ANGLICA

An International Journal of English Studies

30/1 2021

UNIVERSITY
OF WARSAW

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Remembering Mudrooroo (1938–2019)

1.

In 1965, when Angus & Robertson published Colin Johnson's *Wildcat Falling,* described as the "first novel by a part-Aborigine" in Dame Mary Durack's introduction to the book, it would have been absurd to suggest that the author was anything but a person of Aboriginal descent (Mudrooroo 1965). Born in a tiny settlement in outback Western Australia, he had come to Melbourne from Perth with the impeccable 'street creds' typical of black youths in Australia: taken away from his mother at the age of nine ('neglected child'), brought up in a notorious Christian Brothers' orphanage, having served two terms in Fremantle Gaol. He also came with a recommendation letter to the Aboriginal Advancement League written by Mary Durack who had helped him with the publication of his book, thus saving him from a career as a petty criminal on "a roller coaster ride to the bottom of the social pile" (Mudrooroo 2011, 2).

In her romanticised imagination, Mary Durack had described Colin Johnson as showing "little obvious trace of native blood, but he had, what most of the darker people have lost, the proud stance and sinuous carriage of the tall, tribal Aborigine" (Mudrooroo 1965, viii). It was in fact Mary Durack, a respected author, liberal do-gooder and philanthropist from a famous pastoralist family, who had made Colin Johnson into what he was to become: an Aboriginal writer.

2.

I first met Colin Johnson in 1990. He had recently changed his name to Mudrooroo, meaning "paperbark" in the Bibbulman native language of Western Australia, following the example set by Mudrooroo's mentor in poetry, Kath Walker, who had changed her name to Oodgeroo, meaning "paperbark" in the language of her native

people, the Noonuccal of Southern Queensland. The taking of a totemic name, like a writer's trademark, was meant as a public protest against the official celebrations of the Bicentennial of the British Invasion of Australia.

I was then working with Brian Syron, one of the pioneers of Black Australian Theatre, on the production of a play by Heiner Müller, *Der Auftrag* (*The Task,* or *The Mission*). Set at the time of the French Revolution, the play tells the story of three emissaries of the Revolutionary French Republic to the island of Jamaica, then a British colony, to emancipate the slaves and establish a Republic. Two of the emissaries are white, one is black: an ex-slave freed by the revolution that had also promised "Égalité de Couleurs." In a concurrent mission, the British Empire sends a fleet to the South Pacific and dumps a cargo of convicts and their guards on the shores of Botany Bay. The historical parallel evokes the Janus-face of the European Enlightenment: the promise of universal liberty and equality, and its denial to the Indigenous people of the world. The play is about betrayal: when Napoleon comes to power, the revolution is over and the European intellectual turns his back on his comrades.

I had prepared a translation with a new title, *The Commission*, and had organised funding, with support from the Centre for Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, for a two-week workshop with six Aboriginal actors and a director (Syron), to be followed by a public reading at Belvoir Theatre. But Brian said the project needed more Aboriginal input, and he suggested to ask Mudrooroo (whom he still referred to as Colin Johnson) to become involved as a writer.

I had only read *Wildcat Falling* at this stage, so I quickly read some of Mudrooroo's other work. I was fascinated by his recently published sequel, *Doin' Wildcat* (Mudrooroo 1988): the aggressive power of Mudrooroo's Koori English, raw and fast-paced with the four-letter vitality of a Black American movie, yet with a controlled narrative that keeps the different strands (action, reflection, memories) finely balanced. In Mudrooroo's historical novels I found what I was looking for: history in the present tense, two stories/histories told at once, the dialectic of Aboriginality past and present (Mudrooroo 1979, 1983).

I intuitively knew that Mudrooroo was the only person who could do this job: "aboriginalising" a post-modern dramatic text by Germany's leading contemporary playwright, widely heralded as successor to Brecht (Fischer 1995). I wrote a letter (Mudrooroo was living in Northern New South Wales at the time), enclosed the translation and the dramaturgical concept, and asked if he might be interested. To my surprise, he answered a week later: yes. He had no idea who Müller was, but he found the script interesting. He had decided to accept a job at Murdoch University in Perth, he wrote, and there was an opening of some three months next year when he could come to Sydney to work on Müller's play.

In September 1990, Mudrooroo was in Sydney on some Australia Council business, and we met for lunch at the Wharf Theatre Terrace Restaurant. My first impression was that, well, he did not look 'very Aboriginal,' not according to

what some people might assume an Indigenous person from outback Australia should look like. Mudrooroo was tall and slim and muscular, he appeared much younger than his age (51 at the time) although his black hair was thinning on top of his head. He was wearing Birkenstock sandals rather than thongs. He was quite good-looking, as one of my female friends later remarked. In any case, it didn't bother me how Mudrooroo looked like: Brian Syron did not 'look very Aboriginal' either. Both men's facial features seemed essentially Caucasian, though Brian's were softer and rounder in comparison to Mudrooroo's angular and macilent face; both shared the same dark brown eyes and olive-hued skin tone.

Mudrooroo explained to me that he was interested in a Brechtian kind of theatre: realistic, sociological and political, rather than the naturalistic and psychological drama, the mainstay of Australian theatre, that he had criticised in *Writing from the Fringe.* We discussed the politics of the project that had begun as a protest against the Bicentennial Celebrations, based on the near-simultaneity of the French Revolution in 1789 contrasted with the beginning of the European Invasion of Australia in 1788.

Two years after the Bicentennial, that protest had become largely irrelevant. Our focus now was on the Republican Movement led by white liberal intellectuals like Malcolm Turnbull and Thomas Keneally. Their minimalist agenda, formulated without any Aboriginal input or consultation, proposed to replace the Queen as head of state with a native-born Australian president. The date when this was supposed to happen was 1 January 2001: ten years into the future (Fischer 1993b). We agreed that Müller's text was to be used to protest against a cosmetic change that would do nothing to improve the living conditions of the Aborigines. Of course, the Indigenous people of Australia also favoured a republic, but they wanted more than a new head of state. They wanted constitutional recognition, sovereignty, a treaty, a better life.

An application to the Australia Council to provide funds for a twelve-week stay as writer-in-residence at Sydney University was easy enough; Mudrooroo had just served on the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Council. The Performance Studies Centre (under Prof. Gay McAuley) again provided generous support, including a writing space with computer under the roof of the terrace house in Redfern where the Centre was located. Mudrooroo advised that he would be accompanied by his wife and their dog, and he needed a space for the pet. No problem: the Centre had a disused courtyard where the dog could spend the day. When Muddy, as he became known to his friends, finally did come, he was by himself; there was no dog, and he and his wife had split up.

In 1991, it would have seemed preposterous to suggest that Mudrooroo was not an Aborigine. He was at the height of his career: the most prolific Black Australian author, with a string of novels and several award-winning volumes of poetry to his credit. He had also just published the first comprehensive critical study of Aboriginal literature in Australia, *Writing from the Fringe* (1990), a "landmark study"

(Shoemaker 2) and a "masterwork [that] sought to define Aboriginal literature and set criteria for judging its authenticity and worth" (Spickard 2020b, 434). It firmly established his credentials as a literary and cultural theorist. Mudrooroo's books were read and taught in schools and universities; they were being translated into foreign languages, and his work had attracted growing attention among scholars of English literature and postcolonial studies in Australia as well as overseas. "Acknowledged for over two decades as the arbitrator in matters of authentic Aboriginal writing," as one of his most strident critics conceded, "his was the voice of Indigenous Australia" (Clark 19); he "had risen to the status of an icon" (Spickard 2020a, 353).

When Mudrooroo arrived in Sydney in the middle of July 1991, we went to work immediately, meeting several times a week. Initially, our working relationship was not an easy one. His 'brief,' according to the concept that Brian and I had developed, was to write a frame story around Müller's piece. He must have felt that we had put him into a straight jacket where he had little room to move. Also, he was a great novelist and poet, and good at writing dialogue, but he was not a playwright. He had little experience with dramaturgy and had not seen much theatre.

Mudrooroo suggested various storylines to connect Müller's plot with a tangible Aboriginal experience, cutting Müller's text and replacing it with Indigenous content. But *The Commission* was too self-contained and too short; it comprised only fifteen pages of text, dialogue mixed with large chunks of highly formalized prose. To cut it too much would have threatened the coherence of the plot. I told Mudrooroo it was important to keep as much of Müller's text as possible, as a foil to his own, and because one should not mess with a text as good as that.

Mudrooroo accused me of treating Müller as sacrosanct, of not wanting to cut a single word. I countered by arguing that the structure of *The Commission* was fragmentary, there were gaps, and it was alright to break the text up and to fill the gaps with new material. In that sense, the play was wide open to changes and interventions. But Mudrooroo remained hesitant. Essentially, I felt, he was doubtful whether the play-within-the-play scenario would work, if only because of its aesthetic and intellectual complexity. Australian audiences were not familiar with this kind of 'experimental' theatre, and Müller's cryptic text at the core of the new play was not easily digestible.

The turning point was *Marat/Sade*, Peter Weiss' play (in the production of Peter Brooks for the Royal Shakespeare Company) that I told him about. I also told him about Jean Genet (*The Blacks;* Black actors doing Whiteface) that I had in mind as a structural model, and my own work as a dramaturg with the Berlin GRIPS Theatre (Fischer 1988). When we watched *Marat/Sade* together on video, Mudrooroo understood that this was the kind of play Brian and I had in mind: theatre on a panoramic, epic scale, a drama of big ideas with a sweeping historical horizon. This was also a play-within-a-play, theatre-on-theatre; it was highly intellectual but also rowdy, anarchistic and provocative. He was immediately convinced of the potential of such theatre as public spectacle, as the full title of Mudrooroo's

play, that echoes the famously long title of Weiss' play, confidently asserts: *The Aboriginal Protesters Confront the Declaration of the Australian Republic on 26 January 2001 with a Production of Heiner Müller's "The Commission."*

Four weeks later, the first draft of the new play was ready. Mudrooroo had created six strong Aboriginal characters, four male and two female, lay actors involved in a fictional rehearsal of Müller's play on the eve of the proclamation of the Australian Republic. There was decisive and funny dialogue: the actors quarrelling among themselves about how to deal with Müller's text, finally deciding to abandon the play and to do their own political 'black theatre.' By then, they had performed all of Müller's *Commission* while rehearsing its performance within the fictional construct of the frame play.

Mudrooroo's realistic, contemporary figures were a far cry from the clichéd, down-and-out, alcohol-addicted, fringe-dwelling Aborigines usually found in the media, or in literary works and in film or on stage. They were recognisable middle-class Black Australians who closely echoed aspects of the protagonists in Müller's text that they were impersonating. The role descriptions reveal the origin of the characters as 'social types' rather than individuals: there was Bob, the Black activist and director, ambitious and powerful, armed with a mobile phone (still a rarity in 1990) and contacts to the media, who was to play Debuisson, son of colonial slave owners, the leader of the French mission. 'Uncle *King George,*' the 'old goomee,' recalled the traditional image of the Aborigine as victim; he was frail after a long struggle with alcohol and jail-related diseases, but also fiery and rebellious. The old man would play a black slave wilting away in a cage under the blazing Jamaican sun; in a climactic scene in *The Aboriginal Protesters*, he would recall a traumatic, near-death-in-custody experience. Then there was Clint, the Black academic, and Peter, the young Aboriginal bureaucrat brought up by white foster parents, representing the 'stolen generation.' Peter would initially play Sasportas, the ex-slave turned revolutionary leader about to liberate his fellow slaves on Jamaica and drive out the British colonial rulers. The other actors would then decide that the old *goomee* should exchange roles with the young bureaucrat who, brought up in a safe, suburban white environment, had to be initiated into the darker part of contemporary Aboriginal reality to fully understand the situation of his people in order to truly become 'one of us.'

