 1. While the "Northanger Part" has a density of 0.126, Part 2 exhibits a higher vocabulary density (0.186), suggesting a greater lexical richness

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1   The first part includes the same chapters as the "Bath Part"; thus, throughout the analysis, I will refer to it as Part 1.

and potentially more intricate semantic nuances. Part 3 occupies an intermediary position in the trichotomous division (0.159), presenting a moderate level of lexical variation. These quantitative data offer valuable insights into the lexical richness, comprehensibility, and syntactic complexity of Austen's style throughout the novel (see Appendix A), and the observed stylistic differences confirm that we are, indeed, justified to talk about three stylistically different parts in connection with *Northanger Abbey*. It is also evident that Parts 1 and 3 share some stylistic similarities.

In examining the representative topics of the different parts, I used the content analysis tool within Lexos, where genre specific words are compared to the corpus to identify what genre the parts most likely belong to (see Appendix B). This examination aims to use quantitative methodologies to prove that Parts 1 and 3 differ from Part 2 both in terms of style and genre. This function helps to compare the words used in a given text with two "dictionaries" that contain a list of words frequently appearing in Gothic and domestic novels. I created these dictionaries sourced from what I take to be exemplary texts. In the case of domestic novels, these include Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and *Pamela*, Frances Burney's *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, and Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*. These are also novels that are referred to in *Northanger Abbey*; however, they are never quoted. For a better representation, the different grammatical forms of the words were also added to the list. The final list for domestic novels consists of the following words:

> "admiration," "admire," "admires," "admired," "admiring," "admirable," "admirably," "affection," "affections," "affectionate," "affectionately," "beauty," "beautiful," "courage," "courageous," "consent," "convincing," "convinced," "convince," "cried," "cry," "cries," "crying," "delicate," "delicacy," "delicately," "fashion," "fashionable," "fashionably," "gentleness," "gentlemen," "grace," "graceful," "gracefully," "happiness," "happy," "happily," "heart," "heartfelt," "hearts," "innocence," "innocent," "innocently," "interest," "interested," "interesting," "interestingly," "interests," "know," "knowing," "knowledge," "known," "lady," "love," "loved," "loves," "loving," "lovingly," "manners," "mind," "minds," "observe," "observed," "observer," "observes," "observing," "pity," "pitied," "poverty," "poor," "pride," "proud," "returned," "return," "returning," "silence," "silent," "silently," "spirit," "spirited," "spirits," "stay," "stayed," "stays," "taste,"

"tastes," "temper," "tender," "tender," "tenderness," "truth," "true," "truthful," "vain," "vanity," "vainly," "weak," "weakness."

For the Gothic words, I used the nine Gothic novels mentioned in the text of *Northanger Abbey*. These include *The Italian* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe, *Castle of Wolfenbach* and *Mysterious Warnings* by Eliza Parsons, *Clermont* by Regina Maria Roche, *Necromancer of the Black Forest* written by Karl Friedrich Kahlert and translated by Peter Teuthold, *Midnight Bell* by Francis Lathom, *Orphan of the Rhine* by Eleanor Sleath, and *Horrid Mysteries* by written Karl Friedrich August Grosse and translated by Peter Will. The list of representative words includes:

"abbey," "ambition," "ambitious," "ambitions," "ambitiously," "appear," "appeared," "appearing," "appears," "arisen," "chill," "dagger," "daggers," "dismay," "dismayed," "dismaying," "dismays," "doom," "doomed," "dooms," "feeling," "feel," "feels," "felt," "gloom," "gloomy," "glooms," "gloomier," "gloomiest," "haunt," "haunted," "haunting," "haunts," "heard," "hear," "hears," "hearing," "helpless," "helplessness," "helplessly," "horrified," "horrify," "horrifying," "horror," "horrors," "impatient," "impatiently," "impatience," "inhuman," "inhumane," "inhumanity," "maiden," "maids," "miserable," "misery," "miserably," "monster," "monsters," "peasant," "peasants," "retired," "retire," "retires," "retiring," "rise," "rises," "riser," "risers," "rising," "risings," "saw," "see," "sees," "seeing," "scorn," "scornful," "scorned," "scorning," "scorns," "shudder," "shuddered," "shuddering," "shudders," "shuddery," "sick," "sickened," "sickening," "sicklier," "sickliest," "sickness," "sickly," "storm," "struggle," "struggled," "struggles," "struggler," "struggling," "trembling," "tremble," "trembles," "trembled," "trembler," "trembly," "tyranny," "tyrannical," "unfeeling," "unfeelingly," "wrench," "wrenched," "wrenching," "vision," "visions."

After comparing the individual parts of *Northanger Abbey* with these "dictionaries," the results show that Part 1 has the highest overlap with the domestic novel vocabulary (3.8%) but Part 3 also has a significant amount (3.5%).[2] However, when we look

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2   The score is the number of occurrences divided by the total word count within the given documents.

at the "Northanger Part," the number decreases to 2.9% because what I refer to as Part 2 has a low number of words that match the domestic novel "dictionary" (2.1%). When looking at the Gothic words, we can see a similar tendency, but on a smaller scale. This is because, whether we talk about Part 2 or the "Northanger Part," the chapters taking place in the abbey have a satiric tone. As a parody, they possess both the Gothic and domestic novel attributes. Still, the analysis shows that Part 2 has a higher score (0.7%) than the "Northanger Part" (0.6%), and more significantly, that it is different both from Parts 1 (0.5%) and 3 (0.4%). While the differences in vocabulary density and syntactic complexity between the three parts are subtle, they align with the narrative's thematic progression. The focus of Part 2 on Gothic elements, though expected, still significantly contrasts with the domestic focus of Parts 1 and 3. This contrast underscores the stylistic and thematic transitions that mirror Catherine's evolving understanding of the genres. If we think about *Northanger Abbey* in two parts, we not only miss a part of the story that most resembles domestic novels, and the one that least resembles a Gothic novel, but also the subtle changes between the different parts of the story.

These stylistic differences support the argument that the novel transitions from domestic through Gothic back to domestic, mirroring Catherine's development from naivety to maturity. The increasing complexity of sentences across the three parts reflects Catherine's intellectual growth and maturation. This stylistic evolution aligns with the Bildungsroman genre, underscoring Catherine's progression towards becoming a more critical and reflective reader.

Catherine in Bath: The Heroine in Training

In Austen's novel, "living in the world involves the reading of people, behaviour, dress and conversation as well as of books" (Butler xvi). The novel begins by highlighting Catherine's progression as a young girl "in training for a heroine," emphasising her literary education as a crucial aspect of her character development (7). Initially limited to works approved by her parents, Catherine's exposure to literature expands upon her arrival in Bath, introducing her to novels like *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the Gothic genre in general. Hence the setting also corresponds to the genre.

The heroine-in-training also embarks on acquiring self-reflection, which in this context is the act of introspective analysis that pertains to both one's own psyche

and the demeanour of others. This aspect of education is exemplified in *Pride and Prejudice*, where a "young lady" has "deep reflection" and "read[s] great books, and make[s] extracts" (Austen 6). In the early chapters of *Northanger Abbey*, the reader learns about Catherine's restricted literary exposure. At first, her reading is confined to books sanctioned by her parents, for instance, *Sir Charles Grandison*, which is among the works that shaped her early perceptions. Nevertheless, upon entering Bath, the setting of her grand adventure, the focus of the novel expands, encompassing not only Catherine's education and transformation into a heroine but also her quest for a romantic suitor. The literary allusions throughout the novel, as well as the works that the characters claim to have read or want to read, show the reigning genres of the eighteenth century. Interestingly, these references also reflect the proposed three parts of the novel, as well as Catherine's development and the changes in style and genre. In Part 1, the references are mostly related to writers of sentimental and domestic novels, like the ones by Richardson and Burney. However, there are also mentions of Gothic writers, as Catherine starts to get immersed in the world of Gothic literature (33). Part 2 is filled with references to the conventional imagery of Gothic fiction, which can be traced back to Radcliffe and other pioneering writers of the genre. Interestingly, some of the references from Part 1 reoccur in Part 3, for instance, allusions to Richardson, Fielding and Johnson.[3] Richardson is explicitly mentioned in relation to the sentimental and domestic novels that influenced Catherine's early reading. His works, such as *Sir Charles Grandison*, are highlighted as part of Catherine's list of literary works approved by her parents. Furthermore, this reference has biographical relevance to Austen, as this was a book she really liked: "Every circumstance narrated in Sir Charles Grandison, all that was ever said or done in the cedar parlour, was familiar to her; and the wedding days of Lady L. and Lady G. were as well remembered as if they had been living friends" (Austen-Leigh 110). Jane Austen left a footnote at the end of Volume 1 Chapter 3, "Vide a letter from Mr. Richardson, No. 97, vol. II, *Rambler*" (22). This periodical was edited by Johnson. Another reference to Johnson occurs when Eleanor explains to Catherine why Henry

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3   Just as the narrator of *Tom Jones* speculates on how the reader might interpret the novel, similarly, the narrator of *Northanger Abbey* interrupts the narrative to address the reader: "I leave it to my reader's sagacity to determine how much of all this it was possible for Henry to communicate at this time to Catherine" (256). The use of the word "sagacity" in this context recalls the moment when the narrator of *Tom Jones* compares Mrs. Wilkins to birds of prey and asserts that "[t]he sagacious reader will not from this simile imagine these poor people had any apprehension of the design with which Mrs. Wilkins was now coming towards them" (29).

is mocking her use of the word "nicest." "The word 'nicest,' as you used it, did not suit him; and you had better change it as soon as you can, or we shall be overpowered with Johnson and Blair all the rest of the way" (Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 109). Johnson was a favourite of Austen when it came to prose writers (cf. Austen-Leigh 110). In Volume 1 Chapter 7, John Thorpe mentions Fielding during a conversation with Catherine, praising *Tom Jones* as one of the best books in the world (Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 43). This is significant because Thorpe himself embodies some of the superficial qualities and bravado often associated with the picturesque heroes in the novels he admires. He convinces Catherine to go on a walk and a carriage ride with him by telling her that they are going to Blaize Castle.

In Volume 2 Chapter 10, these authors are referenced once again as Catherine realises that her earlier romanticised and clear-cut views on people's characters are unrealistic. This revelation occurs as she acknowledges that in real life, and particularly in English society, individuals are a mix of good and bad traits. This is contrasted with the Gothic settings she fantasises about, such as the Alps and Pyrenees, where characters are either entirely virtuous or completely villainous (205). In his essay *Rambler* no. 4, Johnson argues that authors should be careful in their portrayal of characters and situations, ensuring that they present the best examples for readers to emulate. He suggests that literature has the power to influence readers profoundly and that authors have a responsibility to use this power wisely, even more so because the readers who read novels with mixed characters are "the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life" (Johnson 203). These books also align with the ones written by Fielding, like *Tom Jones*, which John Thorpe enjoys in *Northanger Abbey*.

In this phase of her development, Catherine's literary horizon widens to include novels emblematic of the Gothic genre such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Still, she is a "vulgar" reader rather than a "sagacious" one, lacking diversity in her literary engagement (cf. Simon). Vulgar readers lack depth in their literary knowledge and often blur the lines between reality and fiction as a result of their uncritical and superficial reading. However, sagacious readers "possess the ability to self-reflect, which in this context refers to one's ability to distinguish between real life and imagination" (96).[4] The theme of female reading also appears in *Pride and Prejudice*: vulgar read-

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4   I examine the difference between vulgar and sagacious reader, and apply these notions to the characters of *Northanger Abbey* in "Readers and Reading in Northanger Abbey." The term "sagacious reader" comes from Fielding's use of the word in *Tom Jones*. The defining characteristics of these

ers, like Catherine Morland, would not fit Mr. Darcy's requirements of an "accomplished woman," who, along with "what is usually met with," must "add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 27). We may note that Catherine, although being emotionally invested in reading *Udolpho*, still misremembers the name of Emily's father: "Oh! that we had such weather here as they had at Udolpho, or at least in Tuscany and the South of France!—the night that poor St. Aubin [i.e. St. Aubert] died!—such beautiful weather!" (81).

Central to Catherine's development is her intellectual engagement with the world around her, which is subtly depicted through her interactions with various characters, particularly Mr. Henry Tilney. The conversational interplay between Catherine, Henry, and Eleanor Tilney, set against their walk around Beechen Cliff, casts a spotlight on Catherine's distinct reading proclivities, particularly her preference for fiction over non-fiction, notably history. "I can read poetry and plays, and things of that sort, and do not dislike travels. But history, real solemn history, I cannot be interested in" (109)—these words resonate as a clear manifestation of her literary inclinations. In contrast, a deeper perusal of her juvenile essays shows Austen's literary versatility already in her formative years. Noteworthy here is her adept satirical handling of epistolary conventions, which is manifest in her mature works as well (Keymer 80). Austen's juvenile works even demonstrate an interest in nonfiction, evident in her playful parody of Oliver Goldsmith's *The History of England, from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II* in her *The History of England* (1791). From Peter Sabor's digitally recreated replica of the Library of Godmersham Park, we know that Austen had access to the four-volume set of the ninth edition of Goldsmith's book. She expressed her own political opinions by mimicking the writing employed in conventional history texts, all the while subtly satirising the claims of historians to present a neutral and detached perspective.[5] By echoing Austen's own literary experimentation, Catherine's assertion that "[t]he speeches that are put into the heroes' mouths, their thoughts and designs—the chief of all this must be invention," serves as a reflection

reader types are based on eighteenth-century literary sources, such as Laurence Sterne, Samuel Johnson, Clara Reeve, and Henry Fielding, and the works of reader-response theorists, such as Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish, Umberto Eco, Wayne Booth, and Louise Rosenblatt.

5   James Edward Austen-Leigh, Austen's nephew and biographer recalls: "Jane, when a girl, had strong political opinions, especially about the affairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (109). However, in later portions of her life, she paid less attention to current political issues (106–126).

of Austen's own literary philosophy, albeit in a more pronounced manner (Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 110).

However, books are not the only things that Catherine has to "read" while she is in Bath. Amidst the social whirlwind of the city, she has to learn to decipher not just words on pages but the intricate layers of human nature. Due to her inexperience and youth, this is a daunting task and her misinterpretations of people's intentions reveal her struggles. Through its narrative technique, the novel explores Catherine's imagination, innocence, and naivety, showing her youthful idealism. Catherine's infatuation with Gothic novels serves as a literary foil, emphasising the stark contrast between her vivid imagination and the sobering truths she discovers as the story progresses. This juxtaposition reveals the transformative power of literature and the impact of one's reading choices on one's understanding of the world.

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Catherine Morland's Gothic Adventure:
The Power of Reading and Imagination

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In the second part of the novel, which includes Catherine's time in Northanger Abbey, Henry Tilney playfully teases her with an exaggerated and eerie description of life at the abbey, employing the very conventions typical of Gothic fiction. This tale functions as an introduction to Catherine's impressionability and shows Henry's playful purpose to juxtapose the probability and realism with the Gothic conventions to make them look more absurd. Interestingly, both Henry's storytelling success and Catherine's ensuing escapades can be attributed to her innocence, irrationality, and a notable lack of self-reflection. A distinctive element that adds a layer of parody to Mr. Tilney's narrative is its effect on Catherine herself. During Henry's recounting of the story, Catherine utters the same sentence twice: "Oh! But this will not happen to me, I am sure" (162). This repetition, resembling the formulaic expressions prevalent in the novels she avidly consumes, serves to underscore her readiness to employ Henry's reimagining of Gothic narrative dynamics as well as her knowledge of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as an interpretive tool to decode the anticipated mysteries destined to unfold at the abbey.

The reason why Catherine indulges in Gothic-like fantasies, contrary to the general rationale, is not the "wrong" reading material, but the "wrong" reading style, of which we can already see traces in Part 1. Critical remarks about inappropriate reading materials appeared in the conduct books of writers, such as James Fordyce

and Thomas Gisborne, who both argued against women reading novels.[6] The consensus was that the purpose of books should be to educate the reader, rather than create fantasies.[7] In Part 2 of *Northanger Abbey*, these fantasies manifest in a dramatic way. The catalyst might be the change in the setting, together with the unconscious motivation that Henry gives Catherine while telling her about life in the abbey. When she arrives, she immediately realises that the Tilney estate does not hold Gothic attributes: "To an imagination which had hoped for the smallest divisions, and the heaviest stone-work, for painted glass, dirt and cobwebs, the difference was very distressing" (167). Despite her disappointment, she continues to apply the same Gothic attributes to the abbey that Henry evoked in his story. As a result, Catherine, like paradigmatic Gothic heroines, sets out on an adventure. On a stormy night, her imagination runs wild as she connects the inclement weather with the circumstances described by Henry. However, her apprehension is quickly replaced with a more comforting thought about the abbey's true nature: "How glad I am that Northanger is what it is! If it had been like some other places, I do not know that, in such a night as this, I could have answered for my courage:—but now, to be sure, there is nothing to alarm one" (171). This accentuates her tendency to shift between Gothic expectations and rational comprehension. Within her room, Catherine discovers a chest akin to the one described by Henry. Here, her Gothic venture takes a parodic twist, as her quest centres on the chest's contents—an old laundry bill. This ironic twist adds a layer of humour and highlights the contrast between Catherine's expectations and the mundane reality of the abbey. Consequently, during her adventure,

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6   According to Fordyce in *Sermons to Young Women*, "[t]here seems to me to be very few, in the style of Novel, that you can read with safety, and yet fewer that you can read with advantage" (113). Gisborne, in *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex,* claims that women should not hide their intellectual abilities, against which he recommends reading. However, he does not include novels in his recommendation, as even "those which are deemed to have on the whole a moral tendency, a very few perhaps might be selected, which are not liable to the disgraceful charge of being occasionally contaminated by incidents and passages unfit to be presented to the reader" (227). Furthermore, he claims that the reading habits of women "produce mischievous effects" (228) such as the corruption of mind.

7   Mary Wollstonecraft also discussed women's reading habits: "Yet, when I exclaim against novels, I mean when contrasted with those works which exercise the understanding and regulate the imagination.—For any kind of reading I think better than leaving a blank still a blank, … besides, even the productions that are only addressed to the imagination, raise the reader a little above the gross gratification of appetites, to which the mind has not given a shade of delicacy" (216).

commonplace articles such as the chest's contents acquire Gothic attributes, thus encapsulating the deceptiveness of perception induced by literary engagement.

Throughout this part of the novel, the narrator provides parodic remarks on Catherine's actions and thoughts, illustrating the disparity between the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey* and the heroine of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Catherine's character is significantly shaped by her fervent imagination, standing in stark contrast to the rational considerations of Emily, the protagonist of Radcliffe's novel. Emily St. Aubert's stay in Udolpho castle is plagued by mysterious events, which she instinctively feels to be supernatural, while her logic insists on rational explanations (cf. Radcliffe 167). Conversely, Catherine anticipates and even craves the spectre of dread: "Yes, these were characteristic sounds;—they brought to her recollection a countless variety of dreadful situations and horrid scenes, which such buildings had witnessed, and such storms ushered in" (171). As a result, the main difference between the two protagonists is that, as a true heroine, Emily knows that she has to rely on her own sensibility and objectivity, while Catherine is afraid of Henry's opinion while her perception is still shaped by her reading. This is further highlighted when she envisions the potential revelations of the Tilney family vault, turning to her favoured literary source as a reference point: "Catherine had read too much not to be perfectly aware of the ease with which a waxen figure might be introduced, and a supposititious funeral carried on" (196). This excerpt emphasises another layer of parody, as Austen draws attention to the Gothic elements through Catherine's vulnerability to literary influence. Instead of incorporating the wax figure into the plot, she draws attention to it as part of a Gothic book Catherine has read.

At this point, Catherine is still a vulgar reader: her fantasies make her similar to a quixotic character whose "imbalance of reading" invites over-identification with fictional characters and situations (Alliston 255). Her naivety and impressionability make her fallible to the dangers of the novels she consumes. Her love for Gothic novels emerges from the emotions they evoke, serving as a source of suspense and thrill that compel her to engage in speculative conjectures about her surroundings. Her immersion within the narrative fabric of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* triggers the anticipation of suspenseful sequences, resonating in her reflections: "while I have Udolpho to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh! the dreadful black veil! My dear Isabella, I am sure there must be Laurentina's skeleton behind it" (34–35). In contrast to the Tilney siblings, Catherine lacks the necessary semantic competence to properly evaluate the literary materials she consumes (Simon 105).

Catherine's suspicions concerning General Tilney's potential involvement in his wife's demise intensify after Henry's temporary absence from the abbey. Catherine supposes that Mrs. Tilney could have fallen to a similar death as Madame Montoni, who died of fever after Montoni unjustly imprisoned her. Henry's departure removes the prior constraints imposed by his presence, thus allowing Catherine's ruminations to run free of the moderating influence he embodies (Charlton 187). When Catherine finds the laundry bill, her first thought is: "How could she have so imposed on herself?—Heaven forbid that Henry Tilney should ever know her folly!" (177). However, it is worth noting that she thinks her fantasies are a result of Henry's tale, the same person she fears most to find out about her folly: "And it was in a great measure his own doing, for had not the cabinet appeared so exactly to agree with his description of her adventures, she should never have felt the smallest curiosity about it. This was the only comfort that occurred" (177). She links her fantasies to Henry's tale, paradoxically making them originate from the very person she fears will judge them. However, upon Henry's return, their interactions steer her towards a re-evaluation of the reasons behind her misreading of people.

Domesticity and Self-Reflection: Catherine's Return to Fullerton

Volume 2 Chapter 10 is a turning point in the novel, as Catherine's development starts to take shape: "The visions of romance were over, Catherine was completely awakened" (204). Under Henry's guidance, she comes to acknowledge the misalignment between her preconceptions and the actualities of English society, where distinctions between virtuous and unvirtuous individuals are not straightforward; real people can embody both traits. This realisation is linked to Catherine's deep involvement in a domestic and historically rooted environment: "Among the Alps and Pyrenees, perhaps, there were no mixed characters. There, such as were not as spotless as an angel, might have the dispositions of a fiend. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad" (205–206). Her ruminations about Woodston's attributes in this phase underscore this transformation, shifting her aspirations from the Gothic adventures she once envisaged at Northanger to Woodston, a domestic setting: "What a revolution in her ideas! she, who had so longed to be in an abbey! Now, there was nothing so charming to her imagination as the unpretending comfort of a well-connected Parsonage, something

like Fullerton, but better: Fullerton had its faults, but Woodston probably had none.—If Wednesday should ever come" (218). It appears that Catherine consistently assumes the role of a heroine upon entering a new environment. Whether in the abbey, where she endeavours to embody a Gothic heroine, or at home, where she envisages herself as a character in a domestic novel, or in Bath, where she presents a fusion of romantic and domestic traits, Catherine consistently aligns herself with the setting and the genre of her surroundings. This identification with the environment and the appropriate narrative genres pervades every level of the story.

During her carriage journey to Fullerton, the noticeable Gothic sensibilities that had hitherto coloured Catherine's disposition progressively dissipate, eventually giving way to a demeanour characterised by composure and a notable reintegration into her domestic sphere. In Part 1, when she leaves for Bath, the narrator makes comments about the journey, which evoke domestic and Gothic novels: "Neither robbers nor tempests befriended them, nor one lucky overturn to introduce them to the hero" (11). However, after being "awakened," there is no such description: "The journey in itself had no terrors for her; and she began it without either dreading its length, or feeling its solitariness" (238). As her familial house comes into view, an air of tranquillity envelops her, an outward manifestation of her adeptness at readjusting to her familiar domestic responsibilities. The setting of Fullerton serves as the backdrop against which Catherine's self-reflection flourishes, prompting her to confront her previous misjudgements and acknowledge her errors. The evolution in her character does not escape the notice of her mother, who remarks: "My dear Catherine, I am afraid you are growing quite a fine lady" (249). However, she also alludes to the possible mischievous effects of her daughter's change: "I hope, my Catherine, you are not getting out of humour with home because it is not so grand as Northanger. That would be turning your visit into an evil indeed … I did not quite like, at breakfast, to hear you talk so much about the French-bread at Northanger" (250). Here, Mrs. Morland's sentiments encapsulate her desire for Catherine to maintain a balanced perspective, avoiding undue disenchantment with her home environment compared to her Northanger experience. Consequently, she encourages Catherine to peruse an essay from *The Mirror*, in which the author details the negative effects of his two daughters staying with a fine woman. This gesture is emblematic of the recurring thematic role of reading and its consequences within Austen's narrative. Catherine now is encouraged to engage with non-fiction, which she previously disliked. This is similar to what might have happened in her younger years, when

she read books advised by her mother. However, in this scene, Catherine does not get the chance to oblige her mother and her actions remain ambiguous. While she does not explicitly express a desire not to read the essay, her lack of verbal response and subsequent behaviour suggest a degree of reluctance or disinterest. However, her decision not to immediately engage with the reading recommended by her mother does not necessarily demonstrate disagreement or critical thinking. Rather, she seems to be navigating her emotions and responsibilities, as evidenced by her attempt to focus on her needlework "with an endeavour to do right" (250). This suggests that Catherine's reluctance to immediately pursue the book may stem more from her emotional state and sense of obligation rather than from a deliberate act of critical decision-making. It is also possible that Catherine's reluctance stems from her general attitude towards non-fiction. As her mother perceives that Catherine looks "absent and dissatisfied" even after starting knitting, she fetches the book for her. Thus, getting Catherine to read the book "some day or other" becomes a matter of now (205). Still, Catherine does not get the chance to read the essay when her mother returns with it, because Henry's arrival diverts the focus of the scene away from reading to himself.

Eventually, Catherine's progression is rewarded with the customary happy ending of any heroine—the promise of marriage, a characteristic feature of domestic novels (Fraiman et al. 170). This is a recurring feature in Austen's novels as a reward of the heroine's self-development. Equipped with the wisdom of rationality and discernment, instilled by the guidance of Henry and Eleanor, Catherine successfully transcends the allure of fantastical narratives, transforming into the embodiment of the true heroine intrinsic to the Bildungsroman tradition. In the Bildungsroman, "the imperative takes on a new importance," and the idea of an individual's self-evolution and progress becomes a personal choice (Bakhtin 414). This imperative can be seen at work when she does not read the essay her mother recommends, and when she makes the conscious decision to let go of her Gothic fantasies, although both choices are influenced by both internal reflection and external influences. In the Bildungsroman, the characters' development is closely tied to the environment they are in, and the challenges and opportunities they encounter. This correlation is evident in the transition of the setting from the commencement of Part 1 to the conclusion of Part 3, both situated in Fullerton. It is within this setting that the protagonist embarks on her journey of development, ultimately attaining the conventional reward of such growth.

Towards the final phases of the narrative, there is a perceptible thematic shift, where the focus of Austen's parodic intent is seemingly pivoting from Catherine herself to a satirical portrayal of the conventional heroine archetype. Her departure is unconventional, as seen in the narrator's claim that it is Henry, and not Catherine, who feels gratitude. As the narrator humorously comments: "It is a new circumstance in romance, I acknowledge, and dreadfully derogatory of an heroine's dignity; but if it be as new in common life, the credit of a wild imagination will at least be all my own" (Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 253). This subversion of established expectations underscores Austen's penchant for injecting her narrative with subversive wit, as well as her astute awareness of the genre's conventions, which she playfully manipulates to underscore her distinct authorial voice.

The final phase of *Northanger Abbey* effectively encapsulates Catherine Morland's transformative journey from a naive girl captivated by Gothic imaginings to a self-assured heroine attuned to the nuances of her domestic milieu. Through Catherine's evolving character, Austen not only engages with prevailing literary conventions but she also offers a refined exploration of individual growth, and the transformative power of critical self-reflection.

Conclusion

Critical discourse surrounding Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* has evolved over the past decades, offering diverse perspectives on the structural intricacies and thematic content of the novel. There is a consensus among scholars about the dichotomous division of *Northanger Abbey*, which is based on the settings and the two volumes of the novel. The stylistic discrepancies of the narrative tend to be seen as a result of its prolonged composition and protracted publication processes. However, a more detailed perspective emerges when considering the division of the novel into three stylistically distinct sections, characterised by different reading habits, settings, and genres. Such an approach emphasises the evolution of the protagonist, Catherine Morland, while it also highlights the role of reading habits in character development in the stylistically different parts of the novel.