From a dramaturgical point of view, the role change was pivotal as it fundamentally altered the dynamics of the plot. Thematically, it provided a context for including two important issues crucial to contemporary Aboriginal lives, death-in-custody and the question of Indigenous identity. There was another important topic of the Aboriginal experience that Mudrooroo had incorporated into his dialogue, namely references to the history of Indigenous resistance and the struggle for justice and recognition of their civil and human rights. The inspiration for this had come from another play by Peter Weiss with an impossibly long title, the *Vietnam Discourse*.[1]

On a personal level, Mudrooroo was rather reserved. He did not speak much about his private affairs, nor did he ask about mine. I thought I knew about his biography anyway, through his fiction and some poetry, but perhaps I should have tried to probe a little more into his inner life. He talked quite eloquently and had firm ideas about books and writers, and the arts and politics generally, but whenever we seemed to touch on more private matters, he became quite self-conscious and monosyllabic. He was also a voracious reader. In one scene in Müller's *Task*, a female character called FirstLove acts out a sexual phantasy with a distinctly sado-masochistic dimension, so Mudrooroo decided to have a look at Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, and he ended up borrowing all the Victorian Gothic novels that he could find in the Sydney University library. The material later found its way into the novels of his *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* series, Mudrooroo's "vampire books."

One time I took him sailing on my boat in Sydney Harbour. He had never been on a sailing boat before. On the way back near the Heads the weather suddenly turned nasty; we lost the dinghy that was tied to the stern, and I had my hands full taking the sails down and hoisting a storm jib. Mudrooroo did not offer to lend a hand; instead, he climbed on the cabin and took up position in front of the mast, jumping up and down, laughing and hollering and shouting into the wind, watching the action with great merriment. Fortunately, a nearby motor boat managed to retrieve the dinghy that was drifting precariously towards the rocks at Middle Head. Muddy had a big grin on his face when we arrived back in Rose Bay. To this day I have been wondering what went through his mind during the little performance.

3.

By the time the workshop began, Mudrooroo had completed Version 3. The Aboriginal characters were still fairly shadowy and the dialogue rather thin, as he readily admitted, but I told him not to worry. During the two weeks of intensive workshopping, there would be plenty of opportunities to add details and new material, and the physical presence of live actors would flesh out the skeleton text. During the workshop, Mudrooroo was incredibly disciplined. He listened very carefully to the rehearsals, taking notes all day long without saying much himself during the discussions, then went upstairs to his garret and came back the next day with a fresh, expanded version of the script. I don't think he interacted socially much with the actors. They regarded him with great respect, with awe perhaps. He was one of them, but also famous as a writer and, as an intellectual and academic, part of a world which to them was very foreign. Some of the actors had little formal education. They had not heard of Napoleon. Why should they have?

A few days after the Belvoir reading, Mudrooroo gave me a new copy. This was Version 4, he explained: the final draft. He had added a whole new layer to the text:

four *djangara*, Aboriginal dancers, mimes and musicians, representing spirit beings similar to the *mimi* of Northern Arnhemland. They flit about the stage like moths, reacting to what the characters say or do, especially at moments of danger or crisis, perhaps not unlike Indigenous guardian angels from the Dreamtime. I understood that Mudrooroo's text needed another level of Aboriginality to anchor it against the overwhelming dominance of Müller's European play. He needed an element of dream-like surrealism to deepen the Aboriginality of the work. As he had written in *Writing from the Fringe* about one of Jack Davis' plays: "It is the dancer who shifts the play out of an essentially realistic mode and into Aboriginal reality" (Mudrooroo 1990a, 125). It is this version that I published in *The Mudrooroo/Müller Project,* the "theatrical casebook" that was to document our co-operative venture (Fischer 1993a).

4.

I only saw Mudrooroo briefly a few more times during the next couple of years, whenever he passed through Sydney. I had begun work on *The Mudrooroo/Müller Project* and asked him to write on his experiences with Müller; he contributed two fascinating essays that I included in the book,[2] along with some of his poems, a piece of prose from *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, and of course his play that incorporated Müller's play. Corresponding texts documented the genesis of the project and the Müller input from my side; interviews with Brian Syron and a speech by Tasmanian activist Michael Mansell formulated some of the politics of the project, cultural as much as social. The book was all about symmetry, giving equal weight to both sides, and contrast: the famous Black Australian author shadow-boxing with Müller, his famous German counterpart.

Mudrooroo and I were quite proud of the handsome paperback volume produced by New South Wales University Press in 1993. We had agreed I would edit the book, and he would receive all royalties. When *The Mudrooroo/Müller Project* was shortlisted for a NSW State Literary Award, I did not expect that it would win a prize. I would have gladly accepted the prize money (after all, I had done all the work on the book), but, given the climate of political correctness and with my name on the cover as editor (and Mudrooroo a humble contributor), that was not a likely outcome. The judges found a Solomonic solution that I thought was fair enough; they awarded a Special Prize to Mudrooroo Nyoongah, and a cheque was sent to Perth.

After that, Mudrooroo seemed to have lost interest in the project. I assumed he was busy with his job as Head of Aboriginal Studies at Murdoch University and with his writing, and he probably thought his work on his play was done. Brian and I, on the other hand, knew we were not finished. We were convinced that a professional production would make an impact, provided we received appropriate funding. So, I started again on the frustrating road of writing applications to funding

organisations. The book was important in this process; it was persuasive proof of the feasibility of the project. The Performance Space in Redfern, home of Sydney's urban Aboriginal community, showed an early interest, and we developed a joint application to the Australia Council and the Sydney Festival.

On 14 October 1993 Brian Syron died, aged 59; he had been seriously ill for a long time. As a rule, Aboriginal people in Australia do not live to an old age. I was devastated when I heard the news. Brian and I had become friends, and we had big plans for the future. We were both confident that a successful production of the Mudrooroo/Müller play might open the door for further Aboriginal theatre productions in Sydney, perhaps even for the establishment of a permanent Black Theatre Company. A funding application to the Australia Council had been successful; we were now waiting for a positive reply from the Festival of Sydney. But with Brian gone, all hopes had melted away.

Surprisingly, a new avenue opened up soon after. Lydia Miller, Brian's leading actress in his film *Jindalee Lady*, was interested in taking over as director. The Australia Council accepted the change, but then – only a few weeks later – the very same council offered Lydia a job as Head of their Aboriginal Arts Unit: a senior administrative role in the federal government's arts funding body, a permanent full-time position, well paid and prestigious. For a moment, I hoped Lydia would prefer the uncertainties of a career as a free artist to the security of a bureaucratic position, but she didn't. Again, we had reached the end of the line, I thought: Mudrooroo's play would never be performed on stage.

Incredible as it may appear, a last-minute replacement was then found by the people at the Performance Space. N.T. was a performer of mixed race, with a background in dance and choreography who had apparently worked in London; he had appeared from nowhere and jumped on the opportunity to establish himself on the Sydney scene. I was deeply suspicious, because I realised from the beginning that he was a narcissistic opportunist who was not really interested in the specific political-aesthetic qualities of both Mudrooroo and Müller.[3] On the other hand, the funds for the production had been allocated. After discussing the project with N.T. and agreeing on a general framework for the *mise en scène*, I wrote yet another letter to the Australia Council, asking them to approve the change of director. They wanted more personal information, but finally gave the go-ahead.

We had a great cast and crew, there was plenty of material prepared already on concept and staging, and I joked that the play would direct itself. In the end, the director did a credible job, although it wasn't the play that Brian and I and Mudrooroo had envisioned. During rehearsals, Heiner Müller died in Berlin, aged 66, of throat cancer. On behalf of the cast, I wrote a letter of condolence to Müller's widow and his colleagues at the *Berliner Ensemble*.

The Aboriginal Protesters opened on 11 January 1996 at the Performance Space in Redfern as part of the Festival of Sydney. It was a big hit with audiences and critics alike, as I always knew it would be. There were standing ovations every

night. NSW Premier and 'history buff' Bob Carr declared the show his favourite. The *Sydney Morning Herald* published a review, by Angela Bennie, that must have been its most glowing ever, entitled "Call to arms on eve of the republic" (*SMH*, 15 January 1996). The first paragraph read: "If ever there was hope that our theatre might be ambitious, then this is it. If ever there was hope that our theatre might transcend its past and, through courage, forge something brave and yet fearsome within it, then this might be it." The last paragraph read: "There are occasions, all too rare, when, as a member of the audience, one is privileged to have witnessed what took place. There are also moments when one wants to stand up and bear witness. This is one of those occasions."

Rolf Michaelis, the theatre critic for Germany's leading weekly, *Die Zeit*, had flown in from Hamburg and wrote a similarly enthusiastic review that ran to almost a whole page (Michaelis). A week later, I received a call from the director of the *Kunstfest Weimar*, one of Germany's leading arts festivals, asking if *The Aboriginal Protesters* would be available to tour in Germany during the coming European summer. Performances were planned for Weimar and Munich.

I hadn't heard from Mudrooroo since Brian's death. He had not come to Sydney for the premiere of his play, but he and his wife did join the company on their spectacularly successful tour to Germany. It was when the show was being performed in Weimar, traditional centre of classical German humanist thought and culture, that a newspaper in far-away Perth published an article entitled "Identity Crisis." It asserted that Mudrooroo was no Aborigine at all.

5.

The story by Victoria Laurie in the *Weekend Australian Magazine* (20–21 July 1996) was based on the claim by Mudrooroo's oldest sister, Betty Polglaze (née Johnson), that Mudrooroo's and all of his siblings' skin colour was due to the genetic heritage derived from their Afro-American grandfather. Mudrooroo had never known his father who died months before the son was born. He was initially excited to learn that his paternal grandfather had apparently been a Black American immigrant who had come from the United States to Melbourne around 1900. Hoping he might find a biological connection to the famous Afro-American blues singer, Robert Johnson, Mudrooroo travelled to North Carolina in search of possible roots, but returned empty-handed.

His sister, who had married a White man and identified as White, felt apparently more comfortable about a Black American genealogy than a connection with Australian Aborigines. She was reported as having always been mystified why her famous brother had claimed an Indigenous identity, so she had researched their family history and found out not only about their father's background but also that their mother's family, the Barrons, were settlers from Ireland whose residence in

Western Australia dated back to 1829. The conclusion was that there seemed to be no trace at all of 'Aboriginal blood' in Mudrooroo's family, and that he had wrongfully constructed an Indigenous identity. As the writer initially refused to comment on the story in order to 'set the record straight,' as he was asked to do, it was widely assumed at the time that the family history as claimed by Betty Polglaze was essentially correct.

Recently, American scholar Paul Spickard, a leading researcher in the field of race and ethnicity, especially on mixed racial and cultural experiences, has raised fundamental doubts about crucial aspects of the findings of Betty Polglaze (who is neither a professional historian nor a researcher with training or experience in genealogical work). As Spickard pointed out, within the span of five or six generations after the first arrival of the European settlers, there could have been many instances of racial mixing in the family history, a common enough experience in the early history of rural White Australia. Tellingly, the research of Mudrooroo's sister had focussed on the Barrons alone, ignoring the 31 other branches in the family's complex genealogical tree. There is also the open question whether a much-older half-sister of Colin Johnson, who had signed his birth certificate, was in fact his birth mother (Spickard 2020a).

Mudrooroo repeatedly refused to be drawn on the issue of blood relations as a marker of Indigeneity: "I am […] not a government definition" (2011, 2). He eventually answered his critics by emphasising his record as a Black Australian writer in conjunction with his life story: a life lived and publicly acknowledged as an Aboriginal writer. His Aboriginality, he insisted, was one part of his identity; his religious beliefs and life-long commitment to Buddhism in addition to his original and innovative work as a Black Australian, in other words, his *praxis* as an intellectual and activist in the Aboriginal movement must be accounted for as well. Mudrooroo found that identity was "a fragile thing that could be given and taken away" (1997, 263), yet he steadfastly refused to give up on an Indigenous identity that was determined for him by his life work as well as by others on the 'evidence' of his dark skin colour.

I was shocked by the story and the evolving public debate. In 1996, everybody suddenly seemed convinced that Mudrooroo was not an Aborigine. For a long time, I did not know how to react. I finally sorted out my conflicting emotions and speculations by writing an essay, comparing Muddy's story to that of Gordon Matthews, in *An Australian Son*, both remarkably similar stories of "mis-taken identity" (Fischer 2000).

In the wake of what the media termed a scandal, Mudrooroo was severely criticised; his books were removed from university courses and schools' reading lists, he was repudiated by his publisher and asked to return the literary prizes he had won. Quasi overnight, he had become a *persona non grata* in Australian literary circles. His works were all but erased from the public sphere. In 2001, feeling ostracised and abandoned, and overwhelmed by the continuing hostility

he encountered, Mudrooroo withdrew into a self-imposed exile. He went again to India, then to Nepal. He stopped writing.

6.

I did not hear from Mudrooroo for a long time. After ten years of silence, he sent an email with a text attached, entitled "ME I AM ME. Reflections on me in Exile." It was his 'testament,' dated 6 November 2010. After the death of his sister Betty, and on the eve of an operation to remove a prostate cancer, he wanted "to set the record straight." He wrote at length about our work on *The Aboriginal Protesters* and his experiences in Weimar; I wrote back to suggest two minor corrections that he subsequently incorporated in the revised, published version of the testament.[4] Then I heard from his new publisher, Tom Thompson, that he had returned to Australia a short time later, after a decade in exile, to seek medical treatment for his terminal illness. In 2002, he had married a Nepali woman, Sangya Magar; in 2003, they had a son, Saman Nyoongah Magar. The family had moved to suburban Brisbane where they lived in a modest apartment, virtually anonymously.

In 2017, I was asked by the editors of *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* at the Australian National University to write an obituary for Brian Syron (Fischer 2018). I realized that nearly a quarter of a century had passed since Brian's death. His work had been all but forgotten. Theatre is the most transient of all arts, a nightly performance that lives on only in the fading memory of its ever-changing audience. I thought that the 25th anniversary of Brian's death could offer an opportunity to commemorate his legacy, perhaps by way of presenting another public reading of *The Aboriginal Protesters*, i.e. a repeat performance of the original Belvoir reading. I also thought such an event might revive interest in Mudrooroo's play which was, after all, still highly topical: in 2018, the proclamation of an Australian Republic was as distant a dream as it was in 1993. But how would the audience react to the re-appearance of Mudrooroo? I decided that, after two decades in exile, perhaps it was time to revisit the "stupid non-Aboriginal business" (email, 31 July 2017). Perhaps after all these years, the time was ripe for a step towards rehabilitation, or restitution.

As it happened, the memorial reading never got off the ground. There was no institutional backing for funding, and the people I contacted were non-committal, cautious, unsure about the implications of supporting a project that carried Mudrooroo's name. The two most important actors of the Sydney production whose prominence might have helped had passed away: Kevin Smith in 2005, aged 52, and Justine Saunders in 2007, aged 54. (It is not expected that Australian Aborigines live to old age.) Rachael Maza was living in Melbourne where she ran her own Aboriginal theatre company, *Ilbijerri*; she was very successful and busy. In Sydney, the Performance Space had relocated to the Carriageworks precinct, which was also the home of *Mughalin*, an Aboriginal performance group led by Liza-Mare

Syron, a distant relative of Brian. Liza-Mare and her colleagues were interested in principle, provided funding was secured; but after a few months she reported that the board of her company had said "No." The message was clear: Mudrooroo was still *persona non grata*. Adam Shoemaker, in his 2012 essay "Mudrooroo: Waiting to be Surprised," had called for an end to this kind of "exclusionary discourse"; he referred to "an ethical dimension to the obsession with authenticity" and asked whether Mudrooroo had "been offered any kind of intellectual grace or amnesty" (Shoemaker 5–6). By 2018, the answer was still no.

I had written to Mudrooroo earlier to tell him about the plan. "Dear Gerhard," he wrote back, "I am thinking these days are my last days […] my health being what it is, maybe the play reading might end up being in memory for me too" (email, 31 July 2017). A few days earlier, he had written that he was feeling better now, he was out of hospital and had a new protocol, he was thinking of doing a revision of the play: "I like *The Aboriginal Protestors* because it is […] anti-Monarchist, with the Queen of England being kicked off the Australian stage. An event I am still waiting for" (email, 16 July 2017). In his last email to me, he wrote about his current readings (Solzhenitsyn, a poem by Rilke that I had sent him), his own *Old Fellow Poems*, his current writing and his Buddhist faith. He would like to participate in the reading, he added. It was a rambling, free-wheeling letter, the reflections of a dying man:

> Dear Gerhard, I got Tom to send you a copy of *Old Fellow Poems* and I bet you Rilke doesn't write like this. Underlying the rhythm is the street sounds of the Nepali festival of *dasien* in which groups of girls and boys go around singing insulting songs. […] Kevin Smith is no longer with us, he's gone to the big pub in the sky and so his role is open. If I could be well in 2018, and the finance comes together I would really like (Amitabha Buddha permitting) to read Kevin's old role. We have to keep to the bloody script now as too much work involved merely for a reading. You did point out […] that Justine Saunders' role was pretty weak. Problem with fragments, but they can be played with. By the way "fragments" is an interesting term as it implies a perfect original somewhere of which these are but the fragments. Fragments also has enclosed within its meaning always the notion of "unfinished." Unfinished means that the complete text is ahead if it ever gets written, whereas the term "fragment" refers back to an original text. I always believed Existence precedes Essence. I learnt recently that this was a Marxist position; but I'm not into fixed "essences" which is un-Buddhist. Which brings us to the poem, "Buddha in der Glorie" which I read, but I've been a Buddhist most of my life and it's like Christianity just part of life. So, if you read *Old Fellow Poems* you see that I am right down into the core teachings of Buddha: suffering, illness, old age and death. In this version life goes on and on and on, never coming to an end. Long time before you see Liberation, you know. In my next book to be published after *Balga Boy Jackson*, called *Tripping with Skippy and Jenny*, I end with a short trip to 'God teaching' thrown in. I liked the *ashram* at the

time and I still remember the teaching which is a mix of Islam and Hinduism with the Sikhs behind it all. So, the [Rilke] poem did give me a thought or two, though it is not the rough and tumble of a Mudrooroo poem.

I'll finish, as I'm feeling a bit tired. At least I started a new book today. It's called "Vignettes from a Cancerous Old Age." The subject was suggested by my wife and so I suppose I will have to stick with the theme. Okay bye bye Mudrooroo. (email, 15 August 2017)

7.

During his years in exile, it seemed Mudrooroo had lost his creativity as a writer. But after founding a new family and returning to Australia, he began publishing again. In 2014, his book of *Alterslyrik* and 'death poems' appeared, *Old Fellow Poems*, originally edited by an Indian scholar in Kolkata.[5] In 2017, he published a new novel, *Balga Boy Jackson,* a kind of prequel to *Wildcat Falling* based on his childhood and teenage years. While his health continued to deteriorate, Mudrooroo kept on writing. Against all odds, he managed to complete yet another instalment of his planned multi-volume autobiography, *Tripping with Jenny*. His publisher Tom Thompson, of ETT Imprint, Exile Bay, Sydney, asked me to write an introduction or foreword, but I chose to write an Afterword. Its title is a quote from the book that somehow seems to sum up Mudrooroo's life: "I'm a nomad, it's in my blood" (Mudrooroo 2019, 293–303).

Mudrooroo passed away on 10 January 2019. He was eighty years old. Sadly, he did not see his last book in print.

Notes

1   The full titles of the two plays by Weiss are *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*, and *Discourse on the Progress of the Prolonged War of Liberation in Viet Nam and the Events Leading up to it as Illustration of the Necessity for Armed Resistance against Oppression and on the Attempts of the United States of America to Destroy the Foundations of Revolution*.

2   Cf. "The Aboriginalising of Heiner Müller" and "World bilong tok-tok": Fischer 1993a, 19–32, 135–144. The two essays frame the Müller/Mudrooroo play in the book.

3   In his 'testament' (cf. note below), Mudrooroo remembers the name of the director, Noel Tovey, as "Brian Turvey" who had told him in Weimar "that he loved American musicals and found experimental theatre self-indulgent."

4   It is a kind of literary, biographical testament where Mudrooroo discusses his writings, his literary career and his life-long concern with Buddhism, as well as his role as an Aboriginal activist along with his version of the identity controversy. A revised text was published a year later in *JASAL* under the title "Portrait of the Artist as a Sick Old Villain. 'Me Yes I am He the Villain.' Reflections of a Bloke from Outside" (Mudrooroo 2010). Cf. Eva Knudsen who discusses both versions of the testament and its context and genesis (Eva Knudsen 2012).

5   The book, referred to as 'death poems' by the author and reflecting his desperate battle with cancer, has been re-issued by ETT Imprint, Sydney, with a haunting cover photo of the author. Unfortunately, the original publication was not properly edited and proofread.

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Slow Food Terra Madre: A Novel Pathway to Achieving Indigenous Australian Food Sovereignty?

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyse the participation of Indigenous Australians in Slow Food International's 2018 Salone del Gusto-Terra Madre meeting in Turin, Italy. Slow Food is a global grassroots organisation created to promote local food cultures and traditions, and the organisation's Terra Madre network highlights the urgent need to protect the food-production systems of Indigenous peoples, valuing their holistic approach and recognising them as custodians of biodiversity. By creating a platform for Indigenous peoples to meet and discuss their challenges and ideas, and by putting Indigenous knowledges and stewardship of the environment at the centre of discussions about tackling global environmental challenges, the organisation encourages its Indigenous members to work toward food sovereignty in their respective countries as well as on an international level.

Keywords: Slow Food International, Indigenous Australians, decolonisation, food sovereignty, transnationalism

1. Introduction

Many traditional foods have been abandoned by Indigenous Australians as a consequence of forced relocation and assimilation, and the resulting loss of traditional knowledges, as well as the introduction of European foods, such as wheat, lamb and dairy. In addition, the domination of neoliberal agribusiness in Australia since the second half of the 20th century, has led to the widespread availability of processed foods, which are rich in sugar and fats, yet nutrient-poor. In effect, a large number of Indigenous Australians have been consuming a diet consisting predominantly of these processed foods, which results in decreased health and overall well-being of communities. In order to tackle these issues, Indigenous Australian educators,

farmers and activists have created different initiatives, organizations and corporations with the aim to bring back traditional foodways to their communities.[1] By doing so, they hope to improve the communities' health and to revive cultural traditions related to these foodways. The decolonizing strategies of these organizations range from recovering traditional knowledge to educational programs and cooperation with other Indigenous communities and nonindigenous food sovereignty organizations, both nationally and internationally.

It should be emphasized that "[t]he concern with food security after World War II has led the United Nations General Assembly to declare access to food a human right by incorporating it into the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25), at the same time making the provision of food to people the responsibility of the state" (Kruk-Buchowska 414; after Renzaho and Mellor). However, it was not until the first World Food Conference in Rome in 1974 that the definition of food security itself was introduced. It was defined as the "availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices" (Renzaho and Mellor 3). Large-scale agriculture's ability to produce substantial amounts of food at a low cost has spurred governments to consider it as an attractive "solution to feeding the growing world population and solving the increasing problem of food insecurity" in the past several decades (Kruk-Buchowska 414). However, this model of food production has proven to adversely affect not only many agricultural workers, but also the populations and economies of whole countries, particularly those in the Global South, as well as the environment (Kruk-Buchowska 414; after McMichael 2005, 270–271). Like many food producers and consumers worldwide, Indigenous Australians have suffered from its effects. In their case, as in the case of other Indigenous communities around the world, the introduction of neoliberal agriculture can be viewed as yet another form of colonization, adding to the existing political and economic oppression, as it has forced Indigenous Australians into the corporate food regime and exploited Australian lands.