Through stylistic analysis, the essay has revealed how Austen's deliberate artistic choices accentuate Catherine's progression and reflect the narrative's thematic nuances. In Part 1, characterised by the conventions of domestic fiction, Catherine's naivety and limited reading experiences are mirrored in the restricted

syntactic construction and vocabulary density. As the narrative progresses into Part 2, marked by the presence of Gothic elements, Catherine's immersion in Gothic fiction is reflected in increased syntactic complexity (rising average sentence length) and higher vocabulary density. The final part showcases the highest syntactic complexity and moderate vocabulary density, indicating Catherine's matured understanding of the world. Therefore, the stylistic disparities within the text are not merely outcomes of its composition and publication process but deliberate choices to emphasise Catherine's maturation.

By analysing the context of the novel's literary references, the essay has also traced Catherine's development from reading sentimental novels to embracing and critically assessing Gothic stories. The recurrence of allusions to authors in the final chapters symbolises Catherine's integration of varied literary experiences into a balanced perspective. Thus, the division of the novel into three stylistically distinct sections emphasises Catherine's evolution and the role of reading habits in her character development. Austen uses this method to highlight the dynamic interplay between narrative structure and character growth. Catherine's fascination with Gothic novels serves as a narrative device and thematic exploration, illustrating the transformative power of literature. Her journey from vivid imagination to rationality, culminating in her return to domestic life, symbolizes her growth and integration into society as a heroine.

In conclusion, my analysis demonstrated notable differences among the three parts of the text. The first and third parts share similarities in generic terms, while the second part stands apart. Syntactic analysis, however, reveals a trend of increasing sentence complexity across the three parts. This indicates two key findings: firstly, the narrative structure transitions from domestic to Gothic and back to domestic genres, and secondly, stylistic complexity reflects Catherine's maturation. These findings align with my claims that Catherine's evolving readings are mirrored in the genres associated with each part, and that these readings correspond to her growth, thus framing the novel as a Bildungsroman. Thus, *Northanger Abbey* presents a tripartite structure that aligns with Catherine's developmental journey and reflects Austen's exploration of reading habits and their impact on character growth, while the observed, highly genre-specific stylistic variability also highlights the socio-historical determinacy of literary genres and forms.

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Appendix A

	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	"Northanger Part"
Vocabulary Density	0.099	0.186	0.159	0.126
Words per Sentences	20.5	24.4	25.7	25.1

APPENDIX B

Document Name	Domestic Novel Words	Gothic Novel Words	Word Count	Score Domestic	Score Gothic
Part 1	570	219	15099	0.038	0.005
Part 2	111	93	5168	0.021	0.007
Part 3	220	72	6262	0.035	0.004
"Northanger Part"	331	165	11429	0.029	0.006

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Non(sense)-Places

Non-Places in Edward Lear's Limericks[1]

BALÁZS SÁNTA

Abstract: Space as the locus of a game ("field") has been a common metaphor in analysing Victorian nonsense literature: Elizabeth Sewell's 1952 monograph incorporated it already in its title, The Field of Nonsense, *while Susan Stewart's study,* Nonsense *(1978), identifies discursive operations of nonsense-making "within a closed field." However, little has been said about space as a motif (or topos) in the primary texts of nonsense. Although Gillian Beer in her 2016 book* Alice in Space *treats certain spatial aspects of Lewis Carroll's Alice books, the spaces of Edward Lear's limericks are yet to be explored. The paper attempts such an exploration by invoking anthropologist Marc Augé's term "non-place" (non-lieu) from his 1992 study (first published in English in 1995 with the title* Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*). Augé describes a central part of what he calls supermodernity within the context of anthropology, a field apparently far away from my primary concern. Yet it is not difficult to recognise similarities between lonely spots of modern cityscape such as train stations, shopping malls, airplane cabins, or driver's seats—and the places in Lear's poems like the snippets of countryside in the limericks or the Great Gromboolian Plain. Augé's analyses of excess of space (as well as time), especially space perceived in travel, and of places unconcerned with (social) relations, history, or identity, where solitude reigns, ring familiar when reading Lear's limericks and nonsense songs. By incorporating the main qualities of the non-place, this paper offers an interpretive framework for Lear's nonsense poetry that can be potentially extended to Victorian nonsense literature in general.*

"And children swarmed to him like set-
tlers. He became a land."
(W. H. Auden, "Edward Lear")

The last line of W. H. Auden's poem about Lear captures the poet as a site for chil-
dren, his primary intended readers. His identification with a place may appear par-
adoxical since it was Lear himself, like many of his nonsense creatures, who was
always in pursuit of sites—both as a landscape painter and a traveller and trav-
elogue writer. He preferred wide, open landscapes—but what kind of land can
it be that he became? And what is the kind of place that his nonsense created? Does
nonsense have a landscape?

Space as the locus of a game ("field") has been a common metaphor in analysing
Victorian nonsense literature. In *Field of Nonsense*, one of the first accounts of nonsense
literature in English, Elizabeth Sewell sets out to discover the structure of what she
regards as Victorian nonsense literature, or simply, "Nonsense." She finds that this
structure is best described with the analogy of game or play. Games indeed appear
as a central motif in both Carroll's and Lear's most well-known works. Croquet
and cards in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and chess in *Through the Looking-Glass
and What Alice Found There* recur as structured activities organising the texts to some
extent, and Carroll's frequent language games, like the playful rhymes with place
names in Lear's limericks, all underpin such an interpretation. The latter fall clos-
est to that abstract kind of game that underlies the structure of Nonsense, accord-
ing to Sewell. She defines it as a game played primarily in the mind, which consists
in the manipulation of abstract entities like numbers and words. For Sewell, the con-
ceptual space for this manipulation—language—is the true "field of the Nonsense
game" (55). The "field" of this game, however, will not bear many attributes rec-
ognisable in physical spaces. After all, "[i]n Nonsense all the world is paper and all
the seas are ink" (Sewell 17).

Susan Stewart in her eminent study of nonsense is chiefly concerned with
the "'how' questions" (vii) of making sense and nonsense as two opposing but com-
plementary strategies of interpreting experience and grasping human existence and
social life. She considers nonsense "as an activity by which the world is disorganised
and reorganised" (vii) and analyses its different procedures or operations of "trans-
forming common sense into nonsense" (viii). Space features in this context as a con-
ceptual metaphor for these operations to "take place" in. For example, borrowing

Hugh Kenner's term "closed field" regarding how fictions work, Stewart discusses "arrangement and rearrangement within a closed field" (171) as a nonsense operation. Although she observes that nonsense play "involves the construction of another space/time, another domain having its own procedures of interpretation" (63), her essay is not concerned with the physical spaces of nonsense.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle's oft-quoted *Philosophy of Nonsense* does not treat space even as a conceptual metaphor. He is interested mainly in the linguistic intuitions of nonsense literature—the implicit observations about language that would be articulated in the theories of Austin, Searle, and Grice, anticipating "the main aspects of the current philosophical debate, or the discoveries of generative grammar" (2). He finds nonsense to work according to the dialectic of subversion and support or excess and lack. Nonsense, Lecercle claims, is both conservative, "deeply respectful of authority in all its forms: rules of grammar, maxims of conversation and of politeness," and revolutionary at the same time, "joyously" subverting "rules and maxims" (2–3).

Although occasional remarks on characteristic space(s) of nonsense do surface in the critical literature—for example, that escape into imaginative worlds is "a real and significant feature of play" in Lear's poetry (Williams and Bevis 6)—little has been said about space as a motif (or *topos*) in the primary texts of nonsense. Gillian Beer in her 2016 book *Alice in Space* treats certain spatial aspects of Lewis Carroll's Alice books, but the spaces of Edward Lear's poetry are yet to be explored. This paper embarks on such an exploration by analysing Lear's limericks. What is the kind of place that characterises the Learean limerick? A reformulation of this question may help us find an answer. If, according to Lecercle, nonsense literature entails intuitions of twentieth-century language philosophy, then are there any intuitions of space theory that Edward Lear's limericks, as a particular facet of nonsense literature, entail? If so, what can these intuitions tell us about Lear's limericks?

The paper will answer these questions by invoking anthropologist Marc Augé's term "non-place" *(non-lieu)* introduced in his 1992 study, first published in English in 1995 with the title *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*. I will argue that Augé's theory of typical contemporary spaces can inform, in retrospect, the interpretation of Lear's limericks the same way as modern theories of language inform our understanding of nonsense literature in general. For this purpose, I will first briefly review Augé's concept and its context to spell out its most important features, and then proceed to analyse some of the limericks to show

how considering the "non-place" can aid our understanding of the spatial aspects of the Learean limerick.

"Non-place" *(non-lieu)*, a coinage by French anthropologist Marc Augé, is a space where sense of identity is diminished, providing the self with the illusion of a void: like a passenger staring absent-mindedly at the billboards of a metro station, the individual confronts emptiness of space, time, and reference. Such spaces are "designed and intended for the frictionless passage of a nameless and faceless multitude" (Buchanan, "non-place" 346). Augé defines the non-place in opposition to an "anthropological place," where identity matters and is symbolised by means of handling space—like in the case of a church, a monument in a town square, or any other hallmark of communal identity and belonging. There, the organisation of space mirrors cultural relations, identities, and histories (Augé 42), whereas non-places are characterised by the absence of such relations. "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé 63). As one of his critics observes, non-places, in more concrete terms, "appear to have a material form or geometry that corresponds to the architectures of communication or transport networks" (Merriman 54). Indeed, notes Augé, "[t]he traveller's space may ... be the archetype of *non-place*" (Augé 70).

A pun in the original complements these definitions. The book's English translator, John Howe, makes the following remark in a footnote to the text: "The expression *non-lieu* ... is more commonly used in French in the technical juridicial sense of 'no case to answer' or 'no grounds for prosecution': a recognition that the accused is innocent" (Augé 82). This *double entendre* further refines non-places as spaces where the individual (typically a traveller) passes through in permissible anonymity.

The context of Augé's coinage is the cultural epoch he terms supermodernity *(surmodernité)*, whose essence the non-place captures. This is our contemporary age—as experienced in the Western world—after postmodernism (although when the postmodern ended and the supermodern began remains unclear). He defines this epoch within the triangle of three figures of excess, "the essential quality of the supermodern" (Augé 24): excess of space, excess of time, and excess of meaning. These figures complement the concept of the non-place by providing further context to it.

Excess of space encapsulates the experience of burgeoning metropolitan cityscapes, a sense of going even beyond ourselves as humanity explores outer space. In the supermodern, however, we experience not only vast spaces literally or virtually

explored within a short span of time (the "shrinking of the planet"), but also "a universe that is relatively homogenous in its diversity" (26). The author thus captures in spatial terms a globalised, post-industrial cultural state at the centre of our epoch. Excess of time refers to the temporal dimension of the same experience: the shrinking of time, the perception of "history snapping at our heels" (25). A world-wide pandemic and the outbreak of full-fledged warfare on European soil well after the book's publication illustrate this all too vividly.

The third dimension of the supermodern Augé explores is excess of meaning. The contemporary Western world presents scholars intending to describe it with two problems: first, that of the Western ethnologist as "a privileged informant" (32), an individual who, being the subject of ethnological research, is at the same time a member of the society that is the object of study. Second, individuality has always been of special importance in Western society itself—Augé offers the examples of individual freedoms in politics and "an advertising apparatus" (32) targeting the individual. Therefore, the "individual production of meaning" (30), beyond the partly self-reflective nature of its method, is recognised as one of the most important features of our times. Thus, the "individual reference" or the "individualisation of references" (32) problematises generalisation, or the inductive method central to anthropology.

Peter Merriman offers some insightful criticism regarding Augé's points. As he argues, "the theoretical arguments in *Non-Places* read as general theoretical statements," whereas the "generic traveller" making these statements "is the privileged and successful professor, Augé himself," who "fails to discuss his privileged position as a relatively affluent, white, Western, male anthropologist-traveller" (55). That said, *Non-Places* still seems to articulate a real experience, whatever limitations it may have. Even if not available to all in the same form, solitary travel as a routine, by comparatively advanced technological means that provide leisure to explore the space bubble of the traveller, does entail perceptions to which it is possible for a great multitude to relate. In addition, as Agué himself notes in the book, "it is quite possible that ethnology will be straying from the true path if it replaces its field of study with the study of those who have done fieldwork" (30). Distancing himself from postmodern anthropology, Augé observes its "reductivist method (field to text, text to author)" as being "in fact just a particular expression" (30) of supermodernity's individualisation of references.

Another point in Augé's account that has received criticism is the question of originality. In its effort to conceptualise the contemporary, *Non-Places* may seem to be "overstating the novelty of ... experiences of mobility, speed and acceleration" (Merriman 11). The book may display a "lack of historical insight" (Merriman 11) into modernity when associating non-places, their production, and the attitudes toward them, chiefly with late capitalism or "supermodernity," whereas very similar, if not identical, accounts of the sensation of fast-paced travelling are traceable to at least the nineteenth century with the increasingly wide-spread use of the railway, for example (concerning mobility), or the post office (in communication). In fact, Augé does reflect on this aspect of relative cultural change and novelty when drawing a parallel (albeit in a different context) between the supermodern of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and cultural phenomena of the nineteenth, noting "[c]hanges of scale, changes of parameter: as in the nineteenth century, we are poised to undertake the study of new civilisations and new cultures" (Augé 29). While this paper does not intend to delimit the applicability of non-places to late or early capitalism, for its own purposes, it is useful to take up this aspect of Augé's account. The protagonists of Edward Lear's poetry will be argued to inhabit spaces that, if not the same, do resemble Augé's non-places.

One of the most well-known group of poems Edward Lear produced is the limericks. Each of these condensed pieces of rigorous form presents a persona with curious habits who is typically described as belonging to a particular place: an old (rarely young) person (sometimes man or lady) of a place (most often denoted with a proper name). Ina Rae Hark offers an exhaustive description of the structural features of Lear's limericks in her study *Edward Lear* (24–52). She designates "The Old Person of Deal" as "[t]he archetypical Learean limerick" (25) in this regard:

> There was an Old Person of Deal,
> Who in walking used only his heel;
> When they said, 'Tell us why? —he made no reply;
> That mysterious Old Person of Deal. (Lear 331, Figure 1)[2]

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2   When quoting Lear's limericks, the paper retains the spelling and capitalisation used in *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*, edited by Viven Noakes. Page numbers refer to this edition. For a discussion of establishing consistency in this regard, see Noakes, "A Note on the Texts" (l–li). The electronic texts, however (with Noakes's consistent spelling), and the images of Lear's illustrations, are taken from the ebook editions of *A Book of Nonsense* and *More Nonsense* in Project Gutenberg.

The most obvious point of concern with space in the limerick is the place name in the first line (recurring in the last) that serves as a means of identification for the Old Person. He is implicitly claimed to belong there in some sense, at least coming from that place. However, although "[b]eing identified with a place name implies belonging, fitting in with a habitat or social group," as Brown observes, "the protagonists of the limericks are presented as peculiar species that each consist of only one member" (168). No matter what place the old person is identified with, he must be one of a kind.

Deal is a port town in Kent, England. Does this matter, though? Does it have any bearing on the person's qualities in any way or on whatever happens in the poem? We could also ask if having Dover, some nine miles to the south, instead, would change anything in the poem. It seems that the only qualities of Deal that play any role in the limerick are the number of its syllables and the last two sounds in it that provide a rhyme with "heel." The place name turns out to serve only a verbal function. This stands in contrast to its semantic role as a point of identification; in fact, it does not identify the person in any way, who thus proceeds to his business in the relative anonymity of the passenger in Augé's non-place. If that is so, then anything rhyming with "heel" would do—as a place, Deal has no significance because it could be any place; it is an empty reference. It has no real concern for identity or relations (nor indeed for history), so, despite all its rich maritime history, in Augé's sense it is a non-place in Lear's limerick.

Lear himself took great pleasure in walking tours, and it is with reason that Noakes gave her biography the subtitle *The Life of a Wanderer*: "Lear always enjoyed walking—it was the most certain way of keeping off attacks of epilepsy—and he found the world a happier place when he was outside and on the move" (78). This limerick's protagonist is reminiscent of his author in this regard, too (aside from an apparent inclination for entertainment). This is another aspect relevant for Augé's concept of the non-place. The action in which this limerick's protagonist is involved both actually and habitually is a way of travelling, and the traveller's space is "the archetype of non-place." This may account for the emptiness of the picture's background, but also, coming back to words, for the relative emptiness of reference to the town of Deal. This place name, as that of over a hundred others, seems only to feature in the verses as one item in an itinerary of places. When explaining the concept of the non-place, Augé quotes the French Jesuit scholar Michel de Certeau's observations in *L'Invention du Quotidien* (1980), about proper names

rendering places as mere itinerary items—converting places proper (Augé's "anthro-pological places") into non-places.³ Place names, in Certeau's words, "create non-place in the places; they turn them into passages" (qtd. in Augé 69). Augé carries the idea further and expounds:

> We could say, conversely, that the act of passing gives a particu-lar status to place names, that the fault lines resulting from the law of the other [Certeau's term for place names diverting attention from one another in an itinerary], and causing a loss of focus, is the hori-zon of every journey (accumulation of places, negation of place), and that the movement that "shifts lines" and traverses places is, by def-inition, creative of itineraries: that is, words and non-places. (69)

This is exactly what happens to Deal and all other proper place names in the rest of the limericks. They become sheer words in a list, through mere mention with-out any real significance (there is only the rhyme that justifies them), and also owing to a particular sense of travelling, traversing them in glimpses, at a pace hurried by the terse and short verse form that is coupled with the sheer number of the limericks (about a hundred on average per each volume). Hence, the ideal reader of the limericks can be easily seen as one of the "solitary 'travellers' of the last [i.e. the nineteenth] century—not professional travellers or scientists, but travellers on impulse or for unexpected reasons—[among whom] we are most likely to find prophetic evocations of spaces in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense" (Augé 70). It seems that the prototype for the limericks fea-tures the archetype of the non-place.

The words, writes Viven Noakes, are "inseparable" from the pictures accompa-nying the verses in Lear's poetry (57), which is thus both a verbal and a visual form of art. (Lear was also—by his self-definition, primarily—an illustrator and land-scape painter.) The picture itself contains another spatial reference. The Old Person, to the right, is holding a walking stick in each hand and is indeed on his heels—walk-ing, as indicated in the second verse. This, as well as his outfit (especially his cap), indicate an exterior scene. In juxtaposition, the other person, to the left, is sitting on a chair, without a head covering, which suggests rather an interior. With no other

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3   He also cites the writer François-René de Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem* from 1811 later to the same end.

indication of where we are (except perhaps the shadows, which indicate that the light is coming from behind the man on the chair), the scene of chance meeting between the two men may be said to take place in a non-place in a more general sense, too.

The Deal poem seems indeed prototypical in the kind of spatial reference it has in the first line, which identifies both its Old Person and itself as a piece of verse. If it is prototypical, then what is true of it should apply to most of the other limericks as well. Let us see if this is so, and what we can say about the rest.

Together with Deal, 215 limericks were published in Lear's lifetime in one of three different volumes: *A Book of Nonsense* (first published in 1846 with a second, unchanged edition of 1855, both containing 73 limericks), the third, enlarged edition of *A Book of Nonsense* (1861) having 42 additional limericks, and *More Nonsense* (1872) with 100. Noakes mentions the limericks by the ending of the first lines (e.g. "Deal"), which already shows the prominence of this structural part within each piece. Like most of the old persons, most of the limericks they dwell in are identified and recalled by a place. As Ina Rae Hark points out, "[t]he generic designations given the men, ladies, and persons, often linked to their places of origin, constitute their sole appellations; no limerick protagonist bears a proper name (26).

Unique locations appear to be the norm among the limericks with such references. Lear himself must have considered reference to such specific real places specially to his purposes. Only 55 limericks have no reference to any location, and only about 60% of these (32) were published before Lear's death. As Hark observes,

> Lear obviously grew fonder of the geographical associations, since the number of characters whose homes are not specified declines to eighteen in the second series. The use of these real place names contributes to the overall nonsensicalness of the limericks by creating a tension between the actual and the impossible. Many events in the poems could not occur outside the boundaries of fantasy, but instead of situating the action in a make-believe world (as he will do in some of the longer poems), Lear sets them in known, if sometimes exotic, places. (27)

However, we should still bear in mind the fact about Deal; namely, that despite its being a real place, the actual reference, however unique, does not seem to matter at all. Vienna does not have anything more to do with tinctures of Senna than Nice

with geese (Lear 360) or Greenwich with garments bordered with spinach (Lear 370). Even such historic spots as Troy (Lear 88, 93), Sparta (Lear 94), or Thermopylae (Lear 330) confuse an educated audience with their apparent refusal to activate a cultural context any more than the mere mention of the name. Anything we may know about the Homeric epics will contribute as much to our appreciation of the Old Person of Troy, taking warm brandy and soy ("with a spoon, by the light of the moon, / In sight of the city of Troy") as to that of the skill of the Young Lady who triumphed over some large flies that annoyed her. While children, the original audience of Lear's nonsense, may not be (have been) bothered with it, the interplay of expectations aroused and defeated in more cultivated minds undoubtably adds an extra layer of amusement to these pieces. Part of how this amusement is created is by means of the juxtaposition of a seemingly rich field of reference activated by the place name and the discovery of the complete lack in its place, which again results in the negation of reference, the negative of the place—non-place.

The non-place, as Augé explains, captures the essence of supermodernity, as defined within the network of figures of excess—of space, time, and meaning. If the non-place captures something of the spatial aspect of Lear's limericks, then so will these figures of excess, in their turn, be refracted in the *topoi* of the poetry. The sheer quantity of (empty) references to the kind of places found so typical in the limericks (214 locations in 269 limericks in total) is one example of excess of space, experienced primarily through their fictional visitation one by one.

Travelling is the archetype of the non-place, and it is one of the most common themes of the limericks as well. As the place names start piling up in his/her mind, the reader is unnoticeably slipping into the traveller's position as described by Augé. From Coblenz (Lear 71) to Crowle (Lear 369) via Cashmere (Lear 353) would appear to be just the kind of list that Augé's exemplary traveller Pierre Dupont confronts when leafing through a travel brochure in his plane cabin. Lear's protagonists travel by curious ways and means, and the Old Person of Deal's may not be the most surprising. Walking is preferred, too, by the Old Man of Coblenz:

> The length of whose legs was immense;
> He went with one prance from Turkey to France,
> That surprising Old Man of Coblenz. (Lear 71, Figure 2)

Born for the walk, this old man is aided by a walking stick similarly "immense" as the length of his legs, but he seems also to need a pair of glasses, perhaps to enjoy the sights better from a surprisingly high perspective as if from a bird's eye view. That perspective and the pace of his walking (over 2,200 km / 1,400 m of air distance "with one prance")[4] are reminiscent of the travellers of supermodernity as described by Augé: "while we use the word 'space' to describe the frequentation of *places* that specifically defines the journey, we should still remember that there are spaces in which the individual feels himself to be a spectator without paying much attention to the spectacle" (70). This is how "the position of spectator" becomes "the essence of the spectacle" and the places defining a journey become non-places. The Old Man of Coblenz, looking straight ahead in the picture, focusing on the walk rather than the Oriental cityscape diminishing at his right foot, can indeed be considered both a spectator and a spectacle at the same time. His perception of the view through his glasses from high above must be similar to that of Augé's spectator-traveller.

Similar experiences of traveling recur in other pieces as well, like in "There was an Old Man on a hill":

> Who seldom, if ever, stood still;
> He ran up and down in his Grandmother's gown,
> Which adorned that Old Man on a hill. (Lear 158, Figure 3)

If not in physical dimensions, this old man shares in Coblenz's pace and vitality, but also in a penchant for spectacle with the said gown—worn with a hat. Running up and down also implies little care for destinations—being on the move is more important than whatever it is made toward. Such an inclination is even more striking in the decision of the Young Lady of Sweden:

> Who went by the slow train to Weedon;
> When they cried, "Weedon Station!" she made no observation,
> But thought she should go back to Sweden. (Lear 89, Figure 4)

It would be in vain to guess at a reason for the lady's disappointment, but she is certainly taking her time "by the *slow* train" (emphasis added) between an undefined

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4   This is the approximate air distance between Paris and Constantinople (today's Istanbul).

part of the Scandinavian country and a village in Buckinghamshire (or is it Weedon Bec of West Northamptonshire?). Here again, as anywhere else, the rhyming of the first line's place name with the second line's ending establishes a connection that is otherwise left unmotivated, which creates the nonsense so typical of the Learean limerick. Again, the effect is like that produced by the seemingly haphazard list of the magazine Augé's Pierre Dupont is leafing through in the Prologue:

> Waiting for take-off, while newspapers were being distributed, he glanced through the company's in-flight magazine and ran his finger along the imagined route of the journey: Heraklion, Larnaca, Beirut, Dhahran, Dubai, Bombay, Bangkok… more than nine thousand kilometres in the blink of an eye, and a few names that had cropped up in the news over the years. (Augé 2–3)

Change the city names in Dupont's reading for some in Lear's limericks, and little will be altered in our impression. "Denuded of content, of local colour and richness, … place names are inchoate words, mere word-sounds"—Brown's contention (181) could well be about the passage just quoted. It happens to treat Lear's limericks, though, and the way Sweden and Weedon are brought together reflects a similar logic as in the list of cities in Augé. If not rhyming (but notice the charm of the occasional alliteration in Dhahran and Dubai and Bombay and Bangkok), the somewhat arbitrarily selected points of a long journey mirror the pairing of Sweden and Weedon. "The limericks furnish few opportunities for sightseeing, little or no sense of place" (Brown 181), and the young lady indeed decides to go back to Sweden with "no observation." Her attitude relativises even the direction of the route: it does not matter whether it is Sweden to Weedon, or Weedon to Sweden—the point seems to be that we are on the move, like in Deal, Coblenz, or in the "Old Man on a hill" piece.

Untypically named but similarly iconic is the Old Man at a Junction:

> Whose feelings were wrung with compunction
> When they said, "The Train's gone!" he exclaimed, "How forlorn!"
> But remained on the rails of the Junction. (Lear 328, Figure 5)

His fate could have been the Young Lady of Sweden's, too, had she decided to make some observation of Weedon and missed her train back. More importantly, this old

man has an unknown destination or departure, and is aptly labelled after the typical non-place where he is: "of a Junction," that is, a station for more than one train. "How forlorn," he exclaims, expressive also of the solitude Augé speaks of regarding the individual's state at non-places, "prophetic evocations" (Augé 70) of which he finds in solitary travellers' accounts of the nineteenth century. This junction is like the "spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality" (Augé 70), and the Old Man remains on its rails, a non-place within a non-place. This is the ultimate spot of such a space, not even a point, designed rather as a pair of lines serving the continuous movement of the train (as opposed to the buffer); a set of "installations needed for the accelerated circulation of passengers and goods" (Augé 28). With the Old Man's nonsensically irrational staying there in limbo, in between two trains diminishing in the distance, the verses and the picture (Fig. 5) both paradoxically capture another aspect of the same state of mind that is expressed elsewhere by Lear through constant movement drifting without an aim. It could also vividly illustrate Augé's idea of the non-place, if not for the man's posture and face, expressing his exaggerated feelings "wrung with compunction," an image overdramatised for the limerick's comic effect.

The quality of the spaces that appear in the limericks adds even more depth to the same figure of excess. Besides a poet, Lear was also a traveller and a professional landscape painter, seeking wide horizons in his travels to reproduce on his canvases. None of the limericks features a place smaller than a village, but these wider horizons are most evident among the less typical limericks that identify their protagonists with locations other than settlements. Aside from whole islands like Crete (Lear 165) and Corsica (Lear 373), limerick people are sometimes associated with rivers ranging from the Dee (Lear 86, 109) to the Rhine (Lear 461) and the Nile (Lear 102). Larger regions like th' Abruzzi (Lear 79) and Bohemia (Lear 102) also feature in some pieces, but the widest horizons are arguably supplied by the four cardinal directions: the North (Lear 101), the East (Lear 99), the South (Lear 90), and the West (Lear 87, 98). Some anthropological quality typically associated with these locations (especially from a European perspective) does feature in the pictures; for example, the Old Man of Jamaica (Lear 98) is black (as his newly wedded wife finds out to her distress), and the Old Man of the East is clad in Middle Eastern fashion, but what the limerick people do or what happens to them (marrying a Quaker, being killed by the misconduct of their children) is once again unrelated to the location they are identified with.