In response to this situation, at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, the international organization *La Vía Campesina – International Peasants' Movement* introduced the term "food sovereignty," which can be defined as "the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas, and is considered to be a precondition for Food Security" (Declaration of Atitlan 2002).[2] Food sovereignty is increasingly viewed as a more reliable and fair paradigm of food production, distribution and consumption, both by the United Nations and different international food organizations.[3]

2. Australian Food Policy: A Historical Perspective

In the introduction to his watershed book, *Dark Emu: Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture*, Bruce Pascoe reflects on the picture of Aboriginal Australians' agricultural practices as portrayed in the journals and diaries of explorers and colonists. He writes:

> Hunter-gatherer societies forage and hunt for food, and do not employ agricultural methods or build permanent dwellings; they are nomadic. But as I read these early journals, I came across repeated references to people building dams and wells; planting, irrigating, and harvesting seed; preserving the surplus and storing it in houses, sheds or secure vessels; and creating elaborate cemeteries and manipulating the landscape – none of which fitted the definition of a hunter-gatherer. Could it be that the accepted view of Indigenous Australians simply wandering from plant to plant, kangaroo to kangaroo, in hapless opportunism, was incorrect? (9)

Indeed, in his detailed analysis of these historical accounts, Pascoe refutes the widely accepted view of Indigenous Australians as only hunter-gatherers. He also points to the particular changes brought about by European colonization that have led to the disappearance, or near disappearance of their agricultural economy.

As asserted by Robert Mayes, agriculture has been used to dispossess Aboriginal Australians in a twofold manner: (1) European farming practices were used to distinguish the "civilized" from the "savage"; and (2) "grazing livestock, planting crops, erecting fences and damming rivers," among other practices, meant the settlers occupied land. As Aboriginal communities were being pushed out of their traditional homelands, Australian land was being degenerated by the introduction of sheep and rabbits and by the removal of trees, which resulted in poor soil health and lack of climatic stability on the continent. Moreover, the spread of settler agriculture, particularly grazing, "led to violent clashes and severely disrupted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of life" (Mayes). As mentioned in the introduction, another significant change to Indigenous Australian foodways came with the development of large-scale agriculture and global agribusiness after WWII. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples consider it to be yet another iteration of the colonizing process that has started with European settlement on the continent.

Decades of brutal colonization, the Frontier Wars, and removal from traditional lands have had a ravaging effect on Aboriginal communities and their cultures. The ensuing policy of forced assimilation, which included removing children from their Aboriginal families and the creation of Aboriginal missions, has further added to that devastation, which included the loss of not just Indigenous agriculture, but Traditional Ecological Knowledge. TEK refers to "the accumulative body of knowledge, including skills, practices, and innovations (technology), which is often derived from Indigenous peoples' intimate interactions with their

traditional environment" (Huambachano 87). Thus, TEK may also be associated with fishing, hunting and gathering practices, as well as food preparation techniques. Langton and Ma Rhea explain how governments have impacted the loss of TEK among Indigenous communities:

> The often poor understanding by national governments of inter-relationships between biodiversity and cultural diversity accounts in part for the rapid loss of traditional biodiversity-related knowledge. The rights of Indigenous and local communities are, more often than not, limited by statutes and regulations because of the ideological stance which modem nation states hold towards these subsistence economic systems, holding them to be backward ways of life as against the belief in 'progressive' ways of life that the modem global economy is purported to offer. Nation state absorption and assimilation of these groups and assertion of ownership and control of their knowledge systems for commercial and national purposes also poses a great threat to the capacity of these groups to sustain their social and economic systems and, in some cases, to the continued existence of these groups. (51)

The misguided policies have led to widespread poverty among Indigenous communities, many of which, especially those living in remote areas, lack access to fresh food throughout a large part of the year. Poverty, coupled with food insecurity results in high rates of overweight and obesity among Indigenous Australians (Liotta). Chronic diseases with strong environmental and behavioural etiology, such as cardiovascular disease and Type Two Diabetes are also prevalent among these communities (Beks et al.). Overall, "the burden of disease experienced by Indigenous Australians is 2.3 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians," with 19 per cent of it caused by mental health and substance disorders (AIHW). Therefore, reducing the burden of disease could be attained by improving social and emotional wellbeing, which in turn can be achieved through "engaging and participating in traditional food management" (Liotta). Thus, recovering traditional foodways can be considered as a decolonizing act and a solution to food insecurity and the physical and mental health issues that Indigenous communities in Australia face. Foodways are also part of the broader practices of "caring for country," a concept which is central to Aboriginal Australian cosmologies. Furthermore, producing and selling food offers economic opportunities for Indigenous food producers and retailers. However, recovering traditional foodways is not always possible, or practical, and many precolonial foodways are also influenced by current Australian foods and food production practices, which is a testament to both Indigenous peoples' resilience and creativity. As poignantly summarized by Mayes:

> The capacity for Indigenous people in remote communities to hunt traditional foods and gather bush tucker is crucial for well-being and connection to country. Likewise, the food insecurity faced by Indigenous peoples living in remote areas is a

pressing public health concern. However, conceiving Indigenous food sovereignty as primarily concerned with traditional practices and remote communities relies on a rather narrow conception of indigeneity. This conception mirrors the settler-colonial imaginary that "authentic" Indigenous people live "out there" in the bush, and that "authentic" Indigenous culture is static. (2018)

3. Indigenous Food Sovereignty in Australia

There are a number of Indigenous initiatives, corporations and organizations working towards food sovereignty in Australia. Their goals vary, and they are often intertwined with other aims, such as the revival of Aboriginal languages, ways of "caring for country," and other cultural elements, or creating opportunities for Indigenous youth, i.e., offering vocational training and mentorship. Some of them focus primarily on providing food for their community, some put emphasis on educating youth and passing on TEK from Aboriginal Elders, while others also focus on creating successful businesses in the food and hospitality industries.

One example of such enterprises is Aboriginal Catering, which forms part of the Koori Kulcha Aboriginal Corporation, located on the Kazcare grounds in the NSW Southern Highlands. The Corporation's aim is to "provide education and employment for Indigenous people through training in catering, team building, cultural awareness, art, dance, cooking and cultural knowledge" ("Koori Kulcha Aboriginal Corporation"). Youth and adults trained in their program can later be employed in the organization. Aboriginal Catering itself, provides a unique dining experience based on native foods to its clients at various events, including government functions and weddings ("Aboriginal Catering").

Another such organization is the non-for-profit Prepare Produce Provide (PPP), which the trading name for Live To Tell Your Story Inc., created in 2013 in WA "that provides pathways for indigenous youth to tell their stories and explore their culture through food and hospitality" ("Prepare Produce Provide"). Their aim is to "use food and cooking as a vehicle to help meet the needs of young people in their community while providing training and support for them to develop future career pathways," by creating opportunities for youth "to work with top chefs, local producers and other leaders within the education, hospitality, tourism and agricultural industries, and to inspire and educate through programs that support and benefit a wide range of social and community causes" ("Prepare Produce Provide"). One of the major events that they organize is a unique dining experience called Kinjarling Djinda Ngardak – which means "Albany Comes Alive Under the Stars" in Noongar language. It sees "Indigenous students from across WA travel to Albany to participate in a week-long culinary camp where students participate in culinary masterclasses led by renowned chefs. Students are also mentored by local Elders and Cultural Leaders during activities on-country that facilitate the

exploration of traditional plants and ingredients and support cross-cultural sharing and connection to Country" ("Kinjarling Djinda Ngardak"). Thus, they use food as a means to improve health in their communities, create educational and economic activities for youth as well as opportunities to teach about Aboriginal cultures.

Since the Aboriginal Australian civil rights movement in the 1970s and the following period of self-determination, the ideas relating to food sovereignty have been pronounced as part of the larger Indigenous self-determination efforts. This is particularly visible in the Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017), an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement that calls for a "First Nations Voice" in the Australian Constitution and a "Makarrata Commission" to supervise a process of "agreement-making" between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and "truth-telling" about Australia's history. In it, they emphasize their spiritual connection to the land. After the statement was rejected by government, the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA), which is not an Indigenous-run organization, called on the Prime Minister to reconsider his decision (Mayes 2018). They stated in a press release:

> As stewards of the land, our farmer members are endeavouring to work with the original owners of this country to create a more socially equitable and ecologically sustainable nation, and a truly food sovereign future.
> Through AFSA's ongoing engagement with the international organisation, La Via Campesina, we stand in strong solidarity with the global movement for recognition and inclusion of indigenous and First Nation Peoples everywhere, without whom there can be no true food sovereignty.
> We support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognising "the urgent need to respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples affirmed in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements with States. (AFSA 2017)

Thus, AFSA sees Indigenous Australians' traditional knowledges as a key to achieving their goals of sustainable and sovereign farming, and as a member of La Via Campesina, it frames the issue in the context of international food sovereignty and international Indigenous Peoples' rights. It is in this context that I would like to analyse the involvement of members of Prepare Produce Provide in Slow Food International, which also works towards food sovereignty on an international level.

4. Slow Food International and the 2018 Terra Madre Meeting

Slow Food was founded "in the 1980s in Italy, and it believes that food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment" and that "through our food choices we can collectively influence how

food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and change the world as a result" ("Slow Food International. About Us" 2019). As such, Slow Food views food production and consumption as a political act. In 2004, Slow Food launched the Terra Madre network, "an international network of food communities – groups of small-scale producers and others united by the production of a particular food and closely linked to a geographic area" ("Terra Madre Network"). Its aim is to "give a voice and visibility to those around the world whose approach to food production protects the environment and communities" ("Terra Madre Network"). It brings together "food producers, fishers, breeders, chefs, academics, young people, NGOs and representatives of local communities," and since 2004 it "has come together every two years at the global meeting, while national and regional meetings are regularly organized around the world" ("Terra Madre Network").

Furthermore, in 2011, the first Indigenous Terra Madre meeting was held in Sweden bringing together representatives of Indigenous peoples from across the globe. They are not only welcome in the network, but they are seen as holders of knowledge that can help further the organization's aims globally. I argue that involvement with Slow Food International (as well as other international food sovereignty organizations) offers a new avenue for Indigenous Australians to achieve their goals of food security and sovereignty. I will show this based on my observations at the 2018 Terra Madre – Salone del Gusto meeting, which took place in Turin, Italy, and which is organized by Slow Food biannually. More than 300 Indigenous delegates from over sixty countries attended the meeting, including several representatives of Prepare Produce Provide.

The event took place in several spaces. Three major halls showcased local Italian products, while international producers' stalls were located in a separate building in the World Arena. Apart from visiting stalls, and trying or buying food, one could participate in numerous events, such as, dinners, guided tours, forums and taste workshops. The forums were meant as platforms for discussing important, often urgent topics regarding the relationship between food and land rights, refugee and migrant rights, climate change, education, biodiversity, food waste, ending pesticide use, etc. Apart from food producers, activists and educators, policy makers from the EU and other regions were invited to participate in them. The central place of the World Arena was the Terra Madre Arena, a round stage where many of the forums regarding the three groups represented in the Terra Madre Network – migrants, youth and Indigenous peoples – were held.

The Aboriginal Australian participants at the 2018 event were, among others, members of the Prepare Produce Provide (PPP) as well as the Slow Food Swan Valley and the Eastern Hills convivium. PPP first worked with Slow Food in 2016, when they took two Indigenous students and Wardandi Bibbulmun elder, Dale Tillbrook, to Terra Madre. Building on the outcomes of that inaugural trip, the delegation in 2018 included two additional highly respected Aboriginal elders, Dr. Noel Nannup and Tahn Donovan (Thierfelder 2018a). Together with the students, Johnnice 'Gecko'

Divilli and Peter Roe, they presented in several forums at Terra Madre about the history and techniques of Aboriginal farming and the challenges and opportunities facing the Australian bush food industry. Moreover, they opened the 2018 meeting on its first day, they shared their foodways with the guests who approached their stand and participated in a variety of organized meetings. I will describe selected events to offer my interpretation of their participation in the Terra Madre network, focusing on the promotion of Indigenous foodways, the recognition of Indigenous ecological knowledges as central to solving current environmental issues, the fostering of a trans-Indigenous network of food producers, activists and educators.

For the Indigenous Australian delegates, sharing food and information about how it is produced at the stand, as well as talking about its meaning and the importance of their relationship with country, not only makes an international group of visitors to Terra Madre aware of the rich traditional Indigenous foods that many did not even know existed, but it also allows them to better understand the peoples' relationship with their food. In recalling her participation in the 2016 Terra Madre, Dale Tilbrook expressed her surprise at the dearth of knowledge about Aboriginal food culture and the eager interest of delegates following her address at the 2016 Indigenous Terra Madre: "When I talked about Noongyar six seasons and moving across the land according to the seasons, our approach to agriculture and fire stick farming, people were gobsmacked. They'd never heard anything about our culture or the sophistication of our connection to the land. I got mobbed afterwards by people wanting to know more" (Tilbrook; qtd. in Thierfelder 2018a).

Dr Nannup, Tahn Donovan and Dale Tilbrook also addressed the audience at Italy's University of Gastronomic Sciences stand where they discussed the impact of your blood type on your seasonal diet. The talk "introduced the six-season cycle of Western Australia's Noongar people as an example of a food system that respects weather, environment, social practices and individuals' health" (Thierfelder 2018b). Moreover, Dale Tilbrook shared her knowledge of the Australian bush food industry, its history, challenges and opportunities, while Tahn Donovan shared "the personal side of her entrepreneurial journey establishing bush foods brand, Max's Black" (Thierfelder 2018b). Therefore, participation in Terra Madre allows Indigenous Australians to promote Aboriginal foods and foodways, and to put them on Australia's food map.

Slow Food not only allows Indigenous delegates to promote their foods and foodways, but it also privileges Indigenous knowledges and supports Indigenous peoples in their struggles for food sovereignty and land rights. On the main page of the Indigenous Terra Madre website, we read:

> It is clear that supporting indigenous communities and their traditional food systems means preserving the world's biodiversity. The Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) network was born to bring indigenous peoples' voices to the forefront of the debate on food and culture and to institutionalize indigenous peoples' participation in the Slow Food movement, as an integral part of the larger Terra Madre network.

> Slow Food believes that defending biodiversity also means defending cultural diver-
> sity. The rights of indigenous peoples to control their land, to grow food and breed
> livestock, to hunt, fish and gather according to their own needs and decisions is fun-
> damental in order to protect their livelihoods and defend the biodiversity of native
> animal breeds and plant varieties.
> Today, indigenous peoples are fighting against land and water grabbing, cultural ero-
> sion, social discrimination and economic marginalization. The partnership between
> ITM communities and Slow Food confronts these issues by promoting indigenous
> food systems that are good, clean and fair. ("Indigenous Terra Madre Network")

A similar message was reiterated during the opening of the conference at the Terra
Madre Arena. In addressing the Indigenous participants, one of Slow Food's board
members said that this was their place, their home, and that in the past years the
organization has learnt so much from them. He called them to work together and
give visibility on a global and local level. He emphasized that they needed to grow
and have an impact. Indeed, these do not seem to just be empty words on the part of
the organization. After the introduction, Indigenous people from different countries
opened the meeting with prayers and speeches. First, a Masai Woman and member
of the Advisory Board for the Indigenous Peoples' Network, Margaret Tundra
Lepore, offered a prayer in her language, followed by Whadjuk Elder, Dr. Noel
Nannup, who offered a welcome in the Noongar language and Vincent Medina of
the Muwekma Ohlone tribe of the San Francisco Bay area in California. Nannup
was accompanied by the two young Aboriginal delegates, Johnnice 'Gecko' Divilli,
a Nykina woman with links to the Ngarinyin people, and Peter Roe from Broome,
WA. He acknowledged Slow Food and emphasized that the most important people
for Aboriginal people are the future youth. He said that Slow Food was growing
which was very important, and exclaimed in his Aboriginal Tongue – "Bad spirit,
go away," adding: "They go when we speak our ancient tongue. The vibration
breaks into the spirit world, and as a race of people, our worldview is this simple:
the spiritual world actions the physical world and we abide by that" (Nannup 2018).
As such, Slow Food welcomes not only the ecological knowledge that Indigenous
peoples bring to the table, but also recognizes the inseparability of their cultures
and spiritual practices. This is an important acknowledgement, as from a traditional
Aboriginal point of view, they constitute one and the same element. Indigenous
speakers were also invited to share their perspectives on land stewardship and the
environment at different forums concerning biodiversity, sustainability, climate
change, etc. Policy makers also took part in many of these discussions. Moreover,
the issue of Indigenous land rights, was addressed on many occasions during the
forums by representatives of several Indigenous nations from around the world.
Slow Food further assists Indigenous peoples by supporting 586 presidia and food
communities around the world, many of which are Indigenous. Presidia protect
"a traditional product at risk of extinction (an Ark of Taste Product); a traditional

processing method at risk of extinction (in fishing, animal husbandry, food pro-
cessing and farming)"; or "a rural landscape or ecosystem at risk of extinction"
(Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity).

   Slow Food also serves as an important platform for trans-Indigenous coop-
eration, where the representatives of Indigenous groups are able to discuss their
challenges and solutions, and create new networks for collaboration, both through
Slow Food and beyond, for instance by organizing separate meetings for particular
Indigenous or regional networks, such as the National Australian and New Zealand
Meeting. It is important for Indigenous representatives to be able to make these links
to further their causes both locally and internationally, and because they are keen to
learn from one another. In an interview given before coming to Terra Madre, John-
nice "Gecko" Divilli said, "I want to learn more of that […] I'm excited and a bit
nervous to go to Italy. But I want to learn from other indigenous cultures, to learn how
they do things, get ideas and then share that experience when I get home" (Divilli;
qtd. in Thierfelder 2018a). Indeed, both Divilli and Roe acknowledged the wealth
of knowledge and ideas that they took home after the 2018 meeting, as well as the
realization that Indigenous peoples (particularly in the Asia and Oceania region) face
a lot of the same problems and challenges as their communities do (MacDougall).

   Last, as one of the Turtle Island participants put it, it is nice to see and feel
that one is not alone in their endeavour. As such, Slow Food embraces a global
Indigenous community of actors fighting for their rights. One of the most visible
examples of this was the culminating point of the whole event, a huge, colourful
parade of the Slow Food members from the World Arena, who, playing music on
different instruments, singing songs in their language, often in their traditional
dresses, and sharing bread, made their way to an outside stage, where Carlo Petrini
addressed the participants in a speech emphasizing unity, strength and the power
of millions standing against giants.

5. Conclusion

As shown above, by promoting Indigenous foodways, putting Indigenous knowl-
edges and stewardship of the environment at the centre of discussions on tackling
global challenges like climate change and food insecurity, and by creating a 'trans-In-
digenous' platform for Indigenous peoples to meet and discuss their challenges and
ideas, Slow Food encourages its Indigenous members to create change and impact
food policies and practices in their respective countries. At the same time, through
these efforts, new forms of cosmopolitanism are created, as Terra Madre fosters
not only trans-indigenous cooperation, or what Niezen (2003) would call "interna-
tional indigenism," but cooperation between different international actors working
toward the common goal of food sovereignty. Thus, in order to describe the work
and cooperation that takes place at Slow Food, it is useful to employ McMichael's

concept of "global citizenship," understood as "novel forms of political mobilization that reformulate conceptions of sovereignty itself," or "the unfolding of a world consciousness, or global social episteme, reaching beyond the principle of national self-determination to an alternative principle of cosmopolitan governance" (25).

Notes

1   I use the term "foodways" to mean "the systems of knowledge and expression related to food that vary with culture" and "the connection between food-related behavior and patterns of membership in cultural community, group, and society" ("Foodways").
2   La Via Campesina "brings together millions of peasants, small and medium size farmers, landless people, rural women and youth, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world and advocate for land rights and food sovereignty in the face of globalized agribusiness and food policy" ("International Peasant's Voice" 2020).
3   Parts of the introduction pertaining to global food policy and food sovereignty have been printed in Kruk-Buchowska 2018, 414–415.
4   TEK "began to gain notoriety in the 1980s among various multidisciplinary fields of study, such as the environmental sciences, particularly in ecology. At present, TEK is considered an interdisciplinary theory drawing from social and cultural anthropology, biology, ecology, and resource management fields such as fisheries, wildlife and forestry" (Berkes, Folke, and Colding; McGregor; Huambachano 2019, 87).

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"Mixed identity of circumstances": Bronisław Malinowski in Australia and Melanesia

Abstract: During his stay in Australia and Melanesia from 1914 to 1920, the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski frequently experienced dichotomous and contradictory attitudes to people, places, and events: the contrast between the 'civilized' Australia and the 'savage' Melanesia; the background of the Austria-ruled Poland in which he grew up and the British-dominated Australia, Austria's enemy in the First World War; the emotional tension of simultaneous attraction to two women – Nina Stirling of Adelaide and Elsie Rosaline Masson of Melbourne; the dilemma of the 'heroic' versus the 'unheroic' related to the war. Most of the dualities of Malinowski's Australian-Melanesian experience, reflected in letters to his mother Józefa Malinowska, Elsie R. Masson, and in *Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1989), were resolved at the end of the period, which became a turning point in his life.

Keywords: Australia, Bronisław Malinowski, civilization, First World War, German culture, Melanesia, 'savages'

1. Introduction

The anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942) arrived in Australia in July 1914 to participate in the long meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science/BAAS and to begin his fieldwork in Melanesia. Though a grown-up man aged 30, Malinowski was still to experience conflicts and tensions that exerted a strong formative influence on him. The dramatic contrast of the 'civilized' and the 'savage,' which he first experienced studying the natives of Melanesia, later shaped some of his social and political views. The First World War put him in a difficult position between the cultural background of Austria-ruled Poland in which he had been raised and the British-Australian culture in which he had to

function. It also caused a conflict of moral integrity related to the fighting and his unheroic inability to participate in it. Finally, involved in two love relationships, Malinowski was to go a long way towards stability in his relations with women.

2. Between the 'Civilized' and the 'Savage'

Though the rich programme of events accompanying the BAAS meeting gave him only a superficial experience of the country, Malinowski found Australia a place with "completely fresh, new views, not comprehended either in actual fact or in any artistic imagination" (Young 290). The continent was "unspoiled by cultural appropriations of earlier generations" (Young 290). The presence of the 'savage' Aborigines was a major element of his experience of the novelty of Australia (2002, 352, 354). He first encountered them on 22 July 1914 on the outskirts of Perth and described the event in a letter of 27 July 1914 to his mother Józefa Malinowska (1848–1918): "I saw a black man from the tribe called […] Lurija that inhabits the area next to Arunta. The conversation was very difficult because we could hardly understand each other" (1914a; qtd. in Young 291). On 26 July 1914 he visited an Aborigine camp for a demonstration of boomerang-throwing and a viewing of a *woomera* (spearthrower) and a *churinga* (engraved sacred object); he was, however, still unable to gather "any definite information" (Young 291). A day later he discussed boomerangs and initiation ceremonies with the Protector of Aborigines and was also shown "an interesting penis of wood and stone, which they show to boys during initiation" (Young 292). In a letter to his mother, he continued: "I've already seen a few Aborigines, dressed in the European way, of course, and quite civilized – but I think I could get a lot of information out of them, after long research" (1914a; qtd. in Young 291). At the early stage of his research enterprise, Malinowski showed the passionate attitude of a young field researcher intent on getting a first-hand understanding of the new people and cultures that he was to study for the next six years.