Such wide horizons seem to be telling of the perspective, both literally and metaphorically, that the limericks represent. This is especially evident in the pictures. One example is that illustrating The Old Man of Philae:

> Whose conduct was scroobious and wily;
> He rushed up a Palm when the weather was calm,
> And observed all the ruins of Philæ. (Lear 167, Figure 6)

Philae refers both to an island in the Nile and to a complex of several ancient temples built upon it, of which Lear painted the Temple of Isis more than once.[5] *The Temple of Isis, Philae* (oil on canvas, with the size 13 ½ × 21 ½ in) records it as seen from the north and offers a very similar view as that in the picture for the verses, only without the palm tree and the Old Person. Lear described the place to his sister Ann as "more like a real *fairy island* than anything else I can compare it to" (qtd. in Noakes 124), an impression reflected in the colours he used.

Unlike Deal, this limerick has more references to the place mentioned in the first line: both the last line and the picture accompanying the text make a connection with Philae, and the Old Person's habit may be seen as reflecting Lear's own enthusiasm. The judgment over his conduct ("scroobious and wily"), though, still seems nonsensically disconnected and disconnecting from the scene, creating the overall effect common to the rest of the limericks. What sets this piece apart from most of the others is the depiction of scenery in the background at a distance, in open air. Lear and his company camped in the temple, enjoying "a dinner party each evening, with music on the Temple terrace" (Noakes 124) during his first visit to the place in 1854, which means he had close access to his subject, but he chose a more distant view for the painting as well as the verses and the illustration, capturing as much space as possible.

The Young Lady of Portugal sets herself up in a similarly elevated position "to examine the sea"—with a telescope, as depicted in the drawing (Fig. 7):

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5   Lear did see the temples on their native Philae Island in 1854 and later, in 1867, but the temple complex was moved to nearby Agilkia Island as part of a UNESCO project in the twentieth century to save them from destruction. Philae Island was flooded due to the construction of the Aswan Dam and is currently underwater in Lake Nasser.

> There was a Young Lady of Portugal,
> Whose ideas were excessively nautical;
> She climbed up a tree to examine the sea,
> But declared she would never leave Portugal. (Lear 163, Figure 7)

Save for two fish in a somewhat artificial close-up (perhaps signalling water), even more distance is observed in the background than in Philae, a fact emphasised by the lady's need for a device to aid her visual examination. The vastness of space is thus even more pronounced here.

Similar sights of the sea are observed in the background to the Young Lady of Firle (Fig. 9) and the feast of the Old Person of Putney:

> Whose food was roast spiders and chutney,
> Which he took with his tea, within sight of the sea,
> That romantic Old Person of Putney. (Lear 345, Figure 8)

While the Old Person's mild romanticism finds sufficient expression in the sight of the sea, the focus being on his nonsensical food, a surprising dynamism characterises the Young Lady of Firle:

> Whose hair was addicted to curl;
> It curled up a tree, and all over the sea,
> That expansive Young Lady of Firle. (Lear 373, Figure 9)

Now the lady's locks take centre stage, and their curling, first up the tree in the foreground and then "all over the sea," threatens to acquire unforeseeable dimensions. *Pars pro toto*, this "expansive" character is jovially merging into the distance and promises to unite with space.

The ultimate proportions of space are suggested in the view of the Old Man of the Hague:

> Whose ideas were excessively vague;
> He built a balloon to examine the moon,
> That deluded Old Man of the Hague. (Lear 72, Figure 10)

About 400,000 km from the Earth on average, the object of this limerick person's examination (aided again by a telescope) is the farthest away, with empty space completely surrounding him in his self-built vehicle. Augé's observation of the changes of scale regarding our own sense of space in supermodernity may well inform the perception of today's readers in appreciating this piece:

> We could start by saying—again somewhat paradoxically—that the excess of space is correlative with the shrinking of the planet: with the distancing from ourselves embodied in the feats of our astronauts and the endless circling of our satellites. In a sense, our first steps in outer space reduce our own space to an infinitesimal point, of which satellite photographs appropriately give us the exact measure. (105–106)

This is not to say that the Old Man's examination of space depicted in this limerick should be taken as a precursor to the cultural impact of space exploration in the 1960s,[6] nor that the concept of supermodernity could be applied directly to the cultural context of Lear's piece. However, the "*excessively* vague" (emphasis added) ideas of "That deluded Old Man" and their illustration do exhibit, albeit in a playful manner, a sense of excess of space similar to that explored by Augé some 150 years later.

Excess of time is the next figure of excess characteristic of supermodernity and captured in non-places according to Augé. Two aspects of this figure are noticeably present in Lear's limericks: fast pace and history, "desocialised and artificialised" (Augé 59), "transformed into an element of spectacle" (Augé 83). *A Book of Nonsense* contained 73 limericks in its first two editions, and 117 in the third, and *More Nonsense* had 100, with most of them referencing a location. Given the short and strict, homogenising form, reading each takes merely a few seconds, inviting the audience to an exciting journey through a multiplicity of places. Covering such a large number within such short time implies high speed, as suggested also by the spectacular means of travelling already explored (e.g. in Coblenz, on a Hill, or in Sweden).

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6   It may be worth noting, however, that the first astronomical photograph, the earliest surviving daguerreotype of the Moon, was taken in 1840 (by a John W. Draper), only a few years before the first edition of *A Book of Nonsense* appeared in 1846.

Time passing on a grander scale, or history, is made into a spectacle in a few of the limericks that happen to feature locations recognised as historic—mostly from ancient times. There are two characters of Troy (an Old Person and a Young Lady), but the mythical city serves merely as background to the depiction of the strange habits of both.

> There was an Old Person of Troy,
> Whose drink was warm brandy and soy,
> Which he took with a spoon, by the light of the moon,
> In sight of the city of Troy. (Lear 88, Figure 11)

The kind of drink the Old Person has and the way he takes it occupies the foreground both visually and verbally, while the mention of the city of Troy, with all the associations it may invoke, remains almost parenthetical, its function being mostly to provide a rhyme with "soy," an unexpected accessory to brandy. A lesser function, it seems, is the play with the potential allusiveness of the name recognised from history by Lear's adult audience. History and myth have no place other than mere spectacle.

It has already been explored how Philae, referencing a complex of ancient temples in the upper Nile, refracts ancient Egyptian times by means of capturing the ruins of the Temple of Isis (the illustration might even be seen as capturing the painting Lear made of the island). There the limerick person's observation of the sight from a palm tree represents the kind of distancing in space that can be interpreted as a metaphor of history being distanced and framed as background, turned into a spectacle. This tendency is taken one step further in the illustration for a Young Person whose history

> Was always considered a mystery;
> She sate in a ditch, although no one knew which,
> And composed a small treatise on history. (Lear 374, Figure 12)

This atypical limerick mysteriously conceals the pseudo-identity usually created by a location of origin for most protagonists. This lack is only reinforced by the fact that even her actual whereabouts are unknown. (The ditch she has chosen in the picture, however, must command quite an impressive view

of the setting—or rising?—sun behind the sea or a pond.) Her work directly concerns history, but it amounts to only "a small treatise," and what we can see even of her book is only its upper half. Thus, history in the abstract, together with the relevance of identity in general, merges into the unknown lady's personal history in the last line, receding completely from view with a possibly setting sun.

The third figure of excess Augé uses to characterise supermodernity and non-places is excess of meaning or "the individualisation of references." This figure can also be identified in the limericks as a recurring motif. It is present in Lear's short nonsense pieces in three ways: through the multiplicity of singular locations, the proliferation of meanings in nonsense words, and the theme of mystery or enigma.

First, as mentioned before, very few of the place names in the opening lines are repeated. This creates an atmosphere of excess—not only of space, but of individual places or particular references, too. Secondly, one of the most characteristic feats of nonsense poetry, nonsense words of neologisms, also display the figure of excess. Thanks to Edward Lear, the English language has been enriched with such lexical items as "abruptious" ("An Old Man of Thames Ditton," 376) "borascible" ("An Old Person of Bangor" 173), "ombliferous" ("A Young Person of Crete" 165), and the often recurring "scroobious" ("An Old Person of Philae" 167; "An Old Man of Cashmere" 353; and "An Old Person of Grange" 359). Although these nonce words do not represent such a strong tendency toward nonsense discourse as in Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky," they do add a recognisable flavour to Lear's poetry and nonsense literature in general.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle in his classic study offers a detailed linguistic analysis of literary nonsense. On the level of phonetics, he identifies the kind of linguistic invention most prevalent in nonsense as that conforming to the rules of one's language (in Lear's case, English) and labels it with the French word *charabia* as opposed to *lanternois*, "the proliferation of obsessional phonemes" (Lecercle 31) that express personal fixations to be interpreted by psychoanalysis. *Charabia* operates with "'regularly' invented words" (Lecercle 31), licit coinages exploiting "the possibilities offered by the phonotactics of English" (Lecercle 33). The neologisms quoted above from Lear's limericks are examples of this kind of nonsense.[7] *Charabia*, we learn, prevails in "the published nonsense of the limericks, where the excessive appeal to constraints

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7   Interestingly, Lecercle notes that *lanternois* can be traced rather in Lear's personal letters—one example he offers is "abbiblebongibo" (qtd. in Lecercle 32), coming from a letter to Evelyn Baring, one of Lear's friends.

at all levels precludes the use of imaginary language" (Lecercle 35). On the morphological level, too, nonsense is found to prefer regular word formation techniques—nonsense words can be suffixed or suggest a well-formed variant of a (non-existent) stem, like "outgrabe" in "Jabberwocky," which is instinctively taken to be the past tense of "outgribe" (whatever that may mean). Nonsense, Lecercle explains, "does not invent in a vacuum, but by imitating and exploiting rules" (40).

Indeed, the coinages in Lear's limericks never break the rules of English, and their endings "-ible" (in "borascible") and "-ous" (in "abruptious," "ombliferous," and "scroobious") identify them as adjectives. The fact that they are not follows from their meaning—the lack, or, rather, the proliferation of their meaning. This is more evident when they are read in their proper contexts. "Borascible" is the word used to characterise the Old Man of Bangor,

> Whose face was distorted with anger;
> He tore off his boots, and subsisted on roots,
> That borascible Person of Bangor. (Lear 173, Figure 13)

Apparently uncontrollable aggression, directed primarily toward footwear, and an appetite for uncooked vegetables suggest a lowness and rawness of character that is expressed in the well-formed but unprecedented "borascible." It reminds the reader/listener of "irascible" with an initial /b/ sound added for alliteration with "Bangor." Formal linguistic rules are duly respected, and it is formal properties, too, that seem to necessitate the coinage itself for linguistic euphony. However, "borascible" is not "irascible" in disguise: it is a different word, but one whose meaning, unlike that of "irascible," is unclear. Unlike Carroll's neologisms that operate by "simply hybridising a pair of existing words," "Lear's more capacious portmanteau words invoke morphemes that chime with broader experiences of language use, whether they be conventional, onomatopoeic, or arbitrary and accidental" (Brown 180).

Humpty Dumpty might boast to explain it like the "hard words" (Carroll 225) in "Jabberwocky," but we perceive that poem to be more propitious without the explanations. There are four whole chapters between the poem's first occurrence in Chapter 1 of *Through the Looking-Glass* and Alice's meeting Humpty in Chapter 6, which effectively separates its first, untainted reading by Alice (and the reader) from the pedantic rereading. The former leaves her with a more

vibrant experience expressed in the exclamation, "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't exactly know what they are!" (Carroll 156). The plural in "ideas" signifies an important aspect of the uncertainty of reference in nonsense words, a creative lack (of definite or clearly definable meanings) that is just as characteristic of Lear's verbal creations. This plurality is akin to the excess of meaning that the reader perceives in the multiplicity of locations.

According to Lecercle, Victorian nonsense literature's most prominent characteristic is the dualism of excess and lack—respecting certain rules of language to the extreme and ignoring some others at the same time. Augé's three figures of excess defining supermodernity and non-places do not concern language use, but they share a parallel dualism. The non-place, besides the excesses of space, time, and meaning, also relies on the lack of all those features that make an anthropological place (identity, history, relations). Thus, the central paradox of excess and lack characterises both nonsense (à la Lecercle) and Augé's non-place. My analysis of the limericks has been intended to demonstrate how this theoretical connection can aid the understanding of nonsense poetry by exploring the kind of spaces that characterise an important facet of Lear's poetry.

It should be clear that the non-places of supermodernity are not the same as the sites of Victorian nonsense. Augé's account provides an ethnologist's conceptualisation of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Western world, and many of the social and technological idiosyncrasies of our times (e.g. the Internet, means of personal mobility, comparatively advanced communications technologies) set them apart from the world that the Victorians inhabited. However, the social and technological circumstances of our post-industrial culture started to take shape precisely in the nineteenth-century industrial age that Lear and his contemporaries occupied. The railway, for example, that features in more than one limerick came to be available to an increasingly wider public—the first locomotive carrying passengers on a public line made its first journey in 1825 in England, about two decades before the first volume of Lear's limericks appeared.

Lecercle's idea about the intuitions of Victorian nonsense literature has opened the possibility of going in the other direction as well. He argued that Carroll's and Lear's play with language anticipates certain critical approaches to our primary means of communication (which also explains why so many philosophers of language turn to these authors for examples to demonstrate their points). The present paper has proposed that nonsense's peculiar handling of space can be seen as carrying

premonitions of the critical treatment of the sites characterising the contemporary. The excesses of space, time, and meaning in the limericks intuitively foreshadow Augé's figures of excess and thus, his concept of non-places. That, in its turn, tells us more about the spaces of nonsense and lead Lear's modern readers to discover the curious land that, according to Auden, Lear became.

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Figures

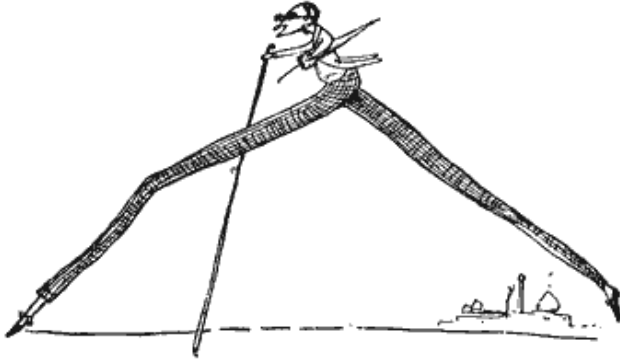Figure 1. An Old Person of Deal

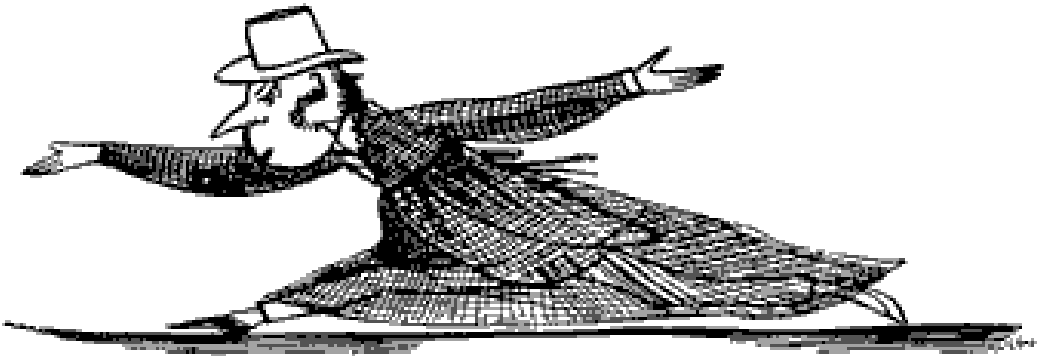Figure 2. An Old Man of Coblenz
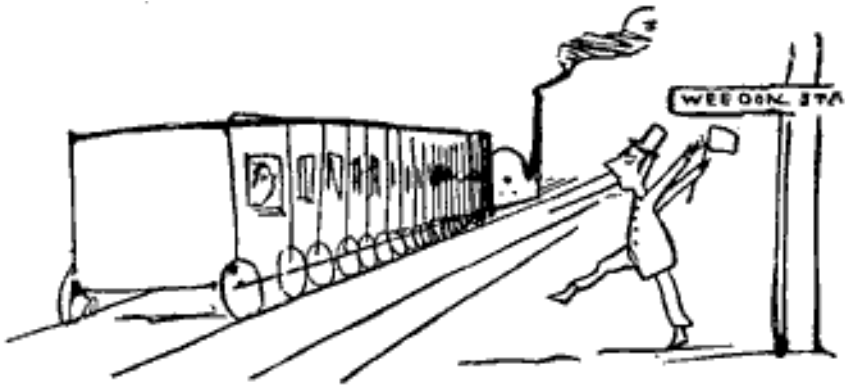

Figure 3. An Old Man on a hill

Figure 4. A Young Lady of Sweden

Figure 5. An Old Man at a Junction

Figure 6. An Old Person of Philæ

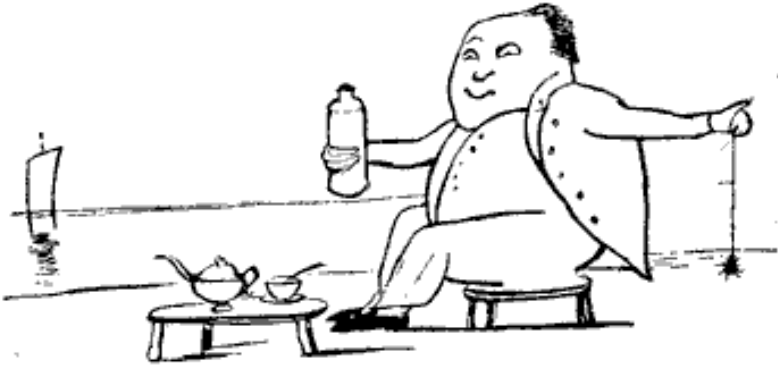Figure 7. A Young Lady of Portugal

Figure 8. An Old Person of Putney

Figure 9. A Young Lady of Firle

Figure 10. An Old Man of the Hague
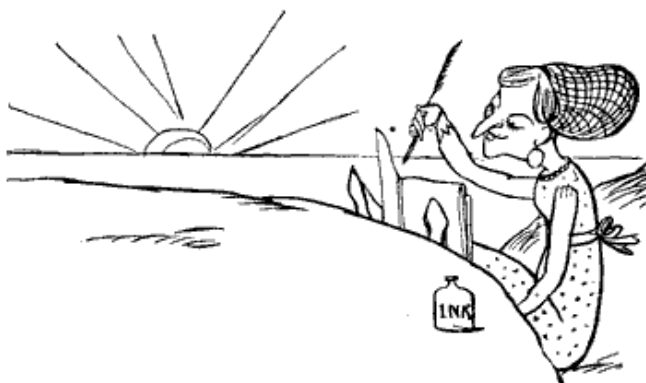
Figure 11. An Old Person of Troy

Figure 12. A Young Person whose history

Figure 13. An Old Person of Bangor

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Cruising and Code

Embracing the Radical Queer and Erotic Self in Eric Stenbock's "The True Story of a Vampire" (1894)

IAN M. CLARK

Abstract: In homophobic cultures, "cruising," or the clandestine pursuit of sexual relations with strangers, is both a pleasurable act and a means of connecting with other queer individuals. This article utilises cruising as an analytical and methodological framework through which to examine Eric Stenbock's "The True Story of a Vampire" (1894) as the author's allegorical effort to combat his social and sexual isolation. Reading Stenbock's text through this subcultural queer practice reconfigures the archetypal "stranger"—here, the vampire Count Vardalek—from simply threatening to also a personification of potential pleasure and queer community. This reading expands upon recent work in queer theory that argues the artistic works of fin-de-siècle aesthetes were a means of gaining sexual self-knowledge and a sense of personal independence within systemic oppression. These critical re-readings call attention to the often subliminal or coded language of queer expression within art; as such, this article posits the benefits of applying queer practices like cruising to literary analysis, particularly toward texts only publishable if their queer themes remain subtextual.

Like Eric Stenbock's polyglot vampire, to be a queer Victorian male was to be fluent in many languages. One such language was the discrete system of coded signals that communicated sexual availability between men; or, as it is called today, *cruising*. This article examines the textual parallels between the subcultural practice of cruising and literary vampirism as they appear in "The True Story of a Vampire" (1894) to demonstrate that the instantaneous and anonymous connection between the titular Count Vardalek and Gabriel, his paramour and eventual victim, suggests

the silent language of queer recognition and pursuit of sexual adventure. Reading Stenbock's text through the lens of cruising recontextualises the anonymous "stranger"—here, the vampire—as both threatening and an opportunity for pleasure and queer community. Though, Gabriel's death reflects that, for Victorians, this pursuit could be as lethal as vampirism.

By embracing Stenbock's vampirism as concomitant with cruising, Vardalek and Gabriel's attraction transcends "vampire" and "victim" to become instead an allegorical affirmation of queer sexual self-expression. This analysis expands on recent work in queer theory, particularly Friedman (2019), that argues the artistic output from *fin-de-siècle* aesthetes was a means of gaining sexual self-knowledge (2) and a sense of personal independence within the structures of oppression that otherwise shaped their lives (3). These critical re-readings call attention to the often subliminal or coded language of queer expression within Decadent art. Indeed, "True Story" evidences that then-illegal queer identities and sexual practices covertly flourished in the works of aesthetes like Stenbock and are now preserved in the autobiographic legacies that are available to us today.

Although I examine Gabriel and Vardalek's dynamic as mutually affirming, it must be noted that this connection is innately coercive due to their differences in age and agency. Certainly, "True Story" is today inextricable from its pedophilic elements, particularly as homosexuality and pedophilia become increasingly interchangeable in homophobic circles.[1] Gabriel's youthfulness is established early and prominently through his relationships with the few other members of his household. He is approximately one year younger than his sister Carmela, who self-identifies as "a little girl of about thirteen" during the events of the story; both are "children of [their father's] old age," and each still requires the care of a governess (Stenbock). Vardalek's age is more ambiguous. Carmela, also the narrator, recalls she "could not possibly guess his age" (Stenbock), but his ability to travel without chaperones, his worldliness, and his rapport with their elderly father indicates that he is an adult who may be even older than he appears. Trevor Holmes suggests

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1   Coincidentally, this homophobic connection is traceable to Stenbock's lifetime. The late-century "West End scandals," particularly the Dublin Castle (1884) and Cleveland Street (1889) affairs, shaped the public's perception of homosexuality as predominantly aristocratic men exploiting under-aged, working-class boys (Cook 167). Vardalek's behaviour is easily aligned with the modern term "grooming," which describes the process of an adult identifying and preparing a child or other vulnerable person for sexual abuse by gaining then exploiting their trust. Grooming also encourages victims to keep this abuse a secret both during and after periods of abuse (Leary 120).

the story's pedophilic elements may reflect Stenbock's interest in a "Classics-inflected cult of youth" (176), thus making Gabriel and Vardalek's age discrepancy part of the neo-Hellenic movement to revive sexual and cultural mentorship between boys and men (pederasty).[2] Gabriel's youth is undoubtedly critical to his character because it heightens his vulnerability as a sexual partner and a vampire's prey. However, his relationship with Vardalek lacks the mentorship element that is essential to neo-Hellenists' interest in reviving pederasty, and so I am disinclined to utilise a "cult of youth" or pederasty as analytical frameworks for this text.

Others have persuasively read the central pairing as an autobiographical experiment in which Gabriel and Vardalek symbolise aspects of the author's life. "Vardalek," Francis King writes, "is Stenbock himself," as evidenced by their shared class status as counts, their feminine and rather unattractive appearance, and their entrancing skills on the piano (qtd. Adlard 9).[3] John Adlard expands King's biographical reading by drawing parallels between Stenbock and Gabriel's mutual preference for animals over people, observing that "[Gabriel's] menagerie at the castle in Styria matches Stenbock's collection of animals at the great house of Kolk in Estonia kept mostly in an apartment under the roof reminiscent of Gabriel's turret retreat" (10). Also in Stenbock's history is the "Little Count," a life-sized doll that he travelled with and anxiously took care of at great expense (Bojti, "Nineteenth-Century Sexology" 182). Zsolt Bojti argues that the author's emotional dependency on the "Little Count" correlates with Vardalek's infatuation with Gabriel, and that their fictional relationship articulates both Stenbock's tragic affection for his doll and an identification with its symbolic youthful innocence (182–183).

I understand Gabriel and Vardalek as fictionalised aspects of Stenbock's anxiety toward mortality and his isolating sexual queerness. An autobiographical reading is further supported by accounts from Stenbock's life in which he used vampirism as a metaphor to understand his sexual and social alienation (Cameron 45). Analysing the text as a literary amalgamation of Stenbock's erotic and neurotic tendencies—tendencies shaped by the homophobic culture in which he lived—reveals Gabriel and Vardalek's pairing to be an exploration of how the search for queer

2   Stenbock and his Decadent peers John Addington Symonds, Oscar Wilde, and Simeon Solomon drew inspiration from texts like Plato's *Republic* and *Symposium* to romanticise an older man's love for a beautiful youth as part of a mutual education in personal fulfilment and self-improvement (Cook 125).

3   Special thanks to the reviewer of this article for introducing me to Trevor Holmes' and John Adlard's respective works on this subject.

community creates both liberatory and dangerous connections, sometimes simultaneously.[4] This tension, I argue, is symbolised through vampirism and its parallels with cruising. Vardalek is more than a stranger and Gabriel is more than his victim—together, they are Stenbock's radical embrace of his queer and erotic self.

Published in 1894 between Sheridan Le Fanu's sapphic novella *Carmilla* (1872) and Bram Stoker's homoerotic *Dracula* (1897), Stenbock's work similarly lives in the rich literary intersection of vampirism and queerness. Written in post-Labouchère Amendment (1885) England,[5] "True Story" was conceived in a deeply homophobic social context, one that forced those with non-heterosexual desires to live, romance, and enjoy sex within the figurative margins. The importance of secrecy, or rather, necessary cautiousness, in reality is here reflected allegorically through Stenbock's recurrent use of homoerotic subtext and its simultaneous invisibility to normative (i.e. not overtly sexually queered) characters. Though, while Gabriel and Vardalek's attraction goes unscrutinised by the former's father and sister, their sexualised bond seems evident nearly to the point of becoming textual; that is, if the reader wishes to see it. To fully uncover the queer coding in "True Story," readers must adopt the pair's shared secretive language and cruise the text itself.

Cruising is by definition fleeting, comprised of ephemeral moments not meant to be captured (Turner 10). As Mark Turner notes in *Backward Glances* (2003), his historical study on nineteenth-century cruising, the problem with writing about this practice is that "it doesn't remain static, it passes quickly, it's over in the time it takes to shift one's eye" (10). How, then, can we apply cruising to a relationship that lasts far longer than a momentary, one-time encounter? Moreover, why apply cruising as an analytical framework to literature, whose relatively static form is incongruent with the ephemeral nature of cruising? I posit that, while Gabriel and Vardalek identify the other's queerness and their mutual attraction through encoded forms of communication, and do indeed create an intense emotional and sexualised bond, they always remain strangers to each other, the narrator, and the reader. This

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4   That their pairing is non-consensual in addition to its coercive vampiric context warrants analysis that extends beyond the focus of this article.

5   This amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act expanded the illegalities of male-male sex beyond sodomy to the more flexible (and thus more easily enforceable) crime of "indecency between males" (McLaren 18). However, the influence of these laws should not be oversimplified; as H. G. Cocks explains, these were particularly public moments within an otherwise "sustained, unspectacular, insidious, everyday and even familiar" process of systematised homophobia that began in the previous century (6).

is not a negative characterisation. Instead, their being strangers allows for sexual exploration without concern toward future responsibilities or the necessary tending long-term relationships require. Further, the opacity of anonymity is an ethical question of how one perceives the foreign, or Other, and thus encourages self-reflection on one's willingness or ability to accept something—or someone—outside of the familiar. In short, is the stranger to be feared, to be enjoyed, or as we see with Vardalek, both?