Those hopeful expectations changed when the fieldwork in Melanesia got under way. Upon leaving Brisbane for the expedition to Mailu in September 1914, Malinowski wrote: "I boarded the ship. Several persons came to see me off. […] I felt I was taking leave of civilization" (1989, 4–5). Between June 1915 and March 1916 he completed the first period of fieldwork in the Trobriands, but kept no diary then. On leaving Sydney in October 1917 for the second expedition to the Trobriands, Malinowski again experienced the feeling that accompanied him on the journey to Mailu in 1914: "Departure: backs of the business houses – last glimpse of civilization" (1989, 107). In a letter of 24 October 1917 to Elsie Rosaline Masson (1890–1935), his future wife, he related the experience to her two journeys to northern Australia, which provided the material for the book *The Untamed Territory* (1915): "Going out of Sydney Harbour I thought of you and wondered how

you felt on the two occasions going that way. I thought we would have developed the Conradesque contrast between the 'last glimpse of civilization'"[1] (Wayne 1995, 30–31).

Malinowski spent most of the time between the two Trobriand expeditions in Adelaide and Melbourne. The latter city was so important for him that the first chart of the diary was titled "Life in Melbourne in Retrospect" (Young 415–416). He spent time in a circle of friends called the Clan, which included Paul and Hede Khuner, Bob Broinowski, Leila Peck and her sisters, Mim H. Weigall of St. Kilda,[2] and, most importantly, Elsie, an Australian writer and nurse, with whom he fell in love. As the study of Melanesian Aborigines went on, Melbourne and the cultural life there became the lonely anthropologist's longing "for a remote idealised civilisation" (Forge; qtd. in Firth 1989b, xxvi). The images of the city and his friends kept haunting him in the Trobriands. Thus, on 15 November 1917 in Samarai, Malinowski wrote in the diary: "Dream: […] I am waiting for tram going to Brighton [a suburb of Melbourne]. I look and listen – is it coming? I catch it at the corner. I am sorry that I am alone and that E.R.M. is not there. I think of the day when I will be back at Melb. and she'll meet me at the station, and we'll ride again up front" (1989, 116). A more definite contrast appeared on 12 December 1917: "I often long for culture – Paul and Hedy [Khuner] and their *home* (almost brings tears to my eyes); E.R.M. and M.H.W. and that atmosphere" (Malinowski 1989, 150). On 14 December 1917 he added: "I thought of Paul, and E.R.M. I thought of civilization with a *pang;* I rowed the Yarra as I read the newspapers, details about Melbourne. The house in Malvern seems now like paradise on earth" (1989, 151). On 21 December 1917 he continued: "All that day longing for civilization. I thought about friends in Melbourne. […] This will be my last ethnological escapade. […] Strong contrast between my dreams of a civilized life and my life with the savages" (1989, 155, 160–161). On some occasions Malinowski was not sure what he missed most. Thus, on 31 December 1917 he wrote: "Then thought of E.R.M. 'What is she doing? […].' […] I was feeling very well physically, as though the tropics don't bother me at all; I long for E.R.M. rather than for civilization" (1989, 170). On 19 January 1918 he confessed: "I sat by the water. At moments almost unbearable longing for E.R.M. – or is it for civilization?" (1989, 190). On some other days, for example on 13 and 16 February 1918, Malinowski was calmer: "The moment I got to work, agitation and *homesickness* vanished. […] *Homesickness* for civilization doesn't torment me these days" (1989, 201, 204; original emphasis). However, the longing for his own world soon returned. On 29 March 1918 Malinowski wrote: "At moments I long, even now, for Melbourne, E.R.M., civilization" (1989, 240). On 9 April 1918 he said: "Continual *flashes of Sensucht* [longing] for Melbourne, P. & H., and E.R.M." (1989, 246; original emphasis). On 25 May 1918 he still noted: "Longing for E.R.M. and Melbourne is still immensely strong. […] I also recall my little room in Grey St., the Library, etc. I am really attached to her and I love her very much" (1989, 279). Malinowski's diary thus shows the period of fieldwork

as marked by "the feeling of confinement, the obsessional longing to be back even if for the briefest while in one's own cultural surroundings" (Firth 1989a, xv). It comprises an image of him "working with enormous industry in one world (New Guinea) while living with intense passion in another (an imagined Australian and European setting)" (Geertz; qtd. in Firth 1989b, xxv).

The contrast between the 'civilized' and the 'savage' was also shaped by the colonial ideology of the time, and some of Malinowski's reactions towards the natives seem to reflect it. As early as on 21 January 1915, during the fieldwork period in Mailu, he said: "On the whole my feelings toward the natives are decidedly tending to '*Exterminate the brutes*'"[3] (1989, 69; original emphasis). The reactions persisted during his second expedition to the Trobriands. Thus, on 18 December 1917 Malinowski wrote: "I thought about my present attitude toward ethnogr. work and the natives. My dislike of them, my longing for civilization" (1989, 155). On 5 January 1918 he was much more emphatic: "During my walk to the *sopi* I felt the need to run away from the *niggers*,[4] but I can't remember what I thought about. In the boat: impressions of Joan Weigall and longing for elegant, well-dressed women" (1989, 175; original emphasis). On some days, however, Malinowski seemed to be satisfied with life among the 'savages.' On 24 January 1918 he wrote: "Read beginning of E.R.M.'s diary; it vexed me. Looked with pleasure at the mangroves and the lagoon; I 'was alone' and felt no desire to go back. For the last few days, until the *mail* came, *native life and native society* had come to seem almost enough to me" (1989, 195; original emphasis). However, negative moods returned on 21 February 1918: "I was irritated by the *niggers* and homesick" (1989, 208; original emphasis). On 11 May 1918 Malinowski made one of his most spiteful comments on the natives:

> On this occasion I made one or two coarse jokes, and one *bloody nigger* made a disapproving remark, whereupon I cursed them and was highly irritated. I managed to control myself *on the spot,* but I was terribly vexed by the fact that this *nigger* had dared to speak to me in such a manner. (1989, 272; original emphasis)

The same mood was still present on 25 May 1918: "The natives still irritate me, particularly Ginger, whom I could willingly beat to death. I understand all the *German and Belgian colonial atrocities*"[5] (1989, 279; original emphasis). On 31 May 1918 he said: "The *niggers* were getting on my nerves, and I could not concentrate" (1989, 284; original emphasis).

The frequent use of the racist-sounding term "niggers" was largely a result of contacts with white merchants in the Trobriand Islands (Firth 1989b, xxiii–xxiv; Kubica 2012, 9). However, it fits both his awareness of the dominant social and cultural position from which he conducted the fieldwork and the difficult emotional experience of extensive contact with Melanesian Aborigines. When the *Diary* was first published in 1967, the attitude "particularly shocked the readers: far from

impartial and benevolent author of *Argonauts*, the Malinowski of the *Diary* was frequently expressing outbursts against the 'niggers'" (Nakai 26). These outbursts, however, were largely motivated by irritation with the behaviour of some of his informants rather than by a racial prejudice on his side. On some occasions Malinowski admitted that his reactions were too extreme (1989, 69; qtd. in Nakai 27).

In spite of the colonial position from which he investigated the savages, Malinowski never advocated the destruction of their native cultures. He believed that the cultural diversity of native life should be protected even if getting to know other cultures "is itself motivated by a colonialist desire" (Nakai 27). That is why he postulated the study of native cultures in native languages – otherwise most elements of those cultures remained obscure (Nakai 25). That was also why he considered the quality of his sources of information very important. On 29 October 1917 he wrote in the diary: "Yesterday morning got up fairly late; I had engaged Omaga [a Mailu informant and village constable] who waited for me below the veranda. […] My talk with him was rather unsatisfactory" (1988, 28). By contrast, on 16 December 1917 he noted: "*Village policeman* is very good informant" (1989, 154; original emphasis). On 9 March 1918 he said: "M.[wagwaya] is very good informant. Worked to the point of exhaustion" (1989, 219). Another form of Malinowski's concern for the culture of the natives was his critical attitude to the white Europeans present in Melanesia. It is especially evident in his numerous comments on British Christian missionaries in the region. He admitted that their work had some positive effects, but thought that the impact of religion on native life was wholly negative. As early as on 16 October 1914 in Mailu, Malinowski wrote: "In the afternoon I went to the village and to the gardens with a policeman; I attended evening service and despite the comical effect of the Psalms being roared out in a savage language, I managed to feel well disposed to the farcical humbug of it all" (1989, 25). On 21 October 1914 he expressed a poignant comment on a missionary in Mailu: "This man disgusts me with his [white] 'superiority,' etc." (1989, 16). On 29 November 1914 he made his standpoint fully clear:

> Saville's underhand dealings with Armit annoy me, as well as the persecution of people unfriendly to the mission. Mentally I collect arguments against missions and ponder a really effective anti-mission campaign. The arguments: these people destroy the natives' joy in life; they destroy their psychological *raison d'etre.* And what they give in return is completely beyond the savages. They struggle consistently and ruthlessly against everything old and create new needs, both material and moral. No question but that they do harm. – I want to discuss this matter with Armit and Murray. If possible also with the Royal Commission.[6] (1989: 41; original emphasis)

Almost four years later, on 31 May 1918, the same attitude was still present: "On my way back: the strongly unpleasant impression made on me by missionaries: artificiality, cult of superficiality and mediocrity" (1989, 284–285). As Gellner

writes, Malinowski "was no doubt much concerned with the culture and well-being of the natives, but in a patronising manner that did not really challenge the basic assumptions of the colonial system" (1987, 557). The 'civilized' and the 'savage' were to be kept separate, and tolerance towards the colonized world was necessary. Such an attitude was at least partly shaped by Malinowski's experience of the Habsburg Empire, in which he grew up – it ruled the member nations but at the same time protected their cultural diversity (Hann).

The opposition of the 'civilized' and the 'savage' did not disappear with the end of Malinowski's fieldwork in Melanesia. Commenting on the rise of Nazism in Europe in the 1930s, Malinowski – like Frazer (55–56; qtd. in Stone 204–205) – agreed that the difference between 'the savage' and "civilised minds" was a matter of degree and that some aspects of the savage had not entirely disappeared from the modern civilized world: the political propaganda of the 1930s was similar to crude magic; racial persecutions in central Europe were modern versions of witch-hunting (Malinowski 1937, vii; qtd. in Stone 203). The fundamental anthropological duality, for the first time fully experienced in Australia and Melanesia, thus turned out to be a legacy of the fieldwork that also shaped some of Malinowski's social and political views.