Cruising responds to this situational friction by discerning and facilitating the erotic possibilities latent in an encounter with Otherness (Dean 179). On the social dynamics of cruising, queer theorist Tim Dean argues that its fleetingness is ironically a means of building community, because it "exemplifies a distinctive ethic of openness to alterity" that encourages us to reconsider the "stranger" as a threatening figure (176). "[The] ethics of cruising," Dean writes, "is a matter not of how many people one has sex with or what kind of sex one has with them ... but of how one treats the other and, more specifically how one treats his or her own otherness" (177). This tension between seduction and unknowable risk is essential to Gabriel and Vardalek's connection; certainly, Gabriel's attraction to the stranger is, from the beginning, encoded as overtly dangerous—yet welcome. This is demonstrated with their initial meeting: "Gabriel stood stock-still, with a startled look, like that of a bird fascinated by a serpent. But nevertheless he held out his hand to the newcomer" (Stenbock). With this line Stenbock positions Gabriel as knowingly vulnerable prey to Vardalek's carnivorous predator, though, as importantly, he still accepts the presence and touch of the possibly dangerous "newcomer." Gabriel's extended hand symbolises his choice regarding the ethical question of accepting intimacy from a stranger. By embracing the unknown, Gabriel is choosing community and all its potential pleasures, even with its potential risks.

More than just strangers to each other, Gabriel and Vardalek are enigmas to the reader and even to Carmela, Gabriel's sister and the otherwise-omniscient narrator. This strangeness is emphasised in Vardalek's introduction, where Carmela describes him as essentially unknowable. Contrary to the archetypal framing of vampires as arcane, nocturnal, isolated creatures, Vardalek is social and "arrived by the commonplace means of the railway train, and in the afternoon" (Stenbock). His appearance likewise defies Carmela's (and perhaps the reader's) expectations: "Vampires are generally described as dark, sinister-looking, and singularly handsome. Our Vampire was, on the contrary, rather fair, and certainly

was not at first sight sinister-looking, and though decidedly attractive in appearance, not what one would call singularly handsome" (Stenbock). From this introduction, Vardalek is most strongly characterised as unremarkable. Unlike the literary vampire forefathers that Carmela alludes to, Vardalek is neither overtly monstrous nor startlingly beautiful; he travels by train, just like any other "commonplace" modern gentleman. Also notable is Carmela's use of "our" to position the reader alongside her disorientation from Vardalek's non-conformity to vampiric archetypes. Her use of pronoun here either encourages the reader to align with her perspective on the queer stranger, or, depending on the reader's orientation, it suggests that the reader, too, has passed her detection.

In one reading, Vardalek's ability to inconspicuously "pass" in human society is what makes him dangerous and frightening—he is a predator who walks undetected amongst his prey. However, such a reading ungenerously situates Vardalek as a purely parasitic figure and contradicts later evidence that he can and does form attachments. Vardalek is, then, the unknowable stranger whose mundanity subverts Carmela's expectations of the archetypal vampire; he is also Dean's theoretical stranger who, through the freedom of anonymity, can form welcomed emotional and sexual connections. Gabriel is similarly opaque to our narrator, despite the two being siblings. Carmela tells us, "I find it difficult to describe my brother ... there was something about him strange and superhuman, or perhaps I should rather say præterhuman, something between the animal and the divine" (Stenbock). Most essential here is the narrator's difficulty in describing Gabriel; even to his sister, there is an unknowable quality to him that escapes and defies established boundaries. His mysterious fluidity, like moving between categories of species and planes ("between the animal and the divine") is likewise represented by his name, which is interchangeably written as Gabriel, Gabryel, and Gavril. Whereas Vardalek is a stranger because he defies expectation, Gabriel is a stranger because of his indefinable qualities and malleable, unstable identity.

Although Carmela can sometimes recognise that Gabriel, Vardalek, and their connection are unusual, she cannot discern the exact qualities of these peculiarities, particularly their latent homoeroticism. This shadow of queerness is exemplified when Carmela casually mentions the Count's frequent excursions to Trieste, a city in present-day Italy:

he always came back, bringing us presents of strange Oriental jewellery or textures. I knew all kinds of people came to Trieste, Orientals included. Still, there was a strangeness and magnificence about these things which I was sure even then could not possibly have come from such a place as Trieste, memorable to me chiefly for its necktie shops. (Stenbock)

It is fitting that Carmela only understands Trieste as an unremarkable place known chiefly for its neckties, an item that is nearly satirical in its symbolism for restrictive respectability. Though her normative perspective finds nothing suspect in Vardalek's trips, closer inspection reveals Trieste to be a signifier for his—and the text's—implicit queerness. By Stenbock's time the city of Trieste was known for its sex tourism industry, but in the previous century it was infamous as the murder site of the prominent German art historian—and notable homosexual—Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Winkelmann, an early intellectual pioneer of neo-Classicism, was killed in 1768 by his much-younger lover, Francesco Arcangeli, who was subsequently executed by breaking on the wheel outside of the hotel in which the two resided (Benadusi et al. 18). Trieste's most well-known affair is in effect an inverted "True Story": rather than the older and foreign man (Vardalek) killing his young lover (Gabriel), in Trieste the older and foreign man (Winckelmann) is murdered by his younger, local lover (Arcangeli).

Should this prominent episode[6] in queer Hellenist history be an origin for "True Story," its structural inversion would reflect the city's reputation as a space in which identities become fractured through the prism of an ever-moving, diverse population. Indeed, the real Trieste was a crossroad between empires, geographically situated at the crux of the Southern Mediterranean and Northern Europe; though it lacked a unifying national identity, the city was "well endowed with a cosmopolitan one" (Benadusi et al.18). In Carmela's above narration, Trieste mirrors Vardalek in that both are defined by their bustling liminality, each constituted by transient moments between "all kinds of people" rather than ongoing, concrete relationships. When read with the city's socio-historical context, Vardalek's trips and exotic treasures become an implicit yet conspicuous reference to what many of Stenbock's Hellenist

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6   Historians Lorenzo Benadusi et al. deem Winckelmann's killing "one of the most impressing events of the [eighteenth] century" (17). Notably, Arcangeli was only tried for murder and not for crimes relating to homosexuality.

peers would recognise as Trieste's greatest scandal. However, the same connections go undetected by Carmela, whose normative gaze only allows her to see the city as a collection of necktie shops.

Narratively, Carmela's ignorance of this moment in queer history prevents her from detecting Trieste's inclusion as foreshadowing Gabriel and Vardalek's lethal affair. Moreover, the passage continues Stenbock's efforts to hide allusions to homosexuality within plain sight of the reader, should they also be fluent in its references. The scene's queer metaphor extends to Vardalek and Trieste's shared fluid cosmopolitanism, a state in which distinctions between peoples evade rigid cultural and political boundaries. Just as Gabriel's queerness is shown in part by the plasticity of his name, Vardalek, too, is queered by transcending categorisation through any one language or nationality. Consider the following description:

> He was announced under the name of Count Vardalek—the name being Hungarian. But he spoke German well enough: not with the monotonous accentuation of Hungarians, but rather, if anything, with a slight Slavonic intonation ... We soon afterwards found that he could talk Polish, and Mlle Vonnaert [our governess] vouched for his good French. Indeed he seemed to know all languages. (Stenbock)

From Carmela's account, Vardalek is a wanderer untied to any specific country or dialect—he personifies the same transience exemplified in Trieste's geographic, cultural, and sexual mélange. Vardalek and Gabriel's mutual acceptance of new experiences and people distinguishes them from the comparatively closed-minded Carmela. It also effectually entrenches queerness as synonymous with an openness to alterity within the narrative.

Gabriel and Vardalek's fluency with diverse and innately fluid forms of communication likewise extends to the body, as evidenced by this physical exchange when the two first meet:

> [Gabriel] held out his hand to the newcomer. Vardalek, taking his hand—I don't know why I noticed this trivial thing—pressed the pulse with his forefinger. Suddenly Gabriel darted from the room and rushed upstairs ... I was in terror what the Count might think

of him. Great was my relief when he came down in his velvet Sunday suit, and shoes and stockings. (Stenbock)

Reading with cruising in mind, the sexual implications of this scene are unavoidable. Gabriel receives an unexplained physical signal from Vardalek (the forefinger touch), and immediately leaves to make himself more attractive in his Sunday best—evidently, he correctly perceives Vardalek's unspoken invitation. In this scene, Gabriel interprets a kindred spirit in Vardalek's strangeness and finds meaning in his subtle yet significant touch. Moreover, the "trivial" physical exchange is witnessed by Carmela but goes unexamined; its implicit sexuality is understood only between Gabriel, Vardalek, and the reader who, like them, understands the language of homoeroticism. Touching frequently occurs between the Count and Gabriel without critical comment from Carmela: the pair walk "hand in hand" in the garden and Gabriel rushes to "kiss [Vardalek] on the mouth" (Stenbock). As with cruising, these suggestively intimate exchanges occur right at the peripheral of normative society—also like cruising, the heteronormative gaze, and, for that matter, heteronormative literary analysis, is ill-equipped to understand what it cannot or will not see.

Physical intimacies are a logical point of inquiry with textual cruising, though other forms of coded queer expression and their contributions to the story's subtext have been fruitfully explored by Bojti (2022, 2024) and S. Brooke Cameron (2021). Bojti connects the historical influence of music on Victorian homosexual subcultures with Stenbock's own poetic adaptations of famous homoerotic music, and further draws parallels to the music described in "True Story." As Bojti writes, homoerotic music, namely Franz Liszt's popular translation and touring production of Franz Schubert's musical "Erlkönig" (1815)—itself an adaptation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's ballad, "Der Erlkönig" (1782)—had a significant influence on Stenbock as both a creative and homosexual. Bojti argues that Stenbock was likely influenced by "Der Erlkönig" and its adaptations as evidenced by the plot similarities between the production and "True Story," which both follow a beautiful young boy succumbing to an older man's vampiric seductions ("The True Story of a Vampire in Context" 159–162).

To expand on Bojti's analysis, musical talent functions in the short story as another means of subtly communicating homoerotic attraction, or even signifying queerness

generally. Indeed, Gabriel and Vardalek share a præternatural musical ability that defies regularity strongly enough to warrant commentary from Carmela:

> [S]eldom could [Gabriel] be induced by Mlle Vonnaert to learn lessons; but when he did so, he learnt with extraordinary quickness. He would play upon every conceivable instrument, holding a violin here, there, and everywhere except the right place: manufacturing instruments for himself out of reeds—even sticks. Mlle Vonnaert made futile efforts to induce him to learn to play the piano. (Stenbock)

Carmela identifies an unusualness in Gabriel's "extraordinary" abilities, though she fails to perceive the significance of this distinction. Gabriel, however, is hypnotised by Vardalek's virtuosity on the piano, his playing described by Carmela as "wild, rhapsodic, wonderful. [It] is the music which makes men mad" (Stenbock).[7] As noted in the passage, Gabriel "seldomly" endured piano lessons with his female teacher, Mlle Vonnaert, a detail that contrasts with and highlights Vardalek's welcomed accompaniment. The sexual subtext most obviously manifests in Gabriel's "quivering" bodily reaction to Vardalek's playing, an erotically charged response that suggests not only their musical and sexual compatibility, but that music—or, more specifically, the "extraordinary" way in which they both play—textually signifies their discrete but mutually recognised queerness. This bond is made explicit by Vardalek, who cries "Poor child! You have the soul of music within you" (Stenbock), a statement that mystifies Carmela, who expects only praise for Gabriel's extraordinary talent. Carmela's superficial musical reading encapsulates how queer subtext operates throughout the story: where Vardalek identifies Gabriel's queerness through his talent and taste in csárdás (and thus foresees

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7   Bojti notes that Stenbock's choice of song (a Hungarian csárdás) further connotes the player's queerness: "Innumerable theorists believed at the time [of Stenbock's writing] that certain types of music had a particular effect on homosexual men's nervous disposition. In gay literature of the nineties ... the *style hongrois* (i.e. music of the Hungarian style) lent itself to the strategic double-coding of the narrative: the immense popularity of the genre in the nineteenth century allowed the kind of music to pass without suspicion; at the same time, it hinted at a homosexual subtext for initiated readers" (168). The *style hongrois*, then, and the "quivering" response it engenders in Gabriel, perhaps demonstrates the physical effect on homosexuals' nervous dispositions that contemporaneous theorists believed such music could induce.

the "poor" misfortune of his inevitable decline), Carmela only sees spectacular performance without consideration for its latent tragic irony.

Thus far Gabriel and Vardalek have been analysed through the lens of literary cruising, though their connection is perhaps most strongly coloured by its fatal vampiric conclusion. Intriguingly, moments of physical intimacy between the two appear in tandem with references to Vardalek imbibing Gabriel's essence, as suggested by the Count being physically refreshed, and Gabriel physically drained, after times they are alone together (Stenbock). Much like Le Fanu's Carmilla, Vardalek's vampirism is intrinsically tied to homosexual activity; certainly, their first flirtation—Vardalek fingering Gabriel's pulse—links the vampire's thirst to a simultaneous physical attraction. Though, unlike Laura (Carmilla's lover/victim,) Gabriel is seemingly aware of his vampire's predation. Why, then, would Gabriel allow himself to be drained to the point of death? Perhaps the answer is the joy and pleasure in being "seen" by another who understands, is attracted to, and reciprocates the queerness that so distinctly marks Gabriel and Vardalek as Other. In a study on homosexual subcultures, Henning Bech emphasises that cruising is, in part, a process of validation. The practice offers "its own rewards: pleasure, excitement, affirmation" (qtd. in Turner 28). This is to say that cruising has returns that extend beyond physical gratification. For Gabriel/Gabryel/Gavril, who was always a "præterhuman" cypher to his family, to be recognised and understood by this queer-identified stranger was an experience worth dying for.

Suggesting death to be Gabriel's intent may appear extreme, but it is not without precedent. In the monograph *Before Queer Theory: Victorian Aestheticism and the Self* (2019), Dustin Friedman outlines the literary reflection of such a grave choice: "[t]he aesthetes demonstrated that it is possible to have a radical theory of sexuality that assumes, in contrast to queer negativity, that the subject possesses a limited, yet meaningful, capacity for self-determination" (6). This radical reformation of self—what Friedman calls "erotic negativity"—allows one to test the "very limits of what is thinkable in one's culture" (4) and envision new modes of seeing, forms of thinking, and ways of being (6). In this sense, Gabriel embracing the vampire is a wilful acceptance of his homosexuality and its pleasures—despite its persecution. Gabriel's price for intimacy was likely known by many queer Victorian readers because his tragedy reflects the ends of notable contemporaneous homosexual figures. Stenbock personally witnessed such impacts with his friend and fellow artist Simeon Solomon, whose various arrests and convictions for "indecent exposure"

and "attempt to commit buggery" resulted in a ruinous financial penalty and eighteen-months of hard labour (Cameron 51). As Cameron notes, Solomon's very public sexual scandals effectively ended his successful painting career, the punishment leading directly to his dependencies on alcohol and financial support from friends like Stenbock (51). With tragedies like Solomon's in mind, Gabriel's death becomes an allegorical reflection for the realities of living authentically as an "out" Victorian. It is not queerness that kills him, but the lethal effects of a homophobic culture. This reading gives agency to Gabriel's choices, nuances the danger of the archetypal stranger, and reallocates the horror of Victorian queerness away from homosexuals and onto those who made secretive processes like cruising a cultural necessity.

"True Story" is an acceptance of the queer and sexual self in that Gabriel and Vardalek recognise within the other a queer kindred spirit; the two share intimate moments and, eventually Gabriel's body and life. This fatal conclusion to their distinctly homoerotic bond raises the spectre of homosexuality's perceived degenerative or even lethal effects within the Victorian imagination—though, I argue Gabriel's death is not the consequence of homosexuality, but of its persecution. In this reading, Vardalek's remark "poor child" can be read as Stenbock reflecting on his youth from the mature outlook of a homosexual who knows the slow and fatal decline of those who live queerly. To read with Carmela's normative gaze is to lose her author's social critique. However, applying underutilised queer perspectives, like the language of cruising, to literary and historical analysis can reveal the essential underlying dualities within this and other Decadent texts.

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Unbridling the "Tamed Other"

Imagining "the Gypsy" in Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction

BORÓKA ANDL-BECK

Abstract: This article investigates late-Victorian literary depictions of the imagined "Gypsy" by examining the "Szgany" of Bram Stoker's novel Dracula. *Contemporary ethnographic and legal sources are also employed to uncover Stoker's reading of "the Gypsy" and the shift from domestic to recognisably foreign roles assumed in works of fiction. This discussion tackles the interaction of landscape and ideology, the historical and ethnographical context of the late nineteenth century, and the general significance of "the Gypsy" in these narratives. Building on the Gothic notion of the de-localised (Oriental) Other, this article introduces a new concept, the re-localisation of the de-localised Other, exemplified by the connection made between the "Szgany" of Stoker's Transylvania and the "ordinary gipsies all the world over." The re-localisation effort results in a shift in the layers of domestic Gypsies' otherness and creates an atmosphere that is ripe for contagion and Oriental invasion, yet is rooted in the ordinary, the "real" that is recognisable to the Victorian middle-class reader. In this article, the relevant processes behind constructing the Gypsy—like gothicisation and orientalisation—are studied, employing a perspective that emphasises the interrelatedness of the Other and the landscape. Together, these aspects of the novel establish a "couleur locale" fitting for the sinister activities of Dracula. Additionally, Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Silver Blaze" and "The Speckled Band" serve as texts for comparison, as they showcase the domestic Other, notably in the role of the scapegoat, the petty, ordinary criminal.*

In the 1890s, Bram Stoker lived and worked in London, which was then the greatest, most developed metropolis of the Western world. Middle-class Brits like him were animated by innovations and inventions that sought to make work easier

or provide entertainment: they travelled on electrified railways, diesel trains, and studied the rapidly expanding Ordnance Survey; used new communication technologies like the telegram; and recorded observations on a travelling typewriter or a phonograph. They witnessed watershed moments in scientific research, and they saw literature tackle these developments; psychology and ethnography entered public discourse and thus the creative agendas of authors like Arthur Conan Doyle or Bram Stoker. This article investigates late-Victorian imagination, including all the factors listed above, through focusing on one narrative entity as construed by Stoker: "the Gypsy."

Previous studies of *Dracula* (1897) have given little attention to the imagined Gypsy, and even when they have considered it, they often omitted the landscape from the discussion. This article argues that the landscape seen in literary fiction and the way it interplays with the Gypsy is paramount to both *Dracula* and other works such as Doyle's "The Adventure of the Silver Blaze" (1894). By re-localising the de-localised Oriental Other to Eastern Europe, Stoker manages to connect both the two geographical entities and the two readings of the ethnic group: the domestic and the foreign. The domestic, "tamed," and the foreign, "unbridled" aspects of the figure are irreversibly linked in *Dracula* by Jonathan Harker, the first narrator of the novel: he claims that the "Szgany" of Transylvania, the wild East, are "allied to the ordinary Gypsies all the world over" (Stoker 50). Thus, the Gypsies seen in Great Britain are recognised as enemies rather than domestic Others; their subhuman quality, the result of simple othering, changes into something abhuman.[1]

Catering to Victorian audiences was easy: the power of Orientalism was inimitable, both as a tool of the genre of Gothic fiction, as a form of exoticism, as well as the manifestation of Western, white domination. Combined with a general fascination with technological innovation, Orientalist views were abundant in ethnographical studies, journals, travelogues, and many other (pseudo-)scientific publications. The innately political Western view of the East also extended to Eastern Europe, thus to Transylvania, as it was a "whirlpool" (Stoker 2) of different nationalities, a quality that was observed by Jonathan Harker as unhealthy hybridity (Bardi 82). The intermingling of people perceived as ethno-culturally different captivated the imagination of many ethnographers and travel authors: some, like Heinrich Wlislocki, Heinrich Grellmann, or Francis Hindes Groome were keen gypsylorists who studied Gypsy

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1   "Abhuman" describes bodies that "have lost their claim to a discrete and integral identity, a fully human existence … a Gothic body—admixed, fluctuating, abominable" (Hurley 190).

folklore in different parts of Europe. These works should be considered as the founda-tion on which Stoker's Transylvania is built: an enormous body of work that contrib-uted to the ideological and material landscape of the novel. This gothicised landscape is unique due to its overtly "foreign" inhabitants. The vilification of "the Gypsy," the attributes that this entity in this Eastern landscape may boast, and the signifi-cance of its presence suggest that the initial, familiar Other has ascended to a new level and has thus altered the domestic Gypsy, too.

Late-Victorian Views on Nation and Nationality

The late-Victorian society of Great Britain is seen by many scholars as one preoc-cupied with anxieties about its future. The Britons' image of their country rested on ideas brought about by the Industrial Revolution and rationalism, the latter of which, according to Said, is "undermined by Eastern excesses" (57). Britain was an industrial, rational, Protestant, modern country well-ahead of its competitors both in size and in political and economic power (Spencer 213); still, recent devel-opments have eroded this confidence in the late nineteenth century (Arata 622). Importantly, this idealistic picture of Britain was homogeneous in ethnicity, and its efficacy relied on the hierarchy established along the lines of wealth and line-age—property and blood (Bardi 78). Thus, the commonplace paranoia of the most powerful player materialises by the end of the nineteenth century because of immi-gration that could disturb homogeneity, as well as due to political unrest in the colo-nies. Such uncertain times, according to Hurley, call for the re-emergence of Gothic fiction, as it is a medium that "negotiatie[s] anxieties ... by working through them in displaced form" (194). I would argue that "Gypsies" highlight this displacement by remaining in the shadows of national "normalcy," thereby constituting an asset for any Gothic narrative.

The imagined Gypsy comes into play as a figure utterly out-of-sync with Western values and notions of space and time. Trumpener arrives at the conclu-sion that Gypsies are outside all Western constraints (843). The time observed by the imagined Gypsy does not align with the time Westerners keep to. Then, in terms of space, as they own no property and are not confined to any given geo-graphical space because of their nomadic way of life, they could not be more differ-ent than the British who have seen themselves as the "hosts" of Gypsy communities for centuries. For example, in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*

(1892), the murderer, Dr. Grimesby Roylott, is one of those landowners who pro-
vide Gypsies with space for their encampments. In this short story, he is presented
as eccentric as well as short-tempered, a man who rather belongs with the crowd
he so readily embraces. This means that the British landowner might have the upper
hand, but he must endure the encumbrance brought on by his tenants. Dracula, too,
is a boyar whose name and land the "Szgany" parasitise—according to the book
referenced by Jonathan Harker, the Szgany habitually take the name of the land-
owner they depend on and "attach" themselves to him (Stoker 50). Additionally,
Jonathan's notes comment upon Gypsies occupying the land of their superiors, not
just their names. Gypsies are also depicted as amoral, "outside all law" (50); they
are presented as immune to the laws that may bind other citizens. Quite like ani-
mals, too, they are "the insensitive, brutal Szgany," as they continue singing cheer-
fully while completing heinous tasks for Dracula (Bardi 89).

In the same fashion, self-proclaimed experts of Eastern Europe and Gypsies,
Heinrich Grellmann and William Wilkinson describe them as "roaming" about
Europe without obvious purpose (Grellmann v), and the Egyptians Acts of 1530
and 1554 attempted to legally define the Gypsies as a problematic group who had
to settle down or be deported at the pain of execution (Morgan 106). Thus, Gypsies,
seemingly unconstrained by Western ideas of space and time, had to be regulated
by law. Victorian lawmakers were deeply anxious about poverty, the conditions
of the poor, and most importantly how their poverty affects the whole of British soci-
ety. In the vein of later Victorian laws, the 1824 Vagrancy Act and other acts con-
cerning highways, canals, and preferable lodgings sought to curtail the freedoms
of vagrants and Gypsies (Mayall 147) similarly to how new housing and working
arrangements targeted the poor a few decades later. Lucassen and Willems suggest
that "with the emergence of dynastic states in Early Modern Europe rulers left less
room for subjects who remained out of its reach" (309). This meant that rulers like
Henry VIII already saw itinerancy as vastly different from the norm, and regarded
any sort of vagrancy as a threat to a sedentary society precisely because of the dis-
ruption, and because Gypsies showed a disregard for the ways of the West. Finally,
these three factors may be understood as the pillars of a nation: a space marked
by borders, a history defined by events that relate to land-taking endeavours, and
a social system built on wealth-based (and thus land-based) hierarchy and cemented
by law. Gypsies are defined by non-synchronicity, as they exist without a nation state;
and, in the nineteenth century, the idea of (homogeneous) nations being "the only

legitimate foundations" for building a state pervaded European minds (Brown 458). Trumpener argues that the Gypsy are excluded from these nation states—when a nation "take[s] stock of itself, it is only the 'Gypsies' who … persist as interlopers" as a people existing outside Western notions of space and time (846).

Stephen Arata and Abby Bardi both argue that *Dracula* is successful in tapping into the anxiety around protecting such nation states, but it is important to add here that there is a marked difference between continental European states and the "heart" of the Great British Empire. The latter, as it was made up of 68 countries and territories (Chalk), and thus considered itself on an *imperial* rather than on a *national* level, feared disintegration in a way that was dissimilar to continental nation states. An empire's integrity depends on its dominance over its own dependents; hence, nationalism in the British psyche is somewhat more layered than in continental Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, often dubbed the century of the nation state (Brown 458). In Stoker's time, the fear of reverse colonisation, the notion that those once colonised by the empire would come to the "motherland" emerged due to political problems in the colonies. Anxieties about the potential loss of property and purity that would result in a heterogenous Britain coalesce in *Dracula*, particularly in Jonathan Harker's notes.

Narratives that rely on reverse colonisation as an underlying theme are "obsessed with the spectacle of the primitive and the atavistic" (Arata 624) and resemble the Orientalism of the period, capturing a sort of thrill derived from "those mysteriously attractive opposites to what seem to be normal values" (Said 57). The most evident manifestation of this fascination can be seen in travelogues and travel guides that, according to scholars like Burke and Light, influenced Stoker's writing. Regarding "Gypsies," Light does not attribute much responsibility to their role in the novel (43); Burke and Tchaprazov, however, differ from Light on that point. Tchaprazov argues that "Gypsies" underline the national anxiety of the period by acting as servants to "absolute evil," helping Dracula colonise the West. In her study of Stoker's potential sources, Burke emphasises that "Gypsies" were already being orientalised in the British Isles, but this process accelerated and turned from bohemian depictions to vilification as the century wore on (58–60); Stoker's narrative reflects this change aptly. "Gypsies," as imagined by the West, are out-of-sync with Occidentals—the trains in the East are not punctual, and the local "Gypsies" are not trustworthy, according to Jonathan, who gives them money but is still betrayed by them. They have no lands, no property, but they could easily take some through

contamination, or more promptly, by immigration to the West. Like their master's, Gypsies' interests lie in movement: as an itinerant people, this imaginary group is able to transport both Dracula and themselves everywhere; only, they do not have to move quite as literally as the vampire does, as their allies are already present "all the world over" (Stoker 50).

Contamination in general was on British society's radar at the time, and Stoker had personal interest in the topic, too, due to his mother's experience with the cholera plague in Sligo (Kiberd 380). Moreover, social reformers at the time sought to help Gypsies move out of what were seen as unsuitable and unhygienic circumstances. The reforms George Smith of Coalville (*Gipsy Life*, 1880) advocated for and his efforts at improving the conditions of nomadic peoples like the Canal Boats Act Amendment Bill of 1884 attempted to move them out of their lodgings for both humanitarian and hygienic purposes. According to Kiberd, vampiric and parasitic entities raise the same concerns as any plague (380): contamination and immigration are often synonymous, and Dracula's invasion represents this "double thrust—political and biological" (Arata 630). The scope of vampirism, then, expands from the individual body to that of the society, the body politic (Bardi 79).

At this point, it is important to mention a theoretical approach to the topic of contamination that highlights a different aspect of Dracula's Occidental project: Jacques Derrida's theory of autoimmunity. Although that approach is not vital to this largely historical argument, it is nonetheless helpful in the attempt at understanding Western anxieties of reverse colonisation and immigration. The story of *Dracula*'s Britain is one of a country that lacks absolute immunity and is thus exposed "to the other, to what and who comes" and can thus expect that something will always happen, and someone, another, will always arrive (Timár 4). Derrida's analogy establishes a parallel between biological and political, similarly to *Dracula*'s narration—thus, it may be hypothesised that the parallel between immigration and contagion is ingrained in the social psyche and has been for centuries. According to Derrida, what underlies the political notion of autoimmunity, then, is the "relationship between the politikon, physis, and bios or zoe, life-death" (qtd. in Timár 4), the very same connection that is fictionalised and gothicised by Stoker. On a slightly different note, however, this autoimmunity may be seen as a disease emanating from the self's body, one that enables other diseases to penetrate the body's immune system. Thus, it is this autoimmunity that political systems often try to eliminate as they attempt to institute a sort of immunity that shifts the immune system's reaction, the confrontation

of the "other disease" outside the body (and thus the West). This is what happens in *Dracula*, at least; the Westerners' group, those providing the immune reaction, displace their fight to the East. The state of Transylvania, at least in Stoker's reading, a "whirlpool" (Stoker 2) of different nationalities and cultures, is an example of what happens when a country's immunity is not perfected to a sufficient degree. The perceived hybridity and (racial and cultural) heterogeneity of Transylvania is seen as a dangerous outcome of vampirism and immigration; its Oriental chaos is what imperfect immunity may result in.

Stoker plays into the Gypso-phobia (Tchaprazov 524), the fear of migration and the Other within, and expands its significance by establishing a linear, evident bond between the exotic, the foreign, and the familiar Gypsy, and steers their existing representation to more xenophobic waters. For that, Jonathan's accounts provide a quasi-scientific basis: by continually referencing his book in the vein of a rational middle-class Briton fascinated by travel and following the general view of Anglo-American gypsylorism, namely, that the "mystery of the Romany may be penetrated by the appropriate reading material" (61), Jonathan legitimises his statements by drawing upon scientific material that would be recognised as a valid source by (Victorian) readers. This book could be E. C. Johnson's *On the Track of the Crescent* (1885), Emily Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest* (1888), A. F. Crosse's *Round About the Carpathians* (1878), or even Charles Boner's *Transylvania: Its Products and its People* (1865), all popular travel books at the time; the main point is that Jonathan felt the need, as did Stoker, to share that it is a rational, accurate, objective account that he seeks to give the reader. The way the narrative strives for such a scientific argument highlights the plan that governs the whole novel, namely, that the reader must be able to believe in the existence of Stoker's version of Transylvania—to further this aim, upon arrival, Mina Harker remarks that Jonathan's accounts were accurate (Crişan 77).

All this preparation, also seen in Stoker's working books that tell us about his research into "folklore, myth, armchair anthropology, medieval history and magic" (R. Foster 226), and his general "encyclopaedic appetite" (Crişan 66) helped propel the novel to great success upon its publication, for the writer understood his audience and their fears and fascinations very well. This appetite for scientific proof fits into Said's Foucauldian argument offered in *Orientalism* (1978), according to which, sovereignty is not enough to rule over all men, instead, one must possess judgment "which means sizing up correctly the force of alien powers and expertly coming

to terms with them" (57), an effort that is, of course, "profoundly anti-empirical" (70). Finally, Said argues that Western science's objective is to "capture …, treat …, describe …, improve …, radically alter" the Orient (95). Thus, the Occidental author may construct a new identity for the Orient and any group perceived as Other through narratives, be they scientific, literary, or legal.

Jonathan Harker, like the novel's writer, felt that he was able to penetrate the mystery of the East through books. According to Said, since the 1700s, there have been two main elements to the East–West relationship: constantly growing, systematic knowledge assembled by Orientalist scholars which was "reinforced by the colonial encounter as well as by the widespread interest in the alien and unusual, exploited by the developing sciences of ethnology, comparative anatomy, philology, and history … [and] a sizable body of literature produced by novelists, poets, translators, and gifted travellers"; and the domination of Western, European ideas in any such discourse (39–40).

Gypsylorism and Ethnography in the Nineteenth Century

Jonathan's account of the "Szgany" and his general perspective throughout his travels resembles those of a folklore researcher; a white European man on a dangerous, enlightening journey, whose mission is to gather information about the nationalities of the region: their clothes, languages, superstitions, and customs. This essentialising effort, according to Burke, resembles the Anglo-American gypsylorist tradition that can be seen in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, a circle of hobby ethnographers as well as genuine researchers of Gypsy folklore (61). The tone of naivety and curiosity conceals the pejorative views behind much of Jonathan's descriptions, similarly to the tone of the *JGLS*. Thus, although these writings opened the door to serious research ventures, some works were, like phrenology, fashionable pseudoscientific pastime for the white, academically-minded middle class and aristocracy.

Ethnographic publications guided their readership to believe that an ethnic group can be essentialised and then researched in a rational, empiric manner, by carefully assembling folk tales, studying their behaviour, and by immersing oneself in the group. In order to find this group, however, ethnographers had to ask for the location of the group, and that necessitated inquiries in the majority society (or at least in one that was willing to name the Other to an outsider). Without understanding who "the Gypsy" is, such efforts would have been in vain; thus, society

had to be able to recognise and name a "Gypsy" before it could be recognised as an authentic representative of the group and its culture. Csaba Dupcsik, a well-known historiographer of the Hungarian Roma and Gypsy society stipulates that there are multiple views on whether "the Gypsy" as such exists or can be named; thus, even in contemporary studies of the ethnic group, we see the question "who is the Gypsy?" appear at important crossroads. In his influential work, *A magyarországi cigányság története: Történelem a cigánykutatások tükrében, 1890–2008,* Dupcsik claims that the classification is dubious (274); still, he enumerates three readings. One prominent research tradition maintains that the classification of the social environment determines which persons are designated as "Gypsies"; another group acknowledges that classification is more important from the perspective of those who have the means to classify; and others think that, if the environment's opinion is the deciding factor in this question, then we all operate on the level of social discrimination.

Stoker was, in many respects via the figure of the Gypsy, able to conceive of his version of Transylvania as a "gateway between East and West, exotic and familiar … through which 'Oriental' degeneration enters the Western European bloodstream" (Burke 60); and, in this process, the re-localisation of the Oriental Other, the de-localised "Gypsy," was essential. Stoker's construction of "the Gypsy" runs parallel with its creation in ethnographers' circles, thus, the latter aspect must be examined first. The late nineteenth century's fascination with nations and ethnicity may be evidenced by numerous historical books, like the series of *The Story of the Nations*, of which the volume *Vedic India* (written by Zénaïde A. Ragozin and published in 1895) may be seen as the capital example. Complete with maps, linguistic, historic, and ethnographic chapters, the first being entitled "The Wonderland of the East," this book attempts to provide a sort of "synopsis at least of the great epics" (iii) of "Vedic India." Such a work exposes the Orientalist tendencies that became somewhat synonymous with the work of any ethnographer while Occidental sources remained the only foundation for their claims. Gypsylorists were curiously silent on social inequality and discrimination when it came to their subjects of study, tackling topics like language and culture exclusively until the early twentieth century, finally realising that Gypsies "did not live in a social and political vacuum, immersed in strange taboos and ancient rites" (Mayall 5).

Longer works of an ethnographic nature, sometimes called "nation-characterology" in a Hungarian context, were scientific, often historiography-driven descriptions of a nation (Kovács 301). As the interest in nationalistic ideologies

grew in the nineteenth century, or the century of the nation in continental Europe (Brown 458), such works gained in popularity. The earliest example of a detailed dissertation on Gypsies as a distinct ethnic group, the *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner* by Heinrich Grellmann (1787) is a work that would later influence numerous ethnographers and travellers. In his account, the German author painted Gypsies in a negative light, regarding them as literal vermin or trash ("Auswurf der Menschheit") who could be distinguished by their extremely strange customs ("durch die seltsamsten Sitten") and their corrupt morals ("wegen eines unerhörten Grades von verderbter Moralität")(v–vi). Despite the romanticised image of the Gypsy that can be found later in nineteenth-century literature (William Wordsworth's 1815 *Gipsies*, Matthew Arnold's 1853 *Scholar Gipsy*, or George Borrow's 1857 *Romany Rye*), William Wilkinson's *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (1820) takes on a tone similar to Grellmann's. Wilkinson emphasises that Gypsies "appear little superior to the brute creation" (qtd. in Tchaprazov 526), suggesting that their domestication as slaves is the only way they could be useful to Westerners. This is clearly echoed in Jonathan Harker's description of the Szgany: he states that they "attach themselves" to any unsuspecting aristocrat and "call themselves by his name" (Stoker 50). As in *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* where Gypsies live on the land of a murderous, once-wealthy aristocrat, imagined Gypsies are unruly tenants entirely dependent on the landowner's will and largely immune to legal consequences. Therefore, for Victorian readers in Britain, the concept of the Gypsy as a parasite only needed Gothic exaggeration and blood-sucking colour to become not only bothersome but threatening.

Such a colour is present in *The Vampire: A Roumanian Gypsy Story*, published in English in the *JGLS* in 1890. Francis Hindes Groome, a well-known gypsylorist and ethnographer decided to publish and briefly compare it to similar stories as a basis for his hypothesis that there was a common ancestor for the folk stories. This attitude and the will to find common threads in folk tales and customs resemble historical linguists' endeavours in tracing cognates and setting up proto languages, activities that were very popular at the time. Following Groome's logic, there may be a link established between the *JGLS*'s publications and Stoker's imagined Gypsies: it has not yet been proven that Stoker used the findings related to in the journal for his novel, but the fact of the publication highlights the fascination that his contemporaries felt about such folk tales. In another story explained in an article of the journal, Heinrich Wlislocki's "The Witches of the Gypsies" (1891), a bloodsucking incident

is explained. This article stipulates that Gypsy witches must always suck the blood of men with every increase of the moon in order to stay healthy (40), something that may be likened to how Dracula and his vampire cronies stay alive. The people they attack "fall into a kind of lycanthropy" and are reduced to animals, as they cannot even communicate anymore (40–41). In a way, the same fate awaits those touched by vampiric entities—monsters that prey on the innocent, much like Dracula himself. It is not difficult to see a parallel between the vampire and the immigrant: if Dracula embodies both in one person, the imagined Gypsies of the East embody these notions as a group of inferior creatures in the novel as well as in ethnographic writings. Some of these works are apologetic and seem to argue that Gypsies, even in their primitive ways, are similar to their civilised counterparts in the West (Wlislocki, "Love Forecasts and Love Charms" 222). Nevertheless, the general tone of the *JGLS* texts recounting their folk tales steers the readers' imagination towards the abhuman, something beyond the natural, not simply below the civilised.

TIME, SPACE, AND THE LAW: RE-LOCALISING THE DE-LOCALISED OTHER

How does the Gypsy, the de-localised Other of the British landscape change in the Transylvanian setting into a re-localised Other? The search for the answer must begin by examining the basic building blocks of the Oriental Gothic genre: the de-localised Other that is Richard Marsh's monster in *The Beetle* (1897), and Stoker's Dracula both exemplify movement from the Orient to the Occident. According to Bardi, the "delightfully exotic, albeit strange" Gypsies of the West are quite different from Stoker's "sinister Szgany" (84), and Tchaprazov emphasises that this vilified image plays a crucial role in how the Count's threat to the Western values of Victorian Britain is framed and understood by the readers. However, previous works on this subject omit to discuss how exactly the "Gypsy" are transformed into the "Szgany," as well as the connection made between the two groups and the interaction between this shift in meaning and the change in landscape.

Taking the de-localised Other further, Stoker's Dracula is presented as an abhuman vampiric figure who is capable of rational thinking to reach the Occident despite his "child brain" (Spencer 213). His masterplan, however, depends on other de-localised entities who are not capable of action without direction: Slovaks and Gypsies, sinister actors who act as his servants and are loyal to him, presumably because they are of the same "race"—Oriental. Still, whereas Slovaks are not an obvious part

of Britain, ever-present, itinerant, and problematic, Gypsies constitute a sort of dormant threat within the Western realm too. By moving the de-localised Other "back" to the East, Stoker creates a clear bond between the familiar, domestic Other, and the sinister, foreign Other. This simple change is achieved through a process that declares every problematic aspect of the "Gypsies" as seen in Britain as something more than burdensome; the idleness and the omission of work becomes industrious servitude of the devil, the rural ways of the British "Gypsy" translate to something more than subhuman, and their connection to the wildlife gets more articulated, or, as Johnson put it in *On the Track of the Crescent* (1885), they are "wild beasts" who are "howling like wolves" (qtd. in Tchaprazov 526). At the end of the novel, wolves follow in the wake of the Szgany, presenting the wild animals and the itinerant people as one unit (Stoker 453): both belong to nature, becoming something abhuman when associated with the Count.

The liminal state of "the Gypsy" and the uncertainty it represents is a crucial part of Stoker's characterisation: as Iulia Hasdeu puts it, Gypsies "belong to an orgiastic space-time out of line with normality" (qtd. in Gay y Blasco 300). "The Gypsy" is liminal: it functions as a sort of transitional state between human and animal as well as human and monster—it embodies subhuman and abhuman qualities and is recognised as a sort of "gateway between East and West, exotic and familiar," similarly to Transylvania itself (Burke 60). The transitory modes of existence that the Gypsy embodies, which include itinerancy and a position apparently outside the constraints of law and civilisation, provides fertile ground for speculation about their origins and behaviour. As the Gypsy cannot be confined to Western values and ideals of time and space, they are perceived as less than human—they are, like many Gothic subjects, dehumanised in order to enhance the sinister atmosphere of a work of fiction; subhuman entities who exist on the brink of society, almost exclusively as part of the *"couleur locale".*[2] The latter is also true for *Dracula*'s narrative, but it is a completely different *"couleur locale,"* a heterogeneous and barbaric, Eastern landscape that they help shape. As a result of gothicisation, these burdensome nomads develop into interlopers within the nation state, more bluntly put, leeches, unwanted aliens in their non-humanity. Gypsies inhabit liminal spaces and liminal bodies: they are part of the familiar, rural British landscape, but they also represent

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2   *"Couleur locale"*: seen in lengthy, detailed descriptions of a rural locality to produce an authentic narrative, e.g. in Mór Jókai's works (Fried 213).

anxiety-inducing Oriental otherness. This liminality facilitates dehumanisation, transforming the Gypsies into something beyond, rather than simply below, human.

Abhuman creatures are the central figures of Gothic fiction, and, as such, they must be built up from both human and monstrous qualities. According to Hurley, the liminality of such entities, especially that of their body, is inevitable for Gothic narratives: these creatures constitute a threat to the integrity of the human form itself due to their liminality (190), and, by extension, they endanger the body politic. This is clearly connected to the paranoia that exists around immigration and contamination, and the anxiety around reverse colonisation. Liminal bodies lack a clear identity and are, by definition, not homogeneous—thus, the rules of nation states cannot be enforced upon them. By extension, this means that Gypsies, as imagined by majority society, are "the avatar of an alien cultural movement whose characteristics threaten Western ideology and English domestic space" and are thus Dracula *by association* (Goodson 21): they abuse the integrity of the nation as well as its citizens' bodies; they are degenerate, criminal entities making their way Westward. Contamination and transformation are, however, only possible if humans already possess the potential to become abhuman, just as the immodest Lucy Westenra is transformed by Dracula through blood contamination. Therein lies the key to the success of Gothic fiction: the idea of the "modern abhuman subject" (Hurley 192) arouses interest and thrill and builds on the fear of the unknown. Like the fascination with Oriental Others, it is also based on ideas of Western superiority and an anxiety about liminality and instability.

There is a further unique aspect of "the Gypsy" in literary fiction that is worth discussing. Trumpener's study suggests that the time frame of any story featuring the figure is affected by the presence of the imagined Gypsies, because their ahistoricity can break the temporality of the narrative. "The Gypsy" exists outside the Western constraints of space and time, and, as such, the time frame of *Dracula* is broken when Gypsies come into view. While Jonathan is trapped in the Count's castle, he cannot keep track of time, and his correspondence with civilised society halts: he enters a space-time continuum markedly different from what he deems normal. Moreover, "Gypsies" deliberately hinder his efforts at communication. The progress of time is adjourned, similarly to how trains become gradually less punctual as Jonathan reaches deeper into Eastern Europe. Technical progress is also thwarted: the superstitions of the East and the lack of proper means of transportation all point to the fact that this part of the world never entered the modernity that the British characters

so readily rely on (e.g. Dr. Seward's phonograph, Mina Harker's Traveller's type-writer). On the one hand, it may be suggested that it is the so-called "up-to-date-ness" of the novel (*The Spectator* qtd. in Arata 622) that is jeopardised by "the Gypsy"; on the other hand, Gypsies help juxtapose the modernity of the West, thereby high-lighting the backwardness and barbarity of the East. In effect, this helps "erode Victorian confidence in the inevitability" (Arata 622) of the progress they see at home, resulting in a novel that depicts instability and the fear of decline and degeneracy on multiple levels—time and space, society and the law, sub- and abhuman enti-ties, as well as the foreign and the domestic.

Gypsies mark the departure from Western temporality and, essentially, reality: their presence signals that all Western laws that Jonathan would keep to are useless in the East. Following Trumpener's argument, it may be concluded that they shift "the tale itself into the different generic mode of the fairy tale" (869), correspond-ing with the general shift in landscape that is essential for the premise of the novel. Gypsies, then, "bring a magical timelessness … into the narrative" (869), thereby producing a unique atmosphere ripe for the supernatural and the abhuman mon-ster. I do not claim that it is only the figure of the Gypsy that facilitates this; nonethe-less, their role in the narrative is defined by their obstruction of time, space, as well as morals, all of which are vital to the success of the novel. Their dubious moral position is evident in their refusal to help Jonathan even when he offers them money (50), and their industriousness while digging up Transylvanian soil to be transported alongside their master (53). They seem oblivious to the villainy of the Count at first, but, as Jonathan's stay progresses, he sees them more and more as genuine accom-plices and servants to Dracula: they are loyal to him because of something more than riches, as evidenced by their betrayal of Jonathan.[3] Like the wolves, then, they are connected to him on a deeper, supernatural level, their bond being their abhu-man, amoral, beastly existence.

As the Count is de-localised as he arrives in the Occident (an "Occidental tour-ist" in urban Britain [Arata 621]), so are the Gypsies in Victorian Britain: they are perceived as Oriental Others, alien bodies in a Western land, even though they have been present for centuries. Statutes issued by Tudor monarchs, like the 1530 Egyptians Act mentioned above, serve as evidence for the centuries-long presence of Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma people on the British Isles; still, this group has

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3   A folk tale published in 1936 recounts a story that suggests that vampires provide Gypsies with a sort of immunity: "the gypsy did exactly as the vampire had told him, and remained alive" (F. Foster 289).

always subsisted on the margins of British society. It is not surprising, then, that their orientalised status leads to gothicisation in Stoker's narrative in a century that is so pre-occupied with nationalistic ideologies. Stoker employs "the Gypsy" as a marker of contamination and Oriental barbarity, but they can bear many other meanings and functions, too. Their vilification in a Gothic narrative helps the reader understand the threat they may pose and highlights their inherent otherness, not just as a foil to the Western norm, but also as a danger to it. De-localisation is a standard element of Gothic fiction, but the re-localisation of the de-localised Other, the Gypsy, lends itself to a connection between two geographical spaces, two imagined landscapes.

The Interplay of the "Gypsy" and the Imagined Landscape

The change of landscape and geographical space undoubtedly alters the domestic Gypsy within the book's realm and presumably the reader's imagination, too. As the re-localisation of the de-localised Oriental Other from the Occident to the Orient occurs, the meaning of "the Gypsy" changes: instead of the idle, petty criminals and freeloaders of the British landscape, they become industrious servants of Dracula, the abominable monster, thereby "maturing" into the villainous, Gothic role intended by Stoker. Their minor misdemeanours on British soil, one of which is the often-mentioned horse theft that came to characterise them in the minds of society (for instance, in "The Adventure of the Silver Blaze"), are indeed insignificant compared to the crimes of the Count. In Transylvania, these Gypsies, so tame and generally harmless in Britain, are *unbridled*. This process can be attributed to the re-localisation effort, and the way the preconceptions of the British public intermingle with the imagined Transylvanian landscape; one that, like all other landscapes, is shaped by the dominant ideologies of its time (J. Duncan and N. Duncan 117). Additionally, Said's term "imaginative geography," a key component of Orientalism, offers a fitting description for the narrative processes, as it features an active construction of an Oriental landscape based on prejudice. This employs the arbitrary binary of "our land—barbarian land" (54); it is the "barbarian" landscape that interacts with the figure of the Gypsy in *Dracula*, both marking a divorce from civilised society.

Jonathan Harker and the other narrators discuss the "Gypsies" of Transylvania a number of times, but the most significant and most descriptive passage is the following:

> These Szgany are gipsies; I have notes of them in my *book*. They are peculiar to this part of the world, though *allied to the ordinary gipsies all the world over*. There are thousands of them in Hungary and Transylvania, who are almost *outside all law*. They *attach themselves* as a rule to some great noble or boyar, and call themselves by his name. They are *fearless and without religion*, save superstition, and they talk only their own varieties of the Romany tongue. (Stoker 50, emphases added)

The motivation behind this brief description of the Szgany resembles that behind Jonathan's accounts of the Transylvanian landscape: it aims to paint a picture that is threatening yet captivating. Referencing a book that exists in the "real world" is important because it legitimises Jonathan's perspective and lends an air of objectivity to his observations. That the Szgany are "fearless and without religion" implies that they can be considered the enemies of the Westerners, a group who will put up a fight and will not abandon their master. This alludes to the last fight between the Easterners and the Westerners in the novel, for it is only the Szgany, Dracula's most loyal servants, who will fight for him in the end. Transylvania is a world that is devoid of "proper" faith and relies on fear: it houses objects that betray superstitious (Catholic) beliefs like crucifixes, and even the placenames ("Istenszék," a Hungarian placename that may be translated as "God's seat") signal that Transylvania is different from the West in terms of religion. Interestingly, the Szgany are not portrayed as particularly superstitious in the novel, and they are willing to work with Dracula—a sign that, in a way, they belong to his "race" more than to Eastern Europe. The topic of religion was not unfamiliar to Stoker: his Irish heritage contributed to a complex perspective on the debates between Protestants and Catholics. Stoker was of loyalist Protestant circles but obviously felt connected to the Irish Catholic tradition and at the very least was fascinated by their seemingly (from a Protestant perspective) superstitious customs (Kiberd 383). Still, although Western notions of religion, morality and law are all challenged in *Dracula*, it is the latter two that are the most relevant to the discussion of Gypsies in the novel.

Legality plays a crucial role in the narrative: Dracula is clearly acting criminally, the Szgany are aiding him through potentially illegal means, and Westerners can break any law whenever deemed necessary in their fight against evil. They break into Dracula's house in London (ch. 22), and they murder what is left of Lucy Westenra (ch. 16), all to save her from the indignity of vampirism. "Gypsies" are

quite different, however, as they are neither Westerners nor supernatural beings in the same fashion as Dracula is, and they are imagined by Jonathan as lowly people outside law and without principle. It has already been ascertained when studying the 1824 Vagrancy Act, the 1884 Canal Boats Act Amendment Bill or the Egyptians Acts that Gypsies had been considered immoral trespassers, thieves, and scroungers for centuries; in *Dracula*, their collaboration with the vampire Count elevates their existence into the realm of amorality. Being *outside* law, being amoral, is more threatening than being against or at odds with the police, a position that British, domestic Gypsies often occupy in fiction. These two iterations of "Gypsy" criminality, the unbridled and the tamed, are inextricably linked: the Szgany are "allied to the ordinary gipsies all the world over" (Stoker 50). This apparently evident bond makes a connection between the two landscapes appear just as natural, indicating that the gruesome, criminal events that happen in the Orient are just as likely to happen in the Occident if a state of perfect immunity to outsiders, even the tamed ones, is not attained.

The change in landscapes accompanies the change of the Gypsy. Put differently, the two imagined entities affect one another during their shared effort of orientalisation and gothicisation within the novel, both of which are not only furthered by the two entities, but also affect the two in separate ways. The Transylvanian landscape immerses the Gypsy, with the sound of the Szgany contributing to the sinister atmosphere. Jonathan writes that "in the courtyard and down the rocky way the roll of heavy wheels, the crack of whips, and the chorus of the Szgany as they pass into the distance" (Stoker 63) can be heard, with all the sounds mentioned having a violent, barbaric undertone. The presence of Gypsies helps the reader grasp just how backward Transylvania is, and, as they are creeping and roaming within the natural landscape like animals, their voices combine with the howling of the mysterious, aggressive Transylvanian wolves (Johnson qtd. in Tchaprazov 526).

Already in A. F. Crosse's 1878 account of the Carpathians and the people of the region there is a clear indication of Gypsies being different from their counterparts in the British Isles. Crosse writes that this group behaved similarly to those in England, but in the same sentence, he points out that "here they were far less civilised than with us" (143). This implies that there is a connection between the two groups that are otherwise quite different. As the region is less civilised than Britain, the barbarian character of Gypsies can be more overt in the Orient. Once they are re-localised closer to their "origins," they become less disciplined: the society

in which they are still only marginal players is itself less policed than Britain is, and hence it is more corrupt, giving the Gypsies more freedom and even some power.

Crosse's observations and Jonathan's initial description of the Szgany tell a similar tale of the group's position in the region. Crosse claims that Gypsies are "legally free, but they attach themselves peculiarly to the Magyars, from a profound respect they have for everything that is aristocratic" (147), a notion mirrored in British society (e.g. in Doyle's *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*). Their attachment alludes to the vampiric sense of the word—Dracula attaches himself to Jonathan, using his professional abilities to move to the Occident. He acquires estates in England to attach himself to the land and brings his own Transylvanian soil; he enlists Lucy Westenra as one of his vampire gang after attaching himself to her through blood contamination; and he also succeeds in attaching himself to Mina Harker who gives birth to a child after she has become related to Dracula by blood: "flesh of [his] flesh; blood of [his] blood; kin of [his] kin" (Stoker 306). The same contamination is raised as a possibility with Gypsies: not only do they inhabit both landscapes, they also always carry their otherness in their blood, as if importing the Oriental evil to Britain. Their parasitic qualities are, however, not limited to their Occidental existence—they also latch onto the noblemen of the East.

The Szgany, in addition to becoming more barbaric, are also different in terms of activity: they are industrious and more involved in serious criminality than their British counterparts. Contemporary crime fiction, particularly Sherlock Holmes stories, dismiss any suggestion that Gypsies could be serious suspects in complex cases: they are unable to hatch criminal conspiracies worthy of Holmes' deductive powers. In Transylvania, they may be accomplices rather than masterminds, nevertheless, they are neither idle nor petty criminals. The Eastern Gypsy does not seem selfish or hungry for riches: their only objective is to aid Dracula until his eventual demise and afterwards to flee as quickly as possible, disappearing into the Transylvanian landscape. Gypsies, according to Bardi, function as "a frame for the novel's transactions," "conduits," and "catalysts" for action (90–91); therefore, their significance as labourers in the plot extends to narrative functions as well. By "transactions," Bardi means both that of the soil and that of lives; however, the transfer of Dracula and the essential mobility that the Gypsies lend him exemplify this role the best. The "merry voices" of the Gypsies who sing while working for the absolute evil showcase their insensitivity as well as the contradiction that is at the core of their constructed identity, evident especially when the Eastern and Western characteristics

are compared. Laborious, life-threatening, parasitic, overtly evil in the East, idle, bothersome, marginal, and petty in the West, "the Gypsy" has a unique quality as an Other in both literary and ethnographic fiction. Crosse, for instance, claims that Gypsies have "an incurable habit of pilfering here as elsewhere; yet they can be trusted as messengers and carriers" (147), a statement that points to the heart of this contradiction. Despite their diligence as messengers, the Szgany of *Dracula* do not help Jonathan with taking his letters; instead, they serve the monster they depend upon, easily betraying Jonathan even though he paid for their services. Crosse also depicts Gypsies as petty intruders and thieves as he summarises the *status quo* of Eastern Europe: "never is a door left unlocked but a gipsy will steal in, to your cost" (147).