3. Between German and British Cultures

Malinowski was born in Cracow, a major city of the province of Galicia in Austria-ruled Poland. Extensive education, much travelling in Europe and Africa, as well as mastery of several languages, contributed to his broad experience of cultures other than Polish. The Austrian-German culture of Galicia exerted a strong influence on him. The Habsburg Empire prevented its constituent nations from fighting one another and at the same time protected their national cultures, thus giving meaning to the richness of life. That is why Malinowski had an undisguised admiration and affection for it (Gellner 1987, 578). In "Preface" to The *Cassubian Civilisation* (1935), he wrote:

> I should like to put it here on record that no honest and sincere Pole would ever have given anything but praise to the political regime of the old Dual Monarchy. Pre-war Austria in its federal constitution presented, in my opinion, a sound solution to all minority problems. It was a model of a miniature League of Nations. (1935, viii; qtd. in Gellner 1988, 176)

Daughter Helena Wayne says her father regarded himself as "a Western Slav with Teutonic culture," "a Polish national," and "an Austrian national" (1988, xiii).[7] Though on some occasions Malinowski mentioned his Polish patriotism, his political views in the context of the struggle for Polish independence were clearly anti-nationalist. The experience of Austria-Hungary made him only a "cultural nationalist" (Hann).

Having obtained a PhD degree in philosophy at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in 1908 for a dissertation on the philosophy of the Austrian Ernst Mach (1838–1916) and the German Richard Avenarius (1843–1896), Bronisław – like his father Lucjan Malinowski (1839–1898), a linguist at the university in Cracow – went to study in Leipzig in Imperial Germany under the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) and the economist Karl Bücher (1847–1930). In an entry in the diary before departure for Australia, where he gives a brief account of his stay in Berlin in April 1914, Malinowski expressed a very positive view of the Germans:

> From a general, purely theoretical perspective, I feel clear sympathy for the Germans. Fabulously versatile and flexible, they are the only nation for which culture really opens its full scale of potential. Compared with the English, they impress me with personal, essential *Leistungsfähigkeit* [competence, efficiency] rather than elegance and style. (2001, 310; trans. K.K.)

However stereotypical the view may have been, Malinowski "maintained life-long, frequently amicable, relations" with such German-speaking scholars as Franz Boas (1858–1942), Leo Frobenius (1873–1938), Fritz Gräbner (1877–1934), and Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954), as well as writing in German for German journals such as *Die Geisteswissenschaften* [*Humanities*] (Strenski 767). He may even have had a part in the German movement of *Neuromantik* [second romanticism] – Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie* [the psychology of peoples] and its idea of the *cultural whole* was fertile ground for a synthetic and holistic approach in anthropology as opposed to narrow specialization and fact accumulation typical of positivism.[8] Only such an approach made empathic understanding of native life and *Weltanschauung* [world view] possible (Strenski 766–767). Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833–1911) *new Humanism* in anthropology and Malinowski's *modern Humanism* (Symmons-Symonolewicz 28; qtd. in Strenski 769) both advocated the idea of a "living man"[9] (Malinowski 1989, 255). Last, but not least, Malinowski's frequent use of German words in his personal writings, for example *Stimmung* [atmosphere], is also indicative of his linguistic attachment to German culture. Thus, in letters to Elsie he wrote about "the general *Stimmung*" (Wayne 1995, 44; original emphasis) of fieldwork in the Trobriands and his concentration on work; "the *Stimmung* of a bad dream" (Wayne 1995, 106; original emphasis) accompanying his waking experience of the period of bad weather and ill health; "a *Stimmung* of an Egyptian temple ruin" (Wayne 1995, 117; original emphasis) that accompanied him when he described a Koyatabu landscape rich in lush plants; "*Stimmung* of a return to a big city" (Wayne 1995, 132; original emphasis) during his lonely walks in Boyowa or Vakuta, when he approached villages full of activity. He sometimes combined this word with other German words, as in the diary entry on 20 December 1917: "I felt again the joy of being with real *Naturmenschen* [lit. "nature people"; trans. K.K.]. Rode in a boat.

Many observations. I learn a great deal. General *Stimmung* […], style, in which I observe tabu" (Malinowski 1989, 158; original emphasis).

During his stay in Leipzig Malinowski met Annie Brunton, a South-African pianist, who awoke his interest in British culture and "took" him to the English-speaking world (Wayne 2000, 38). A scholarship from the Jagiellonian University made it possible for him to accompany her to England and study at the London School of Economics. In a letter of 5 January 1910 to his doctoral supervisor Rev. Stefan Pawlicki (1839–1916), Malinowski wrote: "I am very keen on going to England for at least a year, for there, it seems to me, culture has reached its highest standard" (1970; qtd. in Kubica 1988, 96). His high esteem for England and its intellectual tradition was thus more than the influence of James G. Fraser's (1854–1941) *The Golden Bough* (1890), which stimulated much of his interest in anthropology. Malinowski "saw his own work in anthropology as a part of the scholarship and culture of his adopted home" (Paluch 9). Wayne says that at that time her father "for many reasons had an exaggerated respect for England and things English" (2000, 38). Several years later in a letter to Aniela Zagórska (1881–1943), his friend in Zakopane and a relative of Joseph Conrad, Malinowski confessed to "a highly developed Anglomania, an almost mystic cult of British culture and its exponents" (Wayne 2000, 38). He also added: "I have the impression that if I hadn't met Mrs Brunton I would never have taken up sociology nor would I have become to a certain extent Anglicised" (Wayne 2000, 38).[10]

When on 12 August 1914 the British Empire declared war on the Habsburg Empire, Malinowski – a citizen of Austria-Hungary – became an enemy alien in Australia (Young 299). In spite of bureaucratic problems, he decided not to return to Europe. In a letter to his mother of 24 August 1914, he explained that safe journey through Allied territories was impossible; having poor vision, he was also unfit for military service (Malinowski 1914b; qtd. in Young 301). The status of enemy alien inevitably involved Malinowski in the political context of the First World War and Australia's relation to it. In a reply to his protector Charles G. Seligman (1873–1940), who was worried about the potential consequences of his Austrian citizenship, Malinowski replied: "We had the best treatment in Austria and as a confederation of fairly autonomous peoples, Austria was one of the most passible [*sic*] states. Once A. fights for Germany, A. becomes stupidly and clumsily odious. This is my *confession de foi*" (Firth 1957, 13; original emphasis). The statement thus seemed to deny any pro-German sympathies on his side. In some intelligence materials, Malinowski was even described as an "Australian Pole" (Young 367). Though Attlee Hunt (1864–1935), the head of the Department of Home and Territories, the Stirling family of Adelaide, and the influential anthropologist Walter B. Spencer (1860–1929) helped him, the colonial authorities of Papua New Guinea, especially its Lieutenant-Governor John Hubert Murray (1861–1940), thought he was a spy. In 1915, shortly after the return from Mailu, he was arrested for failing to comply with bureaucratic duties. In a letter of 2 April 1915 to Attlee Hunt,

Malinowski – reflecting on his four-year-long stay in Great Britain – explained that even if he were not always on the side of the Allies as a Pole, he had an enormous debt to British culture and science as a man (Young 366). On 19 May 1915, interviewed by the Sydney newspaper *Daily Telegraph*, Malinowski mentioned the "Polish spirit" on the side of the Allies and "the special link and sympathy" between Poland and Australia: Count Strzelecki, Mount Kosciuszko named by him, and the legions fighting in Europe (Young 377–378). However politically expedient the words may have been – the title of the column was "For Poland. Why Germany Is Hated" – they did not appease Murray's suspicions (Young 377).[11]

As the scale of Australian losses increased, social ostracism against enemies alien grew, especially among the upper-class Melburnians, with whom Malinowski associated. He was again suspected of pro-German sympathies (Young 418–419, 437–439). Indeed, some of his letters and passages of the *Diary* clearly show that his pro-British sympathies were not always genuine. In a letter of 21 October 1917 from Sydney, he wrote to Elsie: "Of course 50% of my love for Australia and of my pro-Allied feelings is due to you – not only to you as my personal friend, but (and this dates from a much earlier time, when I admired you from a far distance) to the vision which I got of certain British qualities in you and in the type you represent" (Wayne 1995, 26–27). In a letter of 15–16 January 1918, Malinowski even said: "I am Australianised enough to find that the *Bulletin* is really good in parts and to enjoy it through and through. […] I feel sometimes that I have developed a very strong and definite Australian and even British patriotism, through my relation to you […] I almost feel that with us two, it will be a mutual adoption of our countries, the exchange of patriotisms" (Wayne 1995, 104).[12] His British-Australian patriotism was thus largely motivated by the relationship with Elsie. In the meantime, he had to deal with serious accusations. In the diary entry of 3 January 1918, he said: "Wrote to E.R.M. – At 6 took out the *dinghy*. Undressed down to my truss; fragment of associations: thought of marriage to E.R.M. B. Sp. is also cool toward her – will he break with her? Lady Sp. – what attitude will she take? I thought with indignation of her anti-Austrian-Polish attitude – I made up a long speech pointing out the ignominy of such an attitude. *I screw myself up to a pitch of indignation.* Then I remind myself that all she really cares about is *public opinion.* '*Wahn, alles Wahn*' [all is delusion]" (1989, 172–173; original emphasis). Elsie's letter to him of 14–16 April 1918 also reflected the uncomfortable situation: "He [Baldwin Spencer] even spoke of your anti-British remarks which were enough to intern you. I said of course that was rubbish, you were as much pro-Ally as he or I, and we had openly declared we were fighting for your country" (Wayne 1995, 141–143).

Malinowski's attitudes, however, were far from settled. On 15 February 1918 came the strangest manifestation of his pro-German sympathies when he described his dream: "[…] I am in Germany, 2 crippled cavalry officers; met them in some hotel. Walking with them in some German city. Fraternizing with them. I express my sympathy for Germany and German culture, and tell them I was a

Kriegsgefangener [prisoner of war] in England" (1989, 203; original emphasis). Nakai argues that the dream represents his confinement to the England-ruled part of the world and that it reveals "his hidden hostility towards the British, whom he betrays by addressing the Germans in the German language" (28). The attitude persisted for some time and, on 20 February 1918 Malinowski wrote: "Thought about E.R.M. and my anti-B. feelings: desire to shake Anglo-Saxon dust off my sandals. Certain admiration for German culture. In the evening – or was it at night – I again thought of E.R.M. with tenderness and passion; again deviation and setting myself straight" (1989, 207). On 21 February 1918 he continued: "Thoughts about theoretical not sentimental matters but what were they? Oh yes – 1 was telling Strong in the presence of E.R.M. that England was the embodiment of self-assurance, status quo, the whole world *in the palm of their hands.* Lack of enthusiasm, idealism, purpose. The Germans have a purpose, possibly lousy and thwarted, but there is *élan*, there is a sense of mission. Conservatives [preaching] to 'democrats'; democrats [allying themselves] with Prussianism – the whole thing is a confusion of ideas. The episode with Baldwin etc. makes me decidedly an Anglo-Saxon – not '*phobe*' perhaps, but it eliminates my '*philia*'" (1989, 208; original emphasis).[13] The anti-British sentiment seemed to be over on 24 February 1918: "Read-finished *Zeppelin Nights*. Strong upsurge of pro-British feelings and regrets that I am not in the war. […] Began to read *All for a Scrap of Paper* [subtitled *A Romance of the Present War,* by J. Hocking] and finished it by 10. A very inferior novel but the patriotic tone moved me" (1989, 209).[14] Yet, even in discussions of politics, Malinowski was not decidedly anti-German. On 2 March 1918 he wrote in the diary: "At 4:30 went to see the Brudos.[15] […] Talked about politics and the war. […] I had criticized Hughes and had expressed moderate anti-German opinions" (1989, 214).[16] On 7 March 1918 Malinowski's mood was again anti-British: "At moments discouraged by my strong hatred for England and the English. […] Read issues of *Bulletin*" (1989, 217–218). On 18 March 1918 he said: "I went down to the cabin and read *[The] Englishman* [an English literary journal], which I finished. I don't associate this with E.R.M.; aroused Anglophobic feelings in me. I thought about this and about the complications it might have created in my feelings for E.R.M. […] I talked, Donovan annoyed me: 'respect more in the German trenches'" (1989, 224). Offended by one of the white settlers in New Guinea (2000, 759), on 21 March 1918 Malinowski noted: "Since Donovan, anti-English feelings, more accurately, anti-nationalistic feelings" (1989, 229). However, the diary entry of 2 April 1918 is another illustration of his political and emotional duality: "Strong feelings about the war, and very pro-British ones, particularly in view of the bad news from France" (1989, 242). Finally, in a letter-diary to Elsie of 19–24 May 1918, Malinowski admitted: "I feel perfectly at home in Melbourne and I could spend my life there to its end, without any regret, though not without remorse. Even though I am ostracized by those people who would form the natural autochthonous milieu for us" (Wayne 1995, 149). Though the transition to British culture and

acceptance of its values was hardly straightforward, the complex political situation did not change his personal response to life in Australia.

4. Between Nina and Elsie

The scientist Edward C. Stirling (1848–1919) helped Malinowski during the time spent in Adelaide before the Mailu expedition and the first period of fieldwork in the Trobriands (Young 378–379). His daughter Nina (1888–1976) and Malinowski fell in love and got unofficially engaged (Wayne 1995, xv). In the only entry of the diary related to the first period in the Trobriands, dated 1 August 1915, Malinowski wrote: "I am thinking seriously of marrying N. In spite of that, I am very uncertain. But I want to see her and try. […] If in the end I marry N., March and April 1915 will be the most important months in my emotional life" (1989, 99).

During his long stay in Melbourne between the two Trobriand expeditions, Malinowski and Elsie fell in love. However, the on-going affair with Nina caused a lot of emotional and social tension for him. On 13 November 1917 Malinowski wrote about Elsie: "Emotionally, my love for her – strong, deep, all pervasive – is the main element of my life. I think of her as my future wife. I feel a deep passion based on spiritual attachment. Her body is like a sacrament of love. I should like to tell her that we are engaged, that I want the whole thing made public" (1989, 113). However, on 12 December 1917 he thought of Elsie as a life-long partner, but still loved Nina: "I see her as my future wife, with a feeling of certainty, confidence, but without excitement. I think *of* N.S. fairly often. […] I love her like a child, but I have no illusions and I am sure that she would not have been happy with me; and vice versa" (1989, 149–150). The emotional duality continued for some time and, on 23 December 1917 Malinowski wrote of Elsie: "At moments I lose sight of her. Sensually, she has not succeeded in subjugating me" (1989, 162). He still maintained letter contact with Nina and delayed ending their relationship. The situation was on many occasions a cause of remorse when he compared the two women (1989, 123, 126). On 15 January 1918 Malinowski noted: "Strong, deep feeling for E.R.M. 'My wife' *de facto* and *de sentimento.* […] I think of N.S. […] I am very much attracted to her and interested in her health, but I don't think of her as a woman" (1989, 185; original emphasis). On 18 January 1918 his mood changed again: "Thought about E.R.M.: a travelling companion rather than star *leading my destinies.* But she is always with me. At moments I think my longing for her is less strong, but then am suddenly dominated by it. I thought about N.S., about Adelaide, the city and the country will always be *Paradise Lost* to me: old Stirling, very faithful, the mother, and the whole [camp]" (1989, 188; original emphasis). On 22 of January 1918 he added: "[…] strong physical attraction to N.S., stronger than ever before. I think of her physique*(am I gross?*) – imagining her body vividly in every detail" (1989, 193; original emphasis). The feelings of guilt and uncertainty returned on

23 January 1918: "Painful feeling that all this is spoiled, that this fundamental error casts a shadow over my life, over my relation with E.R.M. I shouldn't have started anything with her before definitively breaking with N.S. […] More clearly than ever I feel that I love them both" (1989, 194–195). The emotional duality was resolved when Nina herself broke off the relationship with him and Malinowski was fully ready to accept Elsie. As Wayne writes, "Both Elsie and Bronio brought with them a conscious ideal of marriage and it included serious work; the delights, the necessity, of music; and the joy of children" (1995, xvi). But even before it finally happened, Malinowski became involved in another duality related only to Elsie.

5. With Elsie: Between the 'Heroic' and the 'Unheroic'

The ANZAC[17] events, especially the battle of Gallipoli in 1915, affected Elsie and her family. Her fiancée Charles E. Matters (d. 1915) was killed in Turkey; her cousin Jim Struthers (d. 1917) lost his life in Europe. Though unable to participate in the war and having the excuse of poor health for it, Malinowski again became caught up between two worlds: the 'heroic' and the 'unheroic.' In the diary entry of 7 January 1918, he referred to a letter from Elsie: "Passage about Charles made the strongest impression on me, depressed me, and even alienated me" (1989, 178). The tension took on a much more dramatic form on 9 January 1918:

> The problem of heroism. Strong feeling of dejection. Charles and I. At moments sad because I cannot subject myself to a test. […] For one moment I thought that there is no room for me in her heart in the shadow of his fame. I wished he would come back and that I had never met her. […] For a moment I looked Destiny in the eyes. I know that if I had had to go to war, I would have gone calmly and without too much inner fuss. […] My love for E.R.M. can be, must be, based on the feeling that she has faith in my heroism, that if I had been called to the colours, I would not have tried to get out of it. (1989, 179–180)

Despite some self-appeasing thoughts, the dark mood returned on 25 January: "All my despair, after all those killed in the war, hangs over this miserable Melanesian hut. I thought of E.R.M., Jim, and Charles. […] Doubts about whether she is still the 'complete woman' for me – I decide to keep them to myself" (Malinowski 1989, 196). On 2 April 1918 Malinowski still wondered: "I think of E.R.M. – will she love me in these unheroic circumstances?" (1989, 242). In a letter to Elsie of 14 May 1918, he even declared himself ready to participate in the war on the Polish side in response to her readiness to do it on the side of the Allies: "I am fairly confident that nothing very bad can happen on the Western front but even this severe fighting which means the killing of thousands of Australians, and probably many Poles in the German trenches, is terrible. […] But if you felt it your duty to

volunteer as a nurse or as an 'Anzac w. a.a.c.' I would get out of my skin to get in to some Polish war work in America" (Wayne 1995, 146–148).[18] His response was thus again motivated by his relationship with Elsie. Fortunately, the duality of the heroic and the unheroic disappeared with the end of the war. However, daughter Helena Wayne mentions the evasive stance that she assumed whenever she was later asked the question, "And what did your father do in the Great War?" Poor health was an excuse; fieldwork in the Pacific was not (Wayne 1988, xiii).

6. Conclusion

The almost six years spent in Australia and Melanesia well illustrate Malinowski's introspective predicament that "he would always 'be split in two'" (Young 137). However serious an obstacle the dualities that he "so often conjured" may have been in his "quest for integrity, a harmonious self of individual steely purpose" (Young 130, 136), Australia and Melanesia were also a watershed in the anthropologist's life because most of the conflicts were resolved at the end of his stay there. The rift between science and art, which opened around 1910, when Malinowski expressed views of culture different from his friend Stanisław I. Witkiewicz's (1885–1939), terminated in the politically motivated break-up between them in Australia (Skalník 56–57). The conflict of cultural identity and of the 'heroic' versus the 'unheroic' disappeared when the war was over and with marriage to Elsie, but another thirteen years passed before Malinowski finally became a British subject. Marrying Elsie in March 1919 ended his difficult relations with women. The duality of the 'civilized' and the 'savage' was more permanent. Possibly because Malinowski was the first anthropologist to give such a vivid description of the contrast in his self-exposing diary, it affected his later work on society and politics.

Notes

1   "Conradesque contrast" is a reference to the British novelist Joseph Conrad's (1857–1924) experience of the sea.

2   Paul Khuner (1884–1932) and his wife Hedwig Khuner (1886–1974) were Austrian entrepeneurs and – like Malinowski – enemies alien in Australia. Bob Broinowski (1877–1959), a fan of bush-walking, was later Clerk of the Senate in Canberra (Young 421–422). Mim H. Weigall (1891–1978) was a sister of the novelist Joan Weigall, later Joan Lindsay (1896–1984), the author of the novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1967), which was made into a film by the Australian director Peter Weir (b. 1944). Malinowski often walked with her along the Yarra bank and read poetry in a kind of intellectual romance (Young 422–423).

3   The words echo Kurtz's words about the natives of Congo in Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (1902) (Malinowski 2007, 428).

4   The original Polish text uses the term "czarnuchy," which is an equally racist equivalent of *niggers*.

5   See Rapport (1990; qtd in Stone 204) for a partial justification of such attitude in terms of overall human characteristics.

6   L. Armit was the Resident-Magistrate of Abau. Rev. William J. V. Saville (1873–1946), a missionary of the London Missionary Society, worked in Mailu at that time (Malinowski 1989, 24–25).

7   Skalnik argues that Malinowski broke up with his friend Stanisław I. Witkiewicz in Australia in April 1914 because, stressing "his cultural and personal bonds and values," he was "basically happy about belonging to liberal Austria […] Witkiewicz felt otherwise. He was raised as a Polish patriot and wanted to fight the Germans as the greatest enemy of the Poles" (58). Kuper says, however, that educated Poles in Austria-Hungary had an ambivalent attitude to Vienna and the German culture (29). Witkiewicz returned to Europe and fought for Poland on the Russian side. Later he became a well-known painter and writer.

8   Strenski even attributes such views to the social milieu in which Malinowski was raised – landed gentry and intelligentsia that grew out of it as opposed to commercial élites (767). A letter-diary to Elsie of 15–16 January 1918 reflects his negative attitude to this social class: "But it is a different layer of Society with which they deal I expect: more money and dog and less in the line of culture" (Wayne 1995, 104).

9   Such humanism would study "living man, living language, and living full-blooded facts" (Malinowski 1989, 255). The provisional title of the paper on it was to be "The New Humanism" (Malinowski 1988, 255) – the same as Dilthey's term.

10 On meeting Malinowski in Poland in 1930, Witkiewicz thought he was "odd and Anglicized to the core" (Gerould 33).

11 More than two years later, on 23 November 1917, Malinowski also used a slightly ingratiating strategy when talking to the brother of Governor Murray in the Trobriands: "I spoke to him about my health, about friends in Melbourne, and fed him compliments about Australians" (1989, 127–128).

12 *Bulletin* was a very influential Australian periodical around the time of the war.

13 Dr. William or Walter Mersh Strong (1873–1946), a medical administrator in Papua New Guinea, also worked with the tribes of Roro-speaking peoples in the interior of New Guinea (Malinowski 1989, 76).

14 *Zeppelin Nights* is a war-related novel written jointly by Violet Hunt (1866–1942) and Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939) in 1916.

15 Raffael Brudo and his wife were French pearl traders in the Trobriands and Malinowski's friends (Malinowski 1989, 142).

16 Billy Hughes (1862–1952), the Prime Minister of Australia during the First
World War, strongly advocated the country's participation in the war.

17 Australia and New Zealand Army Corps/ANZAC soldiers were volunteers.

18 Malinowski considered participation in the Polish Legion being formed in
America, but – because of his poor health – only in a clerkly capacity (Wayne
1988, xiii).

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"My box of memories":
An Australian Country Girl Goes to London

Abstract: In 1954 a young country woman from New South Wales, Shirley Dunk, exercised her agency and travelled to London. This was a journey to the home of her forefathers and copied the activities of other country women who made similar journeys. Some of the earliest of these journeys were undertaken by the wives and daughters of the 19th-century rural gentry. This research project will use a qualitative approach in an examination of Shirley's journey archive complemented with supplementary interviews and stories of other travellers. Shirley nostalgically recalled the sense of adventure that she experienced as she left Sydney for London by ship and travelled through the United Kingdom and Europe. The article will address questions