One might say that the process described in this article is a simple projection of all the prejudices that already exist, an extreme example of Orientalism, or misreading by ethnographers, travel writers, even by Stoker. All of these claims are true, of course, but "the Gypsy" is interesting because of its layers, and it is these layers that shift completely when it interacts with a similarly gothicised and orientalised landscape. Landscapes can be seen as texts, narratives that are transformations of ideologies into a concrete form (J. Duncan and N. Duncan 118); a landscape change, then, enables a change in ideology to become material. In the case of *Dracula*, the ideologically loaded East–West opposition that is translated into the depiction of Gypsies is also seen in the Transylvanian landscape which endures the same violation to its idyllic identity. What is more, the actual Transylvania, a landscape that has been written about and thus written *over* by the West, is irreversibly transformed. As opposed to the wilderness of rural Britain that the "roaming gypsies" inhabit in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Silver Blaze," Transylvania is foreign, and is a setting for "fairytales" (Crişan 73) rather than a space of nostalgia for pre-industrialisation Britain.

A nation-positive nostalgia is key to several Sherlock Holmes stories that take place in the countryside; Gypsies are depicted in at least four such stories: "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892), "The Silver Blaze" (1894), "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (1902), and "The Priory School" (1904). In these works, Gypsies are curiously represented in a more favourable, less derogatory light than in other nineteenth-century texts (Goodson 17). Thus, there is a marked difference between a depiction of the Gypsy in a domestic setting and in *Dracula*'s Transylvania, a fact that may be accounted for by a nostalgic view of the British countryside. Consequently,

it could be supposed that landscapes determine (or at least influence) the representation of the Gypsy: although both Doyle and Stoker paint pictures of the rural Gothic in their works, only the latter can be classified as Orientalist Gothic, as the landscapes of *Dracula* and Doyle's stories have dissimilar effects on the *"couleur locale"* and thus the Gypsy, too. In Doyle's short stories, the reader does not confront the Orient through "the Gypsy" because readerly prejudice operates within a British landscape that is clearly dominated and understood by Westerners; "the Gypsy" remains a de-localised Other whose otherness in this setting is somewhat softened, tamed. The Gypsies are still confined to the margins of society, but they have their assigned place, mostly out of sight of the white British population.

The abhuman character that is added through their re-localisation to the East is significant because it shows poignantly what changes: Doyle's Gypsy is utterly domestic, a petty criminal and a scapegoat who helps define the norm through its otherness; it is quaint, idyllic, and constitutes what is known as the *"couleur locale,"* making the landscape appear both realistic and mysterious. Stoker's Gypsy, on the other hand, has a name that underlines its foreignness (Szgany), is wolf-like, industrious, allied to the absolute, supernatural evil, and presents a serious threat to the Western norm, symbolising lost control as well as contamination. This imaginary contamination comes alive in the Transylvanian region due to its ethnic heterogeneity and its corrupted landscape in which Gypsies are free to roam about. When Jonathan exclaims, "away from this cursed spot, from this cursed land, where the devil and his children still walk with earthly feet!" (Stoker 63), his words betray his emotions and prejudices. It is the *land and its people* that threaten the West: the Szgany, sometimes called "the children of Cain,"[4] just as much as Dracula himself, are the devil, and it is Transylvania where they "still walk with earthly feet."

Conclusion

"Gypsies" as itinerant people have been present in Britain for centuries, but their reputation as petty criminals and subhuman Others excluded them from the realm of Gothic monstrosity and confined them to the *"couleur locale."* Through a change

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4   One of the first written accounts of Gypsies, penned by an Irish monk visiting the island of Crete, Symon Semeonis, uses negative, religiously loaded expressions like Jonathan's: "[they] assert themselves to be of the race of Cain … as if cursed by God … they wander … from cave to cave" (Semeonis qtd. in Murphy 61).

in landscape, they became abhuman creatures and have thus ascended to the level of the Oriental Gothic. As such, their presence in Stoker's Transylvania is paramount to the apparent danger of the region and its Oriental ways: Gypsies in the Orient come to embody Westerners' fears of contamination, especially because of their involvement with the absolute evil of the novel, Count Dracula. Their newly-assumed abhuman character, their association with Dracula and the near-super-natural wolves, and their industriousness enhance the threat they pose to Western society, especially when their potential movement is considered. Even worse for the Victorian anxieties about reverse colonisation, the Szgany do not even have to move; on the one hand, their objective is to provide Dracula with the appropriate means of transport and to move his boxes of soil within Transylvania, thus, they contribute to an essential phase of Dracula's invasion of the Occident. On the other hand, and arguably more frighteningly, they are already present in the British Isles in an equally problematic, albeit less threatening form. Jonathan Harker's notes connect the recognisably foreign Others to the domestic Gypsies of the West by stating that the Szgany are "allied to the ordinary gipsies all the world over" (Stoker 50).

Gypsies have already been orientalised Others in the British landscape, "roaming" (Doyle, *The Silver Blaze* 9) in the British moorland in *The Adventure of the Silver Blaze* or misbehaving on the land of impoverished aristocrats in *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*. However, their Oriental quality becomes more distinct as soon as they are re-localised to an Eastern European landscape. As de-localised Others, Gypsies wreak havoc in the Occident; still, without their Oriental, abhuman, devilish characteristics assumed in Transylvania, they appear tame, idle, and bothersome rather than threatening. The re-localisation of the de-localised Other, then, is the key to how "the Gypsy" is altered in Victorian imagination: through this effort, Gypsies are transformed into villains appropriate for Gothic fiction. The origins of the versatility of Gypsies can be found in their alleged non-synchronicity with Western ideals of time, space, and law, for they exist on the margins, in the shadows of normalcy within the Occidental realm. They are a "people without history" (Trumpener 843), a blank space that may be filled with both domestic, familiar, and foreign, threatening qualities, depending on which side of the "our land—barbarian land" (Said 54) binary they are located on.

Ethnographers and travel writers have long been fascinated by Gypsies, and their interest in the ethnic group coincided with the increasing appeal of the concept of the nation state. Authors like Wilkinson, Johnson, or Crosse visited Transylvania

and reported on what they identified as local Gypsies, a group that they observed with a rather xenophobic lens, inspiring authors of fiction like Stoker. As the Victorian national anxiety became more prominent in the nineteenth century, so did the field of ethnography; the public wanted to know more about the Orient and its people and describe them accurately, but they were also frightened of the unknown. Therefore, it may be established that the same paradox of Gothic fiction, the combination of thrill and horror governed both the public and the ethnographic discourse. Both ethnographers and authors of fiction were eager to "capture …, describe …, radically alter" the Orient and the Oriental Other (Said 95); hence, "Gypsies" and the "Szgany" are virtually voiceless in both fictional and (pseudo-)scientific texts. In addition, gypsylorists, like Wlislocki or Groome, provided the public with Gypsy folk tales and reports on the customs of Gypsies, thereby reinforcing the power of the category "Gypsy" itself and the foreignness of the ethnic group.

As Gypsies are re-localised to the Orient, their abhuman characters emerge. Connected by Jonathan to their "allies" in the West, their threat becomes evident: they might contaminate and weaken the nation, a very concerning thought in an era of political upheaval in the colonies. In Eastern Europe, "the Gypsy" becomes unbridled, and the tamed Other of the West develops into the enemy within, the first step in the effort of reverse colonisation.

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"What, then, was my new friend?"

Self-Censorship and Narrative Elements of Discursive Limitations in Edward-Prime Stevenson's *Imre: A Memorandum*

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Abstract: Edward Prime-Stevenson's novel, Imre: A Memorandum *(1906), is a recollection of the unfolding relationship between a Hungarian soldier, Imre, and Oswald, an Englishman, whose first-person narration conveys the story through a unique perspective. The novelette functions as a piece of educational literature that aims to break away from the earlier stereotypes of homosexuality's portrayal, especially of Wildean stereotypes, which, according to Prime-Stevenson, only fuel the negative connotations attached to same-sex desire. The advancement of the narrative is influenced by three main reasons: the book as a piece of educational literature, the restricted and strictly controlled speakable discourse on homosexuality, and Oswald's experience told from his point of view. The aim of the paper is to argue that the speakability of homosexuality is only possible in a self-censored narrative frame, which pre-emptively decides the limits of the discourse that can be spoken. First, I present Judith Butler's interpretation of the 1994 congressional statute that prohibited the self-declaration of homosexuality in the US military, in order to reflect upon the performative operation of implicit censorship. Then I explore how self-censorship functions in the dialogues between the protagonists, and argue that Prime-Stevenson's novel uses narrative "blanks" as a means and ways of creating the discursive frame in which, and only in which the speakability of homosexuality becomes possible. Thereby, I aim to present that for the novel to fulfil its function as educational literature, and to provide a sympathetic reading of homosexual love, it is of crucial importance to maintain the narrative frame and, thus, the limits of the speakable discourse. For Prime-Stevenson, it was only through this perspective that same-sex desire seemed portrayable.*

Edward Prime-Stevenson's novel, *Imre: A Memorandum* (1906), explores the precarious progression of the unfolding romance between two young men. Out of fear of the contemporaneous views on homosexuality, and scared of losing each other, they "wear the mask, day by day, until finally it is thrown away, first by one, then by the other" (Prime-Stevenson, *The Intersexes* 369–370). In *Imre: A Memorandum*, the masks worn by the narrator, Oswald, and the Hungarian soldier, Imre, function as discursive regulations, setting forth the carefully structured narrative frame that dictates the speakable limits of homosexuality. Published at the beginning of the twentieth century, under the pseudonym Xavier Mayne, the novel explores the possible discursive ways that allow the two men to speak about their controversial feelings and open up to each other.

The aim of this paper is to examine how the narrative mechanisms of the text create a very particular atmosphere, the so-called masks, which at first seem completely dominated by self-censorship—a censorship that can be observed in both the narrator's and Imre's discourse. It is heavily influenced by certain ideas about masculinity and their possible connections to the two men's understanding of homosexuality. I aim to argue that this narrative framing is essential for the novel to be able to function as an educational and representative literary work.

The Congressional Statute of 1994 and the Performativity of Homosexuality in the Military

In *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, Judith Butler examines the performative potential of the contested meanings of homosexuality in the American military. The US Congress passed a statute in October of 1994 that prohibited the self-declaration of homosexuality in the military; otherwise known as DADT ("Don't Ask, Don't Tell"). Unexpectedly, the statute initiated a broad public discourse on the topic, and thus achieved the very goal it wanted to avoid. Butler states that the regulation, which declares *what* it does not want to be declared, thwarts its own goals in the form of performative self-contradiction: "The term 'homosexual' thus comes to describe a class of persons who are to remain prohibited from defining themselves; the term is to be attributed always from elsewhere. And this is, in some ways, the very definition of the homosexual that the military and the Congress provide" (Butler 105). With whom does the power of identifying someone as a homosexual lie then? This way, the definition of homosexuality, after

the passing of the mentioned statute, is left to others, and a homosexual is thus some-one "who is denied the act of self-definition ... one whose self-denial is a prerequi-site for military service" (Butler 105). The philosopher goes on to suggest that in this social and juridical milieu, the words "I am a homosexual" not only have descrip-tive functions, they also perform what they aim to describe. Consequently, these utterances not only construct the speaker as a homosexual, but they "constitute the speech as homosexual conduct" (107). It should be stated, however, that such performative power of these utterances can only be observed in this very specific, regulated context: "In this sense, the regulations conjure the spectre of a perform-ative homosexual utterance—an utterance that does the deed—that it seeks to cen-sor, engaging in a circularity of fabrication and censorship that will be specified as paranoid" (107). It remains unclear exactly what the referent of the word "homo-sexual" would be in the case of this congressional statute. The lack of being able to capture the meaning of what is prohibited creates the very possibility that Butler calls "radical democratic contestation," which, in the future, might have the poten-tial to pave the way for different (re)articulations. Interestingly enough, this regu-lation does not construct homosexuality as an act—by allowing a single utterance of "I am a homosexual" to be understood as conduct, the singularity of this event is imagined as a series of events, "and so [the regulation] imagines a certain force of homosexuality to drive one-time practitioner into a compulsive or regular repeti-tion" (111). This way, the statute reinstates the presupposition that the communica-tion of one's homosexuality can somehow be equal to doing the act itself. According to Butler, there must be something rather disruptive in the self-defined homosex-uality, since it is construed as if the very speaking of the word is already an offen-sive act, or rather, conduct. The author reminds us that Michel Foucault in his volumes on the history of sexuality argued that first there were homosexual "acts," then, only later did homosexuality as a category of identity emerge. This statute imagines the doing of an act as already a category of identity, as something that is equal to doing the act. Butler, then, invoking Freud's *Totem and Taboo* provides a psychoanalytic interpretation on how the idea of homosexuality that the regu-lation presupposes becomes a taboo, thereby shedding light on the discursive pat-terns of the statute's text, which imagines homosexuality as something contagious, comparing the conduct to a virus-like, spreading idea: "Anyone who has violated a taboo becomes taboo himself because he possesses the dangerous quality of tempt-ing others to follow his example: why should he be allowed to do what is forbidden

to others?" (qtd. in Butler 115). The congressional regulation, therefore, creates a discursive pattern, which binds together the "spreading" of homosexuality with the spreading of a certain virus, notably HIV.

The next chapter of Butler's *Excitable Speech* continues to interrogate how speech act theories might help to understand the function of censorship exercised by the congressional regulation. Butler argues that censorship should be viewed as a means of creating speech, that is, it already pre-emptively dictates what speech can be spoken. If censorship is seen as creating the speech, then it is ahead of the creation of the text, not an *a posteriori* restriction of speech. That is why it is of crucial importance to distinguish between explicit and implicit censorship. The effectiveness of implicit censorship suggests that the power of the censor cannot be limited to overt political actions, censorship like this functions in a much more obscure way. Although the regulations instated by DADT could easily be put in the category of explicit censorship, they also seek to define the norm of military subjectification: in the case of the male military subject, the norms that define masculinity will be those that require the denial of homosexuality. However, the introduction of the regulation did not limit references to homosexuality in the military; on the contrary, a proliferation of such references was seen. Consequently, the mechanism of censorship plays an active role not only in the creation of the subject, but also in the delineation of the social parameters of the discourse that can be spoken: "According to this view, censorship is not merely restrictive and privative, that is, active in depriving subjects of the freedom to express themselves in certain ways, but also formative of subjects and the legitimate boundaries of speech" (Butler 132). As a result, these kinds of implicit potentials give censorship its source of power.

According to Butler, certain kinds of iterability have the potential to subvert cultural and political discourses. The subversion of the politics of different norms and systems of power lies in the potential of repetition done differently. By invoking the case of Rosa Parks, Butler displays exactly how reiterations done in specific ways have the power to change the dynamics of a cultural discourse. As outlined above, the possible reiterations that have subversive potential are always situated in social and political contexts, which dictate in advance what we are to understand by subversion and how it might happen. In other words, the political power of these reiterations is indirectly provided by that authority, state etc., who exercises the censorial power.

In the case of Prime-Stevenson's novelette, the protagonists need to explore and communicate their feelings in such political circumstances that control the exact speakable limits on homosexuality. I will argue that differently done discursive reiterations in Prime-Stevenson's novel have the potential to subvert (up to a point) the negative connotations Imre and Oswald and their societies attribute to homosexual love. These speech acts provide and organise the speakable discourse on homosexuality: by repeating the same kinds of discursive patterns a bit differently each time, the two protagonists slowly become able to subvert their own (sometimes intentional) self-censorship, thereby creating a space for their sexualities to be able to be spoken of. I aim to explore how the performative discursive patterns in which Oswald and Imre enclose themselves are "one of the influential rituals by which [their] subjects are formed and reformulated" (Butler 160).

Narrative Hiatus and the Unfolding Discourse on Homosexuality

Prime-Stevenson's novel focuses on the (self-)censored discourse of the protagonists, who slowly and carefully put down their masks, and in the end reveal their secrets to each other, while still adhering to the limits and customs provided and regulated by the discourse that, according to them and their societies, can be spoken. Three main reasons can be observed as to why and how this discursive frame functions. Firstly, the discursive framing is closely tied to how Prime-Stevenson's novel positions itself within the contemporaneous cultural context. In the Prefatory, Oswald addresses Xavier Mayne: "And as you have more than once urged me to write something concerning just that topic which is the mainspring of my pages I have asked myself whether, instead of some impersonal essay, I would not do best to give over to your editorial hand all that is here? as something for other men than for you and me only?" (Prime-Stevenson, *Imre* 3–4 [1906]). The most important purpose of this novelette explicitly appears in the cited passage, in which the author of this imaginary letter states that the manuscript presented here is for "other men" primarily. As Zsolt Bojti points out, "[t]he nature of *Imre* as a self-help and educational book is seen from the very beginning of the novelette" ("Narrating Eros and Agape" 23). In his paper, Bojti demonstrates that, for the author of *Imre*, it was of essential importance to provide the broader public with a different perspective on homosexual love, compared to what had been previously accessible in English literature. For this very reason, the narrative of the novelette turns away from the pre-existing

negative connotations of homosexuality in order to offer a new and more accept-able understanding of same-sex desire. Therefore, Prime-Stevenson's book is not only memorable for allowing homosexual characters a happy ending for the first time in an English literary text, but also because it displays an empathetic under-standing of male-to-male desire in a cultural era, where homosexuality was strictly criminalised. In *Imre: A Memorandum*, the thoughts and acts of the protagonists are, for the most part, driven by intentional self-censorship, because this narrative key paves the way for a subversive understanding of homosexuality that is explored in the first person narration of Oswald and in the discourse of the Hungarian soldier.

Secondly, Oswald and Imre have no other choice but to navigate their dialogues according to the limitations of their cultural context. Prime-Stevenson's novel, while itself being a piece of educational literature, depicts how dangerous it was for some-one to explicitly open up about their sexuality. The text also showcases to what extent homosexuality and the concepts of masculinity were inherently intertwined at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Finally, Oswald, the narrator of the text, starts writing this "memorandum and guide-book of Imre's emotional topography" (*Imre* 63) after all this has already hap-pened; thus, the narrator knows in advance how their coming-out story would end. Therefore, every bit of the story is conveyed through Oswald's perspective, thereby raising the question, whether he could be seen as a reliable narrator. Nonetheless, the memorandum is as much his "emotional topography" as it is Imre's. Although the novelette portrays only Oswald's reflections, it becomes very clear from their dialogues that Imre goes through the same precarious path of coming to terms with his sexuality, as it is depicted in the narrator's own thoughts. These three elements combined construct the narrative framing of *Imre*: the book as a piece of educational literature, the restricted and strictly controlled speakable discourse on homosexu-ality, and Oswald's experience that propels the narrative.

The withholding of information in narrative fiction is a widely discussed topic of literary theories in the twentieth century. In her book, *A csend retorikája* (The Rhetorics of Silence), Edit Zsadányi gives a brief overview on the development of theories concerned with the narrative function of figures of omission. Zsadányi reminds us of Wolfgang Iser's claim which argues that not even as an experiment would it be possible to create a literary work without interruptions. The narrative hia-tus that is thus formed has an integral part in the interpretation of any literary work (Zsadányi 13). According to Iser, it is in the nature of literary communication that

the "blanks" of a text could never have a singular interpretation, which may provide the information so far withheld. The indeterminacy of interpretation is a consequence of the communicative situation of literature—literature that is the very communication between the text and the reader (Iser 163–170). Reacting to Iser's "blanks" (*Leerstelle*), Leona Toker argues for a more distinct category that she calls "narrative gaps." The inevitable narrative gap only becomes a hiatus, if the reader, following their expectations, considers the omitted information to be relevant, in other words, if the reader considers the hiatus as information to be interpreted (Toker 5–6). In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Wayne C. Booth claims that several authors of the twentieth century restrain themselves from explicitly explaining their stories, thereby avoiding any kind of overt interpretation. Compared to writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these authors do not express their views through any voice in the text, thus letting their characters create their own stories (Booth 271–274).

This is not the case with Prime-Stevenson. Not only does he explicitly provide a voice for his own views on homosexuality through the narrator of the novel, but also the narrative hiatus—the most important discursive element organising the advancement of the protagonists' dialogues—has a very distinct and clear way of operation in the novelette. The first sentence of the Prefatory is already an example of the *modus operandi* of the narrative gaps:[1] "In these pages I give you a chapter out of my life… an episode that at first seemed impossible to write even to you" (3). Zsadányi emphasises that "[a]n unfinished line marked with three dots may indicate not only that the thought can be continued, but also that the speaker has reached the limit of verbal expression" (Zsadányi 23).[2] In the novel, most of these blanks presuppose that some unspeakable information, something mostly related to homosexuality and its (un)speakability is being withheld. Or, it is also very common that the hiatus functions as a typographic tool after which something that shall not be uttered will indeed be uttered, of course, within the limits regulated by the social views on homosexuality and the related self-censorship of the protagonists.

Gerald Prince's narratology distinguishes the un- or non-narratable from the un- or non-narrated as the occurrences of blanks in a literary text (28–31). Within the category of the unnarratable, Prince lists three possible occurrences. First, the narrator does not want to subvert or question the social orders; second, the narrator realises their own incapability of portraying something, this mostly being a rhetoric

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1   In my analysis, I use the terms for figures of omissions interchangeably.

2   Passages from Zsadányi's work are translations of my own.

incapability; and in the third instance, the narrator faces the problem of unspeakability. All three versions occur very often and they sometimes overlap in *Imre*. In the following pages, I turn to the interpretation of the different kinds of narrative blanks in the novel. Thereby, I examine how hiatus organises the discursive patterns, limits the speakability of the discourse, while at the same time creates the possibility for homosexuality to actually be speakable.

Before turning to the analysis of censorship in the text, one more remark must be made. On the one hand, according to the Prefatory, Oswald gives the imagined Xavier Mayne (the pseudonym under which Prime-Stevenson published the novelette) the manuscript for revision. In this fictional framing, therefore, it is possible to entertain the idea that Mayne might have actually changed some parts of the text, since Oswald explicitly asked him to do so. Furthermore, it is stated on the title page that the text was "edited" by Mayne. On the other hand, the narrator emphasises in the same passage that "[he] may say to [Mayne] here that the dialogue is kept, word for word, faithfully as it passed" (*Imre* 4). Hence, it is of vital importance to examine by whom and how censorship is exercised in the progression of the dialogues. The typographical outlook of the novel, the various usage of certain figures of omission, this way, could not only be attributed to Prime-Stevenson's educational aim that correlates mostly with Imre's or Oswald's censorial performative acts, but regarding certain parts of the text, one might as well argue that it was Mayne who edited the manuscript according to his best interests. This is further supported by Oswald's request, since he explicitly states that due to his aim of conveying everything truthfully, the manuscript could have turned out to be too long. Hence the request, asking Mayne to "use" his editorial hand, where he feels it is needed. Thus, censorship in this sense could also be attributed to the imagined editor, Xavier Mayne. At the same time, it must be emphasised that the main feature of the operation of implicit censorship lies in the blurring of censorial power. In other words, implicit censorship functions in a way that the agent of a censorial act could hardly be named. As we have seen in Butler's argumentation, implicit censorship pre-emptively regulates speech, even deciding in advance how the exact censorial act may function. Thereby, regarding a few instances I will aim to present whose (self-)censorship organises the limits of the discourse, because in these cases, locating the censorial act also organises the interpretation of the text; I will do so, however, by bearing in mind the obscure workings of implicit censorship.

In the first chapter of *Imre*, soon after meeting each other, the Hungarian soldier mentions a friend of his, namely Karvaly, a very good-looking person who meant a great deal to him. It is during the telling of this story that significant amount of narrative blanks start structuring the protagonist's speech: "Means much? Ah, ah, so very much! I dare say you think it odd… but I have never had anything… never… work upon me so! ..." (24).[3] After having finished his portrayal of Karvaly, Imre turns to Oswald, saying: "I never talked this way with any one—at least never till now. I am an idiot! I beg your pardon" (25). This self-reflexive utterance is a tell-tale sign of the speakable limits of their discourse. On the one hand, the soldier is unsure, whether he shared way too much information with his new friend, on the other hand, he could as well reflect upon his hesitation that the text typographically conveys with the use of blanks. Talking about his friend's physique, Imre performs one of the first self-censorial acts. He does not let himself explicitly address why the physical appearance of Karvaly matters to him in any way. At the same time, however, this censored discursive element opens the possibility for Oswald to start thinking about Imre's intentions: "'I beg to compliment you on your enthusiasm for your friend. Plainly one of the "real ones" indeed,' I said. For I was not a little stirred by this frank evidence of a trait that sometimes brings to its possessor about as much melancholy as it does happiness" (24).

In the novelette, the concepts of masculinity are significantly intertwined with the ideas about friendship between two males. As James Patrick Wilper argues, the novel "along with the author's *The Intersexes*, is forthright in its rejection of the Wildean stereotype and attempts to wrestle interest in literature and the fine arts away from effeminacy" (139). Prime-Stevenson clearly entertained the idea that the only way he could shift the literary and cultural discourse on homosexuality from contemporaneous negative perspectives was by shedding light on a radically different picture of gay men. Both his protagonists posit themselves as men who are not at all "effeminate" or "weak"—they showcase none of the features attributed to Wilde's characters. Moreover, both Imre and Oswald appreciate homosexual males with distinctively "manly" features, and they also despise the ones who are by any means "feminine." In the second chapter, one of the key points of Oswald's monologue is the part where he describes the kind of gay men he disdains: "To think of them shamed me; those types of man-loving-men who, by thousands, live

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3   In the 1906 edition, figures of omission are sometimes marked with multiple periods. In my paper, I standardised these to three periods.

incapable of any noble ideals or lives." He continues: "The effeminate artists, the sugary and fiberless musicians! The Lady Nancyish, rich young men of higher or lower society twaddling aesthetic sophistries, stinking with perfume like cocottes!" (116). Bojti states that Prime-Stevenson found himself in a conflicted situation: on the one hand, sexual science was problematic and not at all available to a general readership; on the other hand, literature related to Oscar Wilde and his circle only fuelled the criminalisation of same-sex desire, at least according to Prime-Stevenson (*Wilde, Stenbock, Prime-Stevenson* 142–144).[4] While in the cited passage Oswald definitely distances himself from the concepts that evoke Wilde's literature, and while it displays Prime-Stevenson's aim with his book, this discursive pattern is also a tool for developing the discursive frames, which give the protagonists a chance to engage in topics related to homosexuality, of course, in a highly self-censored way. By constructing this hyper-masculinity and relating it to the speakable friendship between men, a narrative situation is constructed that drives the plot. Oswald and Imre continuously return to this topic during their conversations. It is also notable that this censored discursive frame remains in their dialogues even after both of them open up about their sexualities. Therefore, Butler's analysis on censorship helps to better approach the way censorship functions here: by limiting the speakable discourse, exactly those parts of the speech accumulate and proliferate that should have not been spoken. Simultaneously, these reiterations will provide agency to the protagonists by the end of the novelette to communicate their desires; however, the narrative frame remains mostly intact, hardly subverting the concepts of masculinity and censorship.

Although the novel does a very good job at keeping up the tension between the protagonists, constantly maintaining the discursive frame, the narrator's point of view occasionally steps out of these limits, and applies his later acquired knowledge to the textual Oswald, that is the narrator, who at that point of time could not have been in the possession of information he communicates. In these cases, he attributes reflections to his past self from the point of view when writing this memorandum, which, according to the fictional frame, happened after he had experienced all this. "Such an hour or so… for the evening was drawing on when we parted… was a kindly

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4   As Bojti reminds us elsewhere: "let us think of pleasure-driven opium addict Dorian Gray, whose relationships are of no spiritual depth, or of the erotic novel attributed to Wilde and his coterie, *Teleny* which presents the purely sexual and emotionally toxic relationship of the narrator and the title character" ("Narrating Eros and Agape" 22).

prophecy as to the future of the intimacy, the trust, the decreed progression toward them, even through our—reserves" (28). Or, at another point, as he talks about Imre's eyes: "It seems to me that now, as I write, I meet their look. I lay down my pen for an instant as my own eyes suddenly blur" (44). These parts of the novelette complicate the position of the narrator. Prime-Stevenson builds a narrative frame, which, by repeatedly reinforcing the speakable limits of the discourse, displays the (self)-censorial operation of the speech thematising homosexuality. It is also arguable that these parts of the novelette undermine the aim of the text by stepping out of the discursive frames so precisely built. However, the narrator who—so to speak—has the ability to occasionally step out of his own limited speech, must always return to and stay within the censored point of view, whenever talking with Imre, and also in most cases, when he communicates his own feelings and thoughts regarding the unfolding relationship. Consequently, by sometimes leaving the limits of the narrative framing and hence the censored discourse, Oswald—whether knowingly or indirectly—strictly reinforces the very limits of the speakable discourse, thereby emphasising the power and inescapability of implicit censorship. Considering the fictional framing of the novel, Oswald's breaks from his own narrative voice and point of view might be parts of the memorandum that went through the imaginative editorial hand of Mayne. The novel remains very alert about these instances, and they only seem to aim at further establishing the speakable limits.

A very distinct feature of the usage of narrative hiatus can be observed in the "infectious" operation of blanks. As outlined above, Imre behaves rather hesitantly when he approaches the topic of his old friend, Karvaly. Later on, when Oswald recollects Imre's behaviour, he notes that "[s]ince the afternoon on which we had met, Imre referred so little to Karvaly… he seemed so indifferent to his absence, all at once… indeed he appeared to be shunning the topic… that I avoided it completely" (55). It seems to be the case that Oswald re-enacts what Imre had done previously, notably he repeats the pattern of speech organised by the narrative hiatus. Censorship seems to be operating in the same way when Oswald opens up to his old-time friend about his sexuality, and he reacts to the narrator's confession in the following manner: "I took you for my friend because I believed you to be a… man. You chose me for your friend because you believed me… stay, I will not say *that!* … because you wished me to be… a something else, a something more or less like to yourself, whatever you *are!* I loathe you! ..." (141). According to Butler, the text of the analysed congressional statute imagines the operation

of homosexuality in a way that the act of self-definition functions as a "discursive carrier for this displacement and 'transmissability.' The sign uttered in the service of a prohibition carries that prohibition and becomes speakable only in the service of that prohibition" (115). The naming of homosexuality, therefore, cannot merely be understood as a sign of desire, rather it is the very means by which desire is enacted by the sign—thus it acquires a "carrier" function that connects homosexuality to contagion. "The self-descriptive utterance of 'homosexuality' becomes the very act of dangerous communication which, participating in a contemporary revaluation of that sacred scene, infects its listener" ("Contagious Word" 116). This is exactly how the forbidden utterance of homosexuality functions in Prime-Stevenson's novelette. In his 2022 essay, Bojti explores how a "susceptible" reader could interpret the exposition of *Imre* rather differently than the "average" reader. By analysing Wilde's *Dorian Gray* and *Teleny* and other contemporaneous literary works, he argues that there are certain signs in the novelette that pave the way for a subversive reading related to homosexuality; consequently, Bojti proposes that the novel offers a double narrative similar to other pieces of homosexual literature at the time ("Hungarian Nervous Music" 27ff.). This reading, as he points out, differs significantly from the Wildean stereotypes in order to shed light on a different, much less eroticised understanding of same-sex desire. While Bojti explores censorship in relation to the Hicklin Standard, thereby highlighting a possible, restrictedly accessible subversive way of reading homosexuality, the censored narrative framing examined in this paper could also be viewed as a tool with subversive potentials. In this sense, subversion lies in the operation of (self)-censorship that the text conveys with the proliferating usage of narrative blanks, since it is the means and ways for Prime-Stevenson to provide an alternative perspective on same-sex desire. The "contagious" operation of the self-proclaiming utterance of homosexuality may only be approached and communicated in such a discourse of which the limits are very clearly reinstated by the utterance's infectious effect. The typographically inscribed way of homosexuality's speakability that is passed through its very utterance keeps the discourse within the limits of its censored speakability. Prime-Stevenson's double narrative gives its protagonists the happy ending so far not seen in English-speaking literature thematising homosexuality; however, the subversive potential of the text is kept and may only function within the borders of implicitly censored same-sex desire.

So far, little attention has been paid to the distinction between the author, Prime-Stevenson, and the fictional editor, Xavier Mayne. It is of course hardly possible to outline the distinction perfectly, since in this fictional framing most of the censorship present in the novel could be attributed to both the author and the imagined editor. However, the infectious nature of censorship is clearly one of the most important tools of the author in portraying the sexuality that cannot be spoken of. As I have shown, the censorship exercised by either Imre or Oswald has the ability to "communicate" with the other's censorial act. We can observe that the proliferation of censorship occurs exactly because of this: one starts limiting his own speech and then the other continues it, censoring himself. This is clearly a discursive pattern used by Prime-Stevenson to portray the contagious nature of self-censorship. Exactly because of this, it becomes very interesting to entertain the idea that it was Mayne himself who actually allowed censorship to function in a way which, in the end, gains a somewhat subversive power. For Prime-Stevenson definitely has his own limitations and by giving the text to the "editorial hand", one more layer of censorial power is realised in the fictional framing, which might actually have the chance to go against the decisions of the author himself, and allow the discursive limitations to start functioning against themselves, thereby slowly opening the way to the speakability of homosexuality. If Prime-Stevenson's method of infectious censorship were not interrupted throughout the novel, then the speakability of homosexuality might never have been realised. Here, however, it must be stated once more that it is not possible to name the exact occurrence of these interruptions, thanks to the functioning of implicit censorship, following Butler's argumentation. Nevertheless, we can definitely state that Prime-Stevenson's fictional framing needed Mayne to disrupt the contagiousness of implicit censorship. The complexity of *Imre* lies in the creation of this extra editorial layer as well.

One of the key parts in the text is right after the letter that Oswald reveices, which urges him to travel home for approximately a year, and he even has to entertain the idea of not returning. The two protagonists have a final *rendez-vous* before Oswald's planned departure. At this point, the narrator, quite affected by Imre's seemingly emotionless behaviour, starts talking about the War-School. "Imre, Imre! Instead be a… man! A man in this, as in all else. You trifle with your certainty of a career. Be a man in this matter?" (94).[5] Then Imre comes up with

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5   I use the 1906 edition of *Imre* because the Gifford-edition (2003) treats narrative blanks rather arbitrarily, sometimes using dashes instead of the three (or more) periods and also changes the original

a rather unexpected response: "Be a man? In this, as in *all*? God! how I wish I could be so" (94). Whereas at the beginning of their friendship, the intertwining concepts of masculinity and self-censorship served as a discursive pattern that allowed the two men to conceal their unspeakable feelings and sexuality, here Imre with the slightly different reiteration of these ideas *uses* self-censorship as a means and ways of portraying his true feelings. This precisely built narrative framing of friendship between men provides the basis for the protagonists to put their feelings to words. "I have found, as thou hast found, 'the friendship which is love, the love which is friendship.' Come then, O friend! O brother, to our rest! Thy heart on mine, thy soul with mine! For us two it surely is... Rest!" (205).

I argue that the recurring emphasis on the "friendship which is love, the love, which is friendship" is of vital importance to the broader narrative structure of the literary text. By locating their final discourse to the aforementioned ideas of friendship and censorship, the true potential of this discursive and narrative framing comes to light. With this narrative structure, which is inseparable from self-censorship, Prime-Stevenson creates a speakable language that allows same-sex desire to be openly addressed at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is why it is crucial for the narration to remain embedded in the precisely built discursive structure even at the point, when both Oswald and Imre confess their love. By reiterating this discourse continuously, and only by doing so, can the two protagonists open up to each other. Here, we can see that the connotations of same-sex desire not only closely evoke concepts of masculinity, but friendship as an idea is also a focal point in setting forth the speakable limits of the discourse. In the first two chapters of the novelette, Oswald's narration and the protagonists' dialogues, when reflecting upon what kind of relation there is between them, must remain within the possible friendship which society allows. After the limits of the regulated speech has been firmly established, the different reiterations of the discourse start to question this carefully built order by stepping out of the allowed limits of friendship between

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punctuation. The editor states that "[s]pelling and punctuation have been modernised and obvious textual errors have been corrected" (30). I firmly believe that Prime-Stevenson's usage of narrative hiatus is one of the key narrative elements of the text, which organise the discourse between Oswald and Imre. Gifford's changes of typographic tools fail to realise the main goal of the text that is finding the limits of a speakable discourse on homosexuality, in which one can open up and avoid any possible harm. The punctuation and the meaning of the blanks used by Prime-Stevenson are, therefore, of vital importance. Here, for example, Gifford removes the figure of omission, despite the important fact that, by suggesting Imre's hesitation, it subverts the rigid concepts of masculinity.

two men. That is why Imre, at one point, warns Oswald that their relation must adhere to the idea their society allows: "The world thinks—*as* it thinks—now. And the world, our to-day's world, must decide for us all! Friendship now—now—must stay as the *man* of our day understands it, Oswald" (104).

In the following passages, I will turn to examine the removal of the masks (i.e. the confessions), which pave the way for the reformulated speakability of homosexuality. For now, we should state that this recontestation will remain within the discursive framing, and thus, love between two men will only be approachable through the idea of friendship that is allowed.

How do their masks, their shared hidden secret, then, enter the discourse and reformulate their subjectivities? After the speakable limits of homosexuality have been carefully built, Oswald, with a performative speech-act, raises the question:

> I should find myself turning aside from the path of straightest truth which I would hold-to in these pages, if I did not find *that* question written down early and frankly here, with the rest. It *must* be written; or be this record broken now and here!
> Was Imre von N… what is called among psychiaters of our day, an homosexual? (66)

Soon after wondering about Imre's sexuality, Oswald re-enacts the limits, and states that it is surely out of question to put his friend in such a situation in which Imre would be faced with the unspeakable question: "But there! I had *no* right! Even if I… But there! I swore to myself that I had *no* wish!" (69). Then Imre tells the story of his colleague, whose "scandal" made him give up his charge. "You know" says Imre, "how specially sensitive… indeed implacable… the Service is on *that* topic. Anything but a hint of *it*! There mustn't be a suspicion, a breath! One is simply ruined" (70–71). With the use of italics, the text emphasises the unspeakability of homosexuality implying that the mere utterance of the word is dangerous in itself. Here, it is important to highlight that it is Imre himself who thinks of the utterance as unspeakable. Of course, it is still Oswald who highlights this part of Imre's speech. Nonetheless, by attributing it to the Hungarian soldier, it becomes very clear that the ideas and concepts organising censorship and the narrative framing function this way also because Imre (and of course Oswald) integrate the speakable limits to their subjectivities. Hence, the position from where they speak does not provide the possibility

to immediately move beyond the ideas controlled by their society; they have to alter the speakable limits of the discourse by reiterating it differently so that homosexuality can afford to be mentioned.

Continuing the conversation, Imre asks Oswald, whether he has ever happened to meet "with… that sort a man… *person*… yourself… in your own circle of friends?" (72). The concepts of extreme masculinity keep influencing their discourse, these ideas repeatedly reinstate the limits of speech. Here, Imre formulates his question by first referring to a homosexual man, who then is referred to as a "person," thereby keeping the order of the discourse's limits organised by their concept of masculinity. Reacting to this situation, Oswald breaks the promise he made to himself and tries to move beyond the boundaries: "Now *you* are just the very individual I should suspect! … yes, yes, I am surprised!" (75). As the dialogue progresses toward the unspeakable, the narrative gaps get longer and longer, and Prime-Stevenson expresses the advancement with more periods as blanks. Imre, quickly realising the overstepping of the restrictions, replies: "Do you observe anything particularly womanish—abnormal—about me, if you please?" (75). Finally, Oswald's joke eases the tension of the situation, realising that he went too far: "you seem to forget what you yourself said to Captain Molton this afternoon… in the billiard-room… about the menage-cooks… don't you remember?" (76). He concludes that Imre is surely not a homosexual. During this dialogue, the pair crosses the Chain Bridge, which connects Buda and Pest, and Oswald entertains the idea that this place definitely possesses some peculiar ability, since it made them overstep the carefully built-up limits.

Margaret S. Breen argues that the bridge provides the space for the protagonists to talk about their sexualities: "Much as the bridge demarcates the space between Buda and Pest, the two men traversing it explore their relation to each other. … Thus, the bridge offers an intermediate space for Imre and Oswald's initial shared claim to a discourse (though as of yet not an identity) of sexual intermediacy" (Breen 7).[6] However, as I outlined above, this "intermediate space," as Breen puts it, does not allow the dialogue to actually move beyond the restricted discourse, contrariwise: the limits are re-enacted. Breen mentions their "initial shared claim

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6   Margaret S. Breen explores the intertwined relation of the contested terms used to describe same-sex desire and the role of translation in the novel. In my analysis, I do not turn to the question of the various definitions used to describe homosexuality at the turn of the century; however, it must be stated that the unclear and inconsequential usage of terms further complicates the speakability of the discourse. For a comprehensive overview on this topic, see Bojti's *Wilde, Stenbock, Prime-Stevenson* (126–173).

to a discourse" that at the time of the bridge scene has not yet turned into an identity. Two remarks must be made here. Firstly, I do not support the idea that speaks of a "shared claim." Imre and Oswald (and distantly Prime-Stevenson and Mayne) do not find themselves in a situation where they have the "agency" to decide on a discourse they want to claim to themselves, upon which an identity could be formed. The implicit censorship pre-emptively sets forth what discourse and how it can be spoken. Hence, the discourse *precedes* any possible claim. Secondly, following the previous remark, I agree with Breen that an identity cannot be formed upon this discourse, but it is not because at this point the protagonists have not removed their masks. This discourse *prevents* the formation of any stable identity, since it constantly reinforces the speakable limits; thus, Oswald and Imre have to repeatedly come face to face with these regulations. That their speech remains embedded in this discourse even after opening up about their sexualities—as seen in the intact concepts of masculinity, and to an extent, friendship—proves exactly the obscure operation of implicit censorship. There is no "homosexual" identity to be built upon this discourse, since it *forbids* that exactly.

Chapter 2, "Masks and—a Face," mainly focuses on Oswald's coming to terms with his sexuality. The previous roughly hundred pages have all led up to this point, when Oswald finally opens up and tells the long story of his past endeavours. Here, as the self-proclaiming utterance of homosexuality happens, we see the contestation of the conflicting connotations of same-sex desire. It is the very reiteration Butler speaks of that questions social orders and opens the possibility for a more empathetic understanding of homosexuality. However, the speech act happens within a society that strictly controls the way male-to-male love can(not) be addressed. Oswald again seeks the legitimacy of homosexuality by emphasising that a homosexual is "super-male, so utterly unreceptive of what is not manly, so aloof from any feminine essences, that we cannot tolerate woman at all as a sexual factor! Are we not the extreme of the male?" (114). In this sense, the narrative framing remains still intact: Prime-Stevenson's educational goals seemed to be only successful this way, that is without questioning the concepts of masculinity his protagonists keep reaffirming. Imre's reaction and hesitation, whether he should open up too, is again marked by the proliferation of narrative blanks: "If I could… my God! if I only could! … say to thee what I cannot. Perhaps… some time... Forgive me, but thou breakest my heart! ..." (151–152).

In the last chapter, Imre has to leave for a while to fulfil his duties. Interestingly, the soldier, who previously referred to himself as a terrible writer, someone who likes to keep his writing very short, starts sending Oswald very lengthy letters. In just two days, the narrator gets three billets from him, but, keeping Imre's request in mind, he answers laconically. Oswald asserts: "Clearly, Imre in camp was not Imre in Szent-Istvánhely!" (160). Then the narrator spots a stroke in the letters, which seems to be erased. He remarks: "Was it like Imre to be sentimental, for an instant, in a letter?" (161). Oswald finds himself surprised at the tone of his friend's letters, he does not understand the inconsistency and especially does not seem to come to terms with a sentimental behaviour—a behaviour that both of them earlier portrayed as womanly and not suited for men like these two.

Later, Imre comes back to the city and finally decides to tell Oswald what he has been withholding so far: he also removes his mask. Interestingly enough, however, the narrator cuts his story short: "I shall not detail all of Imre's tale. There was little in it for the matter of that, which could be set forth here as outwardly dramatic" (183–184). Oswald finds himself in a situation once more, where it becomes hard for him to understand why Imre delayed his confession. He confronts the soldier: "Imre, I do not yet see why you have not trusted me sooner. There have been at least two moments in our friendship when you could have done so" (194). In a discourse that is pre-emptively organised and restricted by implicit (self-)censorship, one cannot clearly identify the operation of that discourse. Both Oswald and Imre try to be the ones to decide upon the censorial power they want (because they need) to exercise. But, as it is seen in the cited passages, there is no "sudden" escape from the limits of speech. And although there are instances when they are able to reflect on the regulations, not once is it possible to fully break away from the speakability provided by the discursive frame they must navigate their conversations in. The masks are thrown away in the end, but the limits of the speech remain: no stable identity is formed on the grounds of the censored discourse. "For—oh, Oswald, Oswald! I am just as art thou… I am just as art thou! (180). Removing the masks is only the first step in altering the speakable discourse.

Conclusion

Among scholars, Edward-Prime Stevenson's *Imre: A Memorandum* is not celebrated for its literary genius, rather it might earn its place in the canon because of its

historical significance. As a contemporaneous review from Marc-André Raffalovich states: " [*Imre*] is above all a document more than literature. It is deplorably written but it is lived" (187). In my opinion, this book earns its value from its portrayal of a strictly controlled discourse that is very precisely built as narrative framing, and pre-emptively organises how homosexuality can be addressed, and is made up of multiple layers. In the novelette, there is no escaping from the restrictions of speech. "The world thinks—*as* it thinks—now. And the world, our to-day's world, must decide for us all! Friendship now—now—must stay as the *man* of our day understands it, Oswald" (104). The limits remain there constantly; both Oswald and Imre must deal with the precariousness of their own identities and social values when trying to break away from the speakable discourse. Their hesitations and careful behaviour are textually reflected in the various forms of narrative blanks.

The aim of this paper was to present why the specific type of narrative pattern that determines the slowly developing relationship between Oswald and Imre is of crucial importance for the portrayal of homosexual desire. Edward Prime-Stevenson's goal—to provide the broader public with a different account of love between men—was seemingly only possible in this particular way. The performative self-censorship and its close relation to the concepts of masculinity and friendship create a narrative structure that paves the way for a speakable discourse on homosexual love, perhaps thanks to the editorial hand of Mayne, while at the same time constantly alerting the protagonists of its own unspeakability. By portraying this conflicted and contradictory operation of a censored discourse, Prime-Stevenson created an atmosphere where the current social norms could be questioned. As Butler puts it: "The appropriation of such norms to oppose their historically sedimented effect constitutes the insurrectionary moment of that history, the moment that founds a future through a break with that past" (159). The discourse that legitimises homosexuality between Oswald and Imre is inherently bound with concepts of masculinity that, in the end, could not be subverted. This confirms Butler's suggestion that the performative power of differently done reiterations are in an obscure way provided by the very power that aims to regulate what it does not want to happen. Only within such circumstances, only by in some way adhering to the current social order can censored ideas be challenged. And Edward Prime-Stevenson does this exact thing: he offers a sympathetic reading of homosexuality in a certain way that, according to him, can operate as an educational piece of literature. This, in itself, is already an insurrectionary moment of history.

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Cyclical Time as the Liminal Space of Suffering and Denial in the Narrative of Septimus Warren Smith

JUDIT ANNA BÁNHÁZI

Abstract: Through comparing and contrasting studies from philosophy and mainly contemporary literary theory, this paper aims to outline how a complex temporal paradox is refigured in Septimus Warren Smith's fictive experience. It is the argument of the article that we can detect the presence of a divergent, modern variant of the concept of Eliade's archaic cyclical time in this experience, battling with a predominantly linear temporal paradigm, presented through the fictional society of the novel. I argue that linear time is inherently paradoxical as it simultaneously builds and corrodes the individual and that, in Septimus's experience, cyclical time serves very similar purposes. I observe how Septimus's fictive modern cyclico-linear time compares to Virginia Woolf's "moments of being" and isolate three types of moments pertinent to Septimus's experience: the traumatic profane, the psychotic sacred, and the collective haunted. Through defining these three temporal concepts and underlining their presence in the narrative experience of Septimus, I aim to outline how the concept of cyclical time itself becomes a dark, intangible zone in the novel where transcendence is manifested as a consequence of trauma and denial. Septimus immerses himself in the liminal space of dark cyclical time both in hopes of healing, as he tries to amend his fragmented self, and out of necessity, as the post-war society's denial banishes him into a hellish terrain of endless repetition. Tragically, through the ignorant effort of self-healing through denial, the novel's society abandons its function to reintroduce Septimus to linear temporal experience. Hence, Septimus finally succumbs to be completely consumed by the liminal space of dark cyclical

time. He fulfils both society's unspoken wish to disappear and his own need to be free from his trauma—all the while an oblivious fictional world moves on in time.

The argument of this essay is that, through analysing the fictive temporal experience of Septimus Warren Smith, we can witness a particular re-cyclicalisation of a modern, predominantly linear time. This transition is the result of a complex individual experience of trauma and a completely inappropriate collective response to it. The horrors which finally consume Septimus create a liminal space of the dark, twisted, modern rendition of the temporal paradigm Mircea Eliade called "primitive cyclical time," as referred to throughout *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, "primitive" meaning "archaic." I argue that this dark cyclical time loses most of its original transcendent properties, albeit in Septimus's fictive experience some of these are retained, for the most part this theoretical temporal paradigm introduces a different, modern, self-consuming dark transcendence, resulting from underlying trauma. As such, it is a metaphysical experience inescapably bound together not with religious vocation but with psychological distress.[1] Transcendence in Septimus's temporal experience does not arise from believing in (or claiming to be a part of) acts of god(s), but witnessing acts of man that are of godly measures, more devastating than what the human mind can ever comprehend.

Since the original act which resonates in Septimus's fictive experience is one that equally belongs to the domain of fiction and our shared collective reality, the dark cyclical time provokes numerous connotations pertaining to lived temporal experience. Despite the obvious limitations embedded in fictive refiguration, Septimus's character has been extensively studied in light of the particular pathologies he exhibits. Albeit a fictional character, he keeps facilitating discussions about what is now known as a standalone medical, psychiatric condition, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[2] "Post-traumatic stress disorders and related stress response

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1   Elyse Graham and Pericles Lewis note in the context of the novel that "[i]n this modern London, the symbolic position of the cross, which represents the spirit's transcendence over the claims of the flesh, has given way to that commercial instrument and weapon of war, the airplane" (89).

2   "The term post-traumatic stress disorder was first coined and published in 1980 by doctors hoping to legitimise pain and suffering reported by Vietnam veterans" (McDonald 5). "The essential feature of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to one or more traumatic events. ... The clinical presentation of PTSD varies. In some individuals, fear-based re-experiencing, emotional, and behavioural symptoms may predominate. In others, anhedonic or dysphoric mood states and negative cognitions may be most

syndromes are especially interesting because they demand attention to both durable personality structures and major life events that may traumatise the individual" (Horowitz 33). As I will highlight, Septimus's *present* experiences (related to events taking place in the novel's present) and *past* recollections (memories he recalls within the narrative) paint numerous plausibilities to study the ramifications of undergoing trauma not only too severe to process individually, but also left completely untreated by the surrounding collective. I propose to isolate and outline three modern distortions of the Eliadean model of the sacred and the profane in Septimus's experience: the psychotic sacred time, the traumatic profane time, and the collective psychoanalytical (or simply, haunted) time. These are literary analytical propositions based on the refiguration of time, to borrow the expression from Paul Ricoeur, in the novel, and as such, pertain to the domain of the novel. However, if we relate *the experience* of these temporal propositions back to extratextual temporal experiences in a similar psychopathological context, we can continue to underline why reading (or re-reading) Septimus is of such pivotal importance in understanding our present.

Cosmos, Experience, and Cosmic Fictive Experience

Modern societies, predominantly nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western society, were heavily burdened by the fear of immanence and the loss of transcendence (Ungvári 168). Immanence heavily pertains to the linear temporal experience, as the linear temporal experience includes the notion that our lives have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Clarissa Dalloway's character, weary of this immanence and described as an atheist in the novel (90), fears precisely this linear end: her being less present each day, her gravitating towards cessation. Archaic societies kept erasing history precisely to avoid this looming sensation of the irreversibility of events (Eliade 74–75). However, through erasing history, these societies constantly kept erasing the idea of individual and personal timelines as well. The linear temporal paradigm, which records history, was fundamental to the birth of the individual: "even in the simplest human societies, 'historical' memory, that is, the recollection of events that derive from no archetype, the recollection of personal events ('sins' in the majority of cases), is intolerable" (Eliade 75). However, if we juxtapose

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distressing. In some other individuals, arousal and reactive-externalising symptoms are prominent, while in others, dissociative symptoms predominate. Finally, some individuals exhibit combinations of these symptom patterns" (*DSM-5* 274).

the Eliadean idea with the Bergsonian argument that linear time is a uniform, spatialised construct, which cannot properly account for the experience of time in consciousness (Bergson 89–91), we face a fundamental temporal paradox: the same linear temporal paradigm which is necessary to sustain the individual seems to simultaneously corrode it. There would be no individual accounts of time-consciousness without linear time, yet linear time does corrode and corrupt the pure, individual experience of time. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the all-pervasive reliance on a predominantly linear physical time (more precisely, industrial clock-time, a particularly harsh example of what Bergson's *temps* entails) escalated the feeling of immanence.[3] To this society, already weary and fearful of the idea of individual and collective cessation, the Great War was a sledge-hammer blow. Septimus Warren Smith's character presents us with a pivotal opportunity to contemplate the consequences of experiencing such a grand-scale tragic event.

Henri Bergson, one of the most extensively quoted philosophers in connection with Virginia Woolf's *oeuvre*, consciously takes into account the psychological and scientific advancements of his era,[4] along with almost all the divisions of philosophical thought (Dolson 48). However, our scientific and psychological knowledge on time and memory has changed a lot since Bergson, in effect, partly owing to him. My article, as the title also suggests, cannot wholly align itself with the Bergsonian system since my approach includes spatialising a temporal dimension which, at least according to Bergson, does not have any spatial properties and cannot be defined with such measures (Bergson 102). Bergson famously contrasts *temps* (objective, measurable time, which entails a cause-effect order) and *durée* (duration, in which there is none), and debates Albert Einstein's theory of relativity on account of it reducing time to a mere dimension. However, I do contend that contemporary contributions to the topic of cosmic time and the time of the universe, stemming from the Einsteinian thought, do have their place in literary theory and the analysis of Woolf's *oeuvre*. This approach, as I aim to demonstrate, can actually complement the Bergsonian thought as opposed to challenging it.

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3 Mark Hussey, in accordance with Paul Ricoeur and the majority of Woolf analysts, notes that clock time "threatens an individual's sense of continuity, because it takes no account of the lived experience of time" (122).

4 Bergson was acutely aware that new theories of time are originating not from philosophers but mainly from mathematicians to meet the needs of physics (Bigelow 156), even if he also argued that "any 'geometrical' or mathematical or logical-conceptual analysis of time is a falsification of time" (Hoy 22), which ultimately underlines his whole theory of *durée*.

The canonised theory concerning the time of the universe is Stephen Hawking's linear model, nicknamed the Big Bang theory. This theory suggests that there is a potential linear temporal narrative superimposed on our lives, which incorporates the idea of an end, not only for us as individuals, but for planets, galaxies, and even the universe as a whole. This theory suggests that the Universe had a beginning (Big Bang), has a certain life span, and will have an end (Big Crunch), and as such, suggests that there is an innate linearity embedded within the fabric of the universe. I argue that this temporal directionality vitally influences our subjective experience of time and the world, even if at the end of the day, it may not be as unappealable as even Hawking himself once suspected it to be. We need to be aware that later in his life, Hawking began suspecting that there is possibly another cosmological narrative: the universe has finite boundaries, but no beginning and no end, just like a globe, or a *perpetuum mobile*. This idea, also known as the Hartle-Hawking "no boundary" proposal, introduces the concept of the so-called imaginary time:

> In real time, the universe has a beginning and an end at singularities that form a boundary to space-time and at which the laws of science break down. But in imaginary time, there are no singularities or boundaries. So maybe what we call imaginary time is really more basic, and what we call real is just an idea that we invent to keep us describe what we think the universe is like. (Hawking 158–159)

Hawking's opposing theories suggest that unanimous agreements regarding the true nature of time are, at this point, lacking even in science. This fundamentally paradoxical quality of time allows Eliade's and Bergson's seemingly contradictory ideas about linear time and the individual to be considered both valid, and it is a paradox that persists in Septimus's fictive experience. Septimus is stuck with the experience of being completely denied what makes him an individual in time (his war memories, his war trauma, or even his love for Evans). However, this denial is the product of a society which *exists* through consciously tracking history, historical remembrance, and individual remembrance. By escaping to cyclical time, albeit mainly through paranoid re-iterations and symbolic visions, Septimus can keep remembering himself, yet cyclical time fundamentally remains the domain

which constantly erases what makes an individual—a hellscape with no chance of resolution and no end.

The notion of an end can be terrifying, but at least the linear narrative of the universe is still based on a cause–effect order, as referenced by Stephen Hawking and contemporary memory studies (Hawking 164), which fundamentally defines every single act in the universe,[5] along with how we are able to perceive, conceive of, and experience life as human beings. Even if the existence of an underlying cause–effect order does not entail any sort of elusive meaning, there is still a somewhat reassuring sense of logic in it (something happens *because* of something else). However, when it comes to a global act of destruction, such as the Great War, we can only intellectually trace a cause–effect order between events, or find a certain crude logic behind the acts committed. There is hardly anything that *feels* logical in the *experience* of mass murder and mass destruction. It is a rupture in both individual and collective experience and remembrance.

The "Sacred" and the "Profane" Versus "Moments of Being"

In Eliade's reading, the linear temporal paradigm became increasingly dominant in the composition of "modern" societies,[6] which abandoned the previously reigning "primitive" cyclical temporal paradigm. The primitive cyclical time was divided between moments taking place in either the sacred or the profane time (35). Sacred time denotes the liminal terrain of meaningful, transcendental experience, while profane time is the void of meaningless, forgettable acts. As already mentioned, Eliade's argument underlines that the primitive cyclical temporal scheme did not allow for a sense of individuality to be conceived in archaic thought since these societies were not recording history. Eliade notes that, for societies "for whom time is recorded only biologically," time recorded as history reveals "its corrosive action being able to exert itself upon consciousness by revealing the irreversibility of events"

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5   Hawking argues that (linear) time has an "arrow," emphasising its direction, moving as it does from the past to the future, from birth to death. To explain the possible reason as to why time's arrow points in the direction it does, he names three factors or three supposed types of arrow: the psychological arrow (the direction in which we actually perceive it to pass: we remember the past and anticipate the future, but not the other way round), the thermodynamic arrow (the direction in which entropy or disorder increases), and the cosmological arrow (the direction of time in which the universe is expanding and not contracting) (Hawking 164).

6   In Eliade's terminology, modern refers to anything existing during or after the conception of the Bible.

(74–75). For suffering to remain tolerable, archaic societies constantly gave it a magico-religious meaning: "suffering proceeds from the magical action of an enemy, from breaking a taboo, from entering a baneful zone, from the anger of a god, or when all other hypotheses have proven insufficient from the will or the wrath of the Supreme Being. The primitive—and not the primitive alone, as we shall see in a moment—cannot conceive of an unprovoked suffering" (97). Septimus's tragedy consists of the idea that in a linearly temporal modern society, burdened by immanence, suffering becomes devoid of meaning: "And in our day, when historical pressure no longer allows any escape, how can man tolerate the catastrophes and horrors of history—from collective deportations and massacres to atomic bombings—if beyond them he can glimpse no sign, no transhistorical meaning; if they are only the blind play of economic, social, or political forces?" (Eliade 151).

Death was not generally considered to be an act of suffering in primitive cyclical time, since in cyclical time, everything keeps renewing itself and returning, even life. In cyclicality, life has no real end, and the "death of the individual and the death of humanity are alike necessary for their regeneration" (Eliade 88). However, a linear temporal understanding entails a definite end point to life, both individual and cosmological. In the novel, both Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith utilise fictive "moments of being" to combat the part of this end paradigm which troubles them: for Septimus, it is the almost cosmic, apocalyptic end envisioned through war trauma; for Clarissa, it is the individual end—aging, fading from existence and from being *present*.

I keep using the expression "moments of being" to refer back to the term coined by Virginia Woolf. In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf notes that moments of being in her own lived experience are akin to a sense of "shock" (*Moments of Being* 72) or a "sledge-hammer force of … blow" (72). She recalls that as a child, she feared that moments of being would be "random manifestations of some malevolent force" (Schulkind 17) but later came to realise that a moment of being is "a token of some real thing behind appearances" (Woolf, *Moments of Being* 72). Moments of being carve themselves out from a mass of forgettable moments, resulting in a mystical, individual memory. First comes the shock, then the moment gains meaning retrospectively. Woolf's experience, even if the end result is similar (cf. Eliade) unfolds partially by opposing the primitive sacred circularity. Sacred moments in primitive societies consisted of rituals such as praying, hunting, eating, mating, or any sort of action through which the individual can project itself into a mythical time,

and unite with the universe and others around them (Eliade 35). Eliade claims that "[a]rchaic consciousness accords no importance to personal memories" at all (47). Sacred moments only served to dissolve one's identity into the collective haze. They do not carve out individualism, rather, they carve out a hive mind where a sense of collective consciousness takes shape, as in a beehive or a formicary.

As opposed to the archaic idea, Woolf's moments of being serve to anchor the individual in the self-assurance of individual experience, albeit in connection with the vast and often mystical universe. I use the word "connection" since words such as "fusion" or "unity" would not suffice to clarify the experience in question, as Woolf contended that "transcendent unity is unattainable" (Chen and Lai 230). Hence, she "focuses on consciousness in a search for individual transcendence" (230). In Woolf's sacred time, it is not the selfless individuals who carve out a hive mind, but the self is the hive mind, composed of a myriad of fragments. In Ruth Porritt's words, "the self is actually a plural phenomenon which uses multiple discourses or 'voices' to constitute meaning" (qtd. in Chen and Lai 231). Moments of being reinforce a sense of self all the while acknowledging its mystical dissolution. It is a temporal experience imbued with contradiction. However, this contradiction is not alien to temporal understanding at all. In fact, Woolf's simultaneous need to reinforce a sense of self in time all the while constantly losing it is inherently cyclico-linear, echoing an experience akin to Hawking's cosmological uncertainty.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway deliberately wants to keep integrating her prominent past moments of being into her present, to keep feeling alive, to carry that exuberant feeling of livelihood over into a present where she has to deal with more and more anxieties over feeling less present. Clarissa needs to keep feeding on the past to create a certain emotional coherence in her life, to be able to claim a coherent knowledge of herself. In a way, Septimus, whom we can also view as a dark doppelganger to Clarissa Dalloway,[7] tries to achieve similar goals by letting his vile past protrude from the under the fabric of his present. Driven by the unverbalisable urge of the trauma survivor, he is trying to regain a continuous self-narrative by attempting to integrate the traumatic past into the present. In lived experience, his process is mirrored when trauma survivors are trying to re-integrate episodic memories (in Bertrand Russell's words, "[t]his happened," qtd. in Bermúdez 188) into autobiographical memories ("This happened to me in my past"). Bermúdez argues that

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[7] Cf. "A more clinical way of putting it is this: she recognises that he is the id to her ego. In that
   sense I take him as her double and see them 'merge' at the end" (Page 123).

an "autobiographical time frame is a linearly ordered sequence of events in the life of a person. This is in contrast to the cyclical perspective on time" (188). I believe it can be deduced from his argument that, in lived experience, autobiographical memories of any given event strengthen the individual's ability to partake in and conform to linear time, whilst abstaining from or being denied these memories, as it is illustrated equally by the fictive case of Septimus, potentially weakens these ties.

Cyclical Time as the Liminal Space of Suffering

Septimus is denied his memories, and through his memories, his experiences as well, by almost every single character he comes to interact with in the novel. As often mirrored in our lived reality, expressing his specific trauma ("government-inflicted violence" and war) is taboo, "secret, forbidden, or unacceptable" (McFarlane and van der Kolk 25). In the novel, this denial is directly mirrored in, for instance, the attitude of the medical professionals treating Septimus: Dr. Bradshaw argues that Septimus is not mad, he just lost his sense of proportion (Woolf, *Collected Novels* 104) and "must be taught to rest" (141). Holmes proclaims with his "forty years' experience behind him" that as opposed to lying in bed depressed, Septimus should just go outside and start to "do something" (100). Yet, it is not just the doctors who are in denial: the people in London live their fictive lives busy with adoring airplanes spelling out letters, pondering mysterious authority figures in cars, or buying flowers, almost as if the war had never happened.[8] But Woolf's fictional universe is not a Uchronia—the Great War did happen just as it did in our reality. Hence, the efforts of Bradshaw, Holmes, and every other character in Septimus's plotline, including on a broader level, the whole fictional society, simply push war trauma into what Eliade denotes as "profane time" in the cyclical temporal scheme.

I contend that this temporal domain is profane precisely in the original Eliadean, primitive cyclical sense. Through a collective denial that completely dissolves individual narratives, war becomes an act completely forgettable, hence meaningless and not worth being noted. It is history, which needs to be deleted, erased because it only reveals, to quote Eliade once again, time's "corrosive action being able to exert itself upon consciousness by revealing the irreversibility of events" (74–75). This

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8   There are resonances between society and the memory of war pronounced both in case of the car and the airplane; yet, these are so feeble when contrasted with Septimus's reaction that, if anything, they just underline the collective denial.

urge is even more potent since society becomes a mere spectator of this monstrous history unfolding in front of it (Levenback 75) and remains unwilling to submerge in the experience of those who were part of the destructive event. War is no longer a cosmic act for this society, which is in stark contrast with the individual war survivor, Septimus Warren Smith's experience. Septimus's experience, as I argue, treats war as an original primitive sacred act, although not by the virtue of exalted archaic stance, but due to the burden imposed by trauma.[9] While the predominantly linearly temporal society, shocked by what its own linearity entails (apocalyptic measures of cessation)[10] paradoxically sinks back to archaic cyclicality for reassurance, this ignorant self-healing drive also pushes Septimus further into cyclical time. Albeit for him, this domain can only reveal hell, as it constitutes a collective denial of his individual remembrance. Denying remembrance equals to denying the formation (or in his case, reconstruction) of a coherent sense of self in time.

Through Bradshaw and Holmes's actions and words, the novel illustrates how denying Septimus the source of his suffering (ironically, by the very professionals tasked with helping him heal) escalates his confusion and feelings of isolation.[11] In the context of the novel, Karen DeMeester outlines that the societal paradigm which destroys Septimus is "a culturally prescribed process of post-war reintegration that silences and marginalises war veterans" (649). Kristin Czarnecki emphasises that Western societies are particularly prone to isolating unfit members, to pretend that they do not exist by incarcerating and setting these individuals apart (53). This idea is directly mirrored in Woolf's narrative: Septimus is not understood and no attempts are made to understand him; hence, he becomes isolated. As a result, both him and his partner Rezia feel a damning sense of loneliness.

Quoting Todd, Czarnecki argues that combat trauma is "inscribed on [the] mind, emotions, and the body" (55). In Woolf's fictional universe, the trauma, inscribed on the mind and emotions of Septimus, keeps resurfacing over and over again. On the one hand, it is reiterated through bizarre, incoherent-seeming musings and exclamations, often repeated over and over (e.g. about "the truth" which only

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9   Graham and Lewis emphasise that Septimus "makes plans to found a new religion" (91) which underlines my comparison: as opposed to Clarissa, who looks for individual transcendence, Septimus turns his suffering into a sacral quest, a basis of an exchange between man and God. From Clarissa's world, God, as pertaining to religion, is missing.

10 Antoine Compagnon defines two possible outcomes of the linear model: utopia or apocalypse (5).

11 Rezia recalls that Bradsaw even physically attempts to isolate Septimus from her: "Bradshaw said they must be separated" (*Collected Novels* 141).

Septimus is aware of [82, 98–99, 136], being consumed by flames [43, 90, 136], the brutality of human nature [105, 101, 136], or the existence of universal love [82, 142]). The recurrence of these ideas can be understood in the context of his trauma. However, the mode of expression spikes fear in the heart of Rezia, who feels that her husband is slipping into madness. Indeed, an understandable fear: as DeMeester quotes John Johnson, "a language wrenched free of its social functions and hence no longer obsequiously obedient to 'discourse' turns out to be intimately close to madness" (652). Septimus's ideas sound increasingly more senseless as his intent to express his trauma continues to be met with external resistance in the novel. Yet, in the context of my analysis, it can be argued that what the society of the novel considers insane is simply a mode of expression devoid of its canonised functions in causal social discourse, pertinent to societies with a predominantly linear temporal experience.[12]

One of the most important aspects of primitive cyclical time is the act of repetition. An act becomes a part of sacred time through repeating its mythical original (Eliade 5, 22). The act of repetition reinforces the temporal experience of cyclicality. Cyclicality constantly renews and erases time and through this process, individuality is also constantly erased. The fictional society of *Mrs Dalloway*, whilst suppressing the efforts to integrate war trauma into individual and collective remembrance, banishes Septimus into a vicious temporal circle, as he needs to keep reliving his trauma without any hope of resolution or even acknowledgement in the view.[13] Septimus is denied any chance to re-construct his coherent self-narrative as he is stuck in a loop and that profoundly affects his ability to communicate as well. Societal repudiation escalates the need for verbal and mental repetition, without order or causality.

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12 Levenback argues that "Septimus understands that language merely objectifies relation" (77), which can underline the idea of "cyclical communication," since the objectification of relation is not alien to linear temporal understanding as a whole (e.g. through clocktime).

13 Real-life war veterans likewise need to act upon their urge to remember, however unpleasant their memories are, because they are trying to re-construct a coherent, linear narrative of their lives and integrate the trauma into lived experience, just as Septimus does in his fictive experience. The trauma itself is so shocking in both cases that it completely distorts the individual's coherent, linear self-narrative (Horowitz 24). We can look at the traumatic distortion Horowitz talks about as a sort of temporal wedge in the fabric of the individual's own personal timeline. It makes it impossible for both the fictional character Septimus and real-life soldiers with PTSD to move on with life as ordinary humans move from day to day, reassured in the dynamism of time and the constant fluctuation between past, present, and future.

This manic repetition is the only form of expression available to a mind banished into circularity, which yields nothing more than futile repetition without resolution. Septimus, in a dark and twisted way, acts just as Eliade's primitive men did: via the act of repetition, he keeps reinstating the original, *sacred* event that stands above and beyond linear time. The novel's modern, primarily linear society paradoxically contributes to this "de-linearisation" by attempting to erase history, as their efforts turn shell-shock and war trauma into a cyclical enigma, which cannot be resolved and healed because its existence is simply not acknowledged.[14] Yet, Septimus is so deeply driven by the dire need not to forget the real horrors that he goes further than just repeating the original "sacred" act. Septimus also calls forth an apparition belonging to sacred time: the ghost of his dead comrade, Evans. Evans is the mythical reassurance, provoked by Septimus's disintegrating mind (sinking into post-traumatic psychosis through societal denial on repeat) that his experiences and his trauma are real, that the horrors did happen.[15] The above-mentioned repetitive proclamations and revelations of Septimus, along with Evans's spectre, originate from what can be called "psychotic sacred time." Psychotic sacred time

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14 Graham and Lewis reflect on how this essentially turns the very dire reality of death at war into a sort of mystical event too: "The deaths of soldiers in the war were real deaths, on behalf of the nation. The problem that Woolf singles out—a practice the novel teaches us throughout to view sceptically, from the early scene where the Bond Street crowds wax sentimental over thoughts of 'the dead; of the flag; of Empire'—is turning these real deaths into a myth" (106). As Levenback remarks, Septimus is only a hero as long as he is at war: once he returns, society turns away from him, because "the only real heroes were the dead" (75).

15 This allows us to observe the fictive "pre-refiguration" of another psychiatric condition which was unaccounted for at the time of the novel's conception, now known as Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (*DSM-5* 790). This disorder is usually comorbid with PTSD. "Persistent complex bereavement disorder is diagnosed only if at least 12 months (6 months in children) have elapsed since the death of someone with whom the bereaved had a close relationship (Criterion A). This time frame discriminates normal grief from persistent grief. The condition typically involves a persistent yearning/longing for the deceased (Criterion B1), which may be associated with intense sorrow and frequent crying (Criterion B2) or preoccupation with the deceased (Criterion B3). The individual may also be preoccupied with the manner in which the person died (Criterion B4)" (*DSM-5* 790). PCBD can also cause social disruptions for the individual such as "[a] desire to die in order to be with the deceased. Difficulty trusting other individuals since the death. Feeling alone or detached from other individuals since the death. Feeling that life is meaningless or empty without the deceased, or the belief that one cannot function without the deceased. Confusion about one's role in life, or a diminished sense of one's identity (e.g. feeling that a part of oneself died with the deceased). Difficulty or reluctance to pursue interests since the loss or to plan for the future (e.g. friendships, activities)" (*DSM-5* 790).

is the liminal space where the dark "meaning" unfolds after a moment of shock. In the case of Septimus, this terrain becomes a self-consuming tragic reminder of trauma, haunting itself in endless repetition of erasure and regeneration.

The moment that I call "traumatic profane" can be almost directly correlated with what psychology calls a post-traumatic stress trigger in lived experience:[16] however, my objective is to observe how traumatic profane moments manifest in the particular context of Septimus's narrative and what the fictional refiguration of a PTSD trigger signifies in this context. The first time we switch to Septimus's point of view is right after Clarissa and everyone in that particular spot and moment in London are startled by a backfiring car because for the first instance, it sounds as if someone had fired a gun. I call this a traumatic profane moment for Septimus. It is an everyday, otherwise forgettable instance, which loses its profanity for the traumatised mind. The refigured moment here carries the same significance as its counterpart in lived experience. As Giotakos describes it, "a situation that is perceived as 'dangerous,' such as a person that resembles an offender or a startling sound in the middle of the night, activates the hypersensitive amygdala to initiate an alarm reaction and a normal stress response accompanied by a feeling of fear" (163). It immediately shifts Septimus out of the linear flow of time and opens the gateway for partaking in psychotic sacred time.

Yet, no matter how similar the meaning of the moment is to its double in lived experience, it is the generative virtue of fiction which allows us to define this moment as "traumatic profane." The trauma *and* the profanity can unfold side by side as Woolf's narrative describes not only Septimus's experience, but a variety of visceral reactions focalised through different observers of the event side by side. This approach conveys a sense of simultanity, an experience both individual and collective. It subtly contrasts the difference in the perception of the war survivor Septimus, and everyone else in the novel, only indirectly affected by the war. Woolf's treatment allows for a smooth transition between the sound of the car, the collective startledness, and the collective and individual echoes of the moment

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16 "Intense psychological distress … or physiological reactivity … often occurs when the individual is exposed to triggering events that resemble or symbolise an aspect of the traumatic event (e.g. windy days after a hurricane; seeing someone who resembles one's perpetrator). The triggering cue could be a physical sensation (e.g. dizziness for survivors of head trauma; rapid heartbeat for a previously traumatised child), particularly for individuals with highly somatic presentations" (*DSM-5* 275).

in the thoughts and actions of Clarissa, the passers-by, and Septimus. For the latter, fear provokes a sacred epiphany.

Septimus shifts into the psychotic sacred time right after experiencing the traumatic profane moment. In his epiphany, witnessing the accumulating traffic and everyone suddenly being busy with the car and the mysterious authority figure in it, orders the universe to perform a sort of *danse macabre* towards the centre of hell:

> Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. (43)

This psychotic sacred moment can be interpreted as a doomsday epiphany, a vision of apocalypse. Except it is not simply a vision of the future: it is equally a haunting reminder of the past, a backwards-looking epiphany, which is projected on the present reality as a possible future scenario. It is a moment which is inherently devoid of linear causality, it is both simultaneous and repetitive, hence, cyclical. This doomsday epiphany of Septimus's is the negative counterpart of Clarissa's joyous union with a cyclical scheme which overrules the profanity of linearity:

> Did it matter then, she asked herself, walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (39)

Regardless of the anxieties which plague Clarissa, I argue that the act of her partaking in cyclical time is ultimately a positive experience. It is the consequence of both the joy of life, and the fear and anxieties of living. Clarissa, aware of the threat of the individual's end, combats her fears by ultimately contemplating the possibility of connecting with a larger metaphysical reality after but also prior to death. Mark Hussey notes that the whole day the novel covers "is circumscribed by an aura of mystery that promises a revelation that will console Clarissa (in particular) in her perception of the 'emptiness of the heart of life.' The 'inner meaning' only *almost* expressed, but it is enough to sustain Clarissa's faith in life and renew her efforts to find a solid purpose of it" (Hussey 100).

Clarissa's narrative allows us to gain insight into the spatio-temporal unison that can be sustained along the fringes of existential threat between the individual and society, life and death, being and non-being. Septimus's narrative emphasises alienation, the rifts between the war survivor and the society surrounding him. However, there are moments when this society experiences residuals of Septimus's trauma on a profound, emotional level: I call these moments "the collective psychoanalytical" or "the haunted." As previously argued, the society of the novel turns the experience of war into a cyclical enigma, an inexpressible secret. This, in my reading, also means that in this fictional universe, any and every recognition of war horrors can only happen in collective, preconscious, individually inexpressible moments. Here, fiction's virtue lies in being able to describe these moments, while retaining the idea that the moment is not individually verbalisable:

> The car had gone, but it had left a slight ripple which flowed through glove shops and hat shops and tailors' shops on both sides of Bond Street. For ... something had happened. Something so trifling in single instances that no mathematical instrument, though capable of transmitting shocks in China, could register the vibration; yet in its fullness rather formidable and in its common appeal emotional; for in all the hat shops and tailors' shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire. In a public house in a back street a Colonial insulted the House of Windsor which led to words, broken beer glasses, and a general shindy, which echoed strangely across the way in the ears of girls buying white underlinen threaded

> with pure white ribbon for their weddings. For the surface agitation
> of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound. (45–46)

"The haunted" are unverbalisable, collective "moments of being" in fictive experience, bursts of fear, angst or grief from that void, that black hole, into which society banished its own war trauma. These moments resonate and gain individual meaning and expression retrospectively through the individual characters experiencing them. However, the original moment of the experience is a collective, quasi-sacred ritual, which is, in itself, not interpretable. Hence, moments of "the haunted" in the novel are expressed through an omniscient narrator as opposed to focalised characters. The resonance of the haunted moment and the meaning it acquires through individual characters can be focalised, but not the original moment itself.

The Return of the Archaic "Sacred"

Woolf's novel occasionally describes "sacred" moments which can feel akin to Eliade's original idea of primitive sacred time. Such is the moment of the airplane appearing above the sky. When the plane starts spelling out the letters, through multiple focal characters, we can grasp a sense of confusion provoked by the indecipherability of the moment through the actual indecipherability of the letters. Different characters read different things into the puffs of smoke dissolving in the sky. The indecipherability signals that this, again, is a shared, collective moment which is non-verbalisable for individual characters. The moment is outside of the linear universe and ordinary means (such as causal verbalisation) which can describe ordinary linear reality. However, I do not consider this moment as haunted. It could, in theory, be argued that the appearance of the airplane reminds people of the war trauma in a similar way as the backfiring car does, but the novel does not spend too much time underlining this. It can also be argued that—for at least Septimus, who directly experienced the war—this moment is necessarily traumatic, even if on the surface, the joy of connecting with others overshadows the moment's innate reminder of the horrors of war. This could explain why, during the experience, he technically begins drifting into what can be called a "psychotic state" even if he initially articulates a sense of joy. However, I contend that in this precise instance in the novel, the moment is first described as a shared experience of awe and mystery, almost transcendental. Hence, it can be defined as reminiscent

of original sacred moments. Septimus rejoices in the experience with the crowd. Yet this much needed connection remains stuck in an intuitive, preverbal state: Septimus's joy of unity immediately takes manic undertones, reminding us that he is not free from the clutches of the dark cyclicality. For him, cyclical time offers no real mystical unison with others, no healing and no resolution. His joy over partaking in such a magnificent moment is accompanied by delusion and ideas of a sort of paranoid faux-causality in a dire attempt to generate logic and meaning while being stuck with the experience of senselessness.

Conclusion

Septimus, like any war survivor, keeps shifting between the dire need to find meaning and the harrowing experience of there being none. His fictive experience outlines how experiencing war trauma can erase the convictions of linear logic, cause and effect, action and consequence from the mind, no matter how deeply these convictions may be engraved in us.[17] "In the post-war world, Septimus has learned that there is no relation and no direct communication" (Levenback 78). The linear patterns are further corroded by the novel's society, which turns cyclical time into a no man's land to dump all memories and reminders of the Great War into. Septimus's fictive temporal experience echoes in a liminal space which is like a dark twin zone of the archaic, mystical cyclical thought. This liminal zone consists of modern variants of the Eliadean concept of primitive cyclical time: the psychotic sacred, the traumatic profane, and collective haunted moments.

Clarissa's journey demonstrates that, albeit it is terrifying, it is possible to consolidate modern linear time with archaic circularity as her arc peaks at the party she had been planning all along.[18] Septimus channels the rifts, the irreconcilability, the tragedy of the isolation and invisibility of the archaic cyclical tenets in a modern, linear society. This society, plagued by immanence, strips cyclical time from its mythical transcendence and grants it a different, dark transcendence

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17 By now, humanity (or at least a part of it) is aware of the idea that time is multi-faceted and warped. Woolf's society only began to understand it. Yet, I contend that, on the grand scale of everyday life, our convictions of time are still predominantly linear.

18 A celebration is a sacred act even in the original Eliadean sense but it equally qualifies as such in Woolf's modern circular linearity: "To find her 'self' in such a universal soul, Clarissa would try to remove the boundaries by bringing people together. Her party allows people to temporarily forget about their disjointed selves" (Chen and Lai 242).

through the controversial treatment of suffering. If Evans is the ghost haunting Septimus then Septimus is the ghost which haunts a society in denial. Septimus is stuck between what he knows (the extent of his suffering) and what he is being told (the denial of it): "Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate, people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death" (Woolf, *Collected Novels* 169). The only solace offered to Septimus is that in his death, he consolidates the maddening paradox: he both fulfils society's unspoken wish to disappear and his own need to put an end to his suffering. This is the only actual profound re-alignment he can make with the linear temporal paradigm, as Hussey notes that "however much the moment is expanded, the past recreated, or a sense of being outside time achieved, the actual fact of death circumscribes all effort" (125). At least for the linearly aligned fictional society, Septimus is gone. Life, Clarissa's party goes on. Septimus's tragic fate only keeps echoing in the liminal space, like some cyclical pre-utterance, which never turns into an actual act of communication between the two characters, let alone Septimus and the novel's society.[19]

Using an interdisciplinary lens to observe the mechanisms and effects of these so-called dark cyclical moments allows us to discuss more than simply a fictional character's experience. Through defining the fictional liminal space of the dark cyclical time, observing both the individual and collective experiences and attitudes which sustain it in the novel, we can perhaps one day learn to avoid sustaining its counterpart in our lived, shared experience. Our understanding of Septimus's tragedy can help avoid the all-consuming ostracism of real-life war survivors into the dark cyclical time. The novel shows us that we need to listen, no matter how terrifying the reckoning with their experience is, and continuing to do so is more timely than ever. Further than provoking the ethical dimension, interdisciplinarity can also highlight how and why *Mrs Dalloway* can and should be the continuous subject of research, as our understanding and knowledge on the topics it tackles keeps evolving not only in the literary, but also in the philosophical and scientific contexts. The true virtue of Woolf's narrative is that just a year short of its 100th anniversary, it continues to enter into exchange with us. It sustains a boundlessly flourishing dialogue between its poetic refiguration of experience and our own lived experience of time, memory, and trauma. Be it through the analytic lens of Henri Bergson or Mircea

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19   Cf. "This communication argues for an abstract 'reality' in which the soul can find rest and continue to exist, but not in the mode of actual life, and not within the scope of language" (Hussey 125).

Eliade, perhaps *Mrs Dalloway* will never exhaust the possibilities of discussion and interpretation—like a luminous halo, forever circulating in time.

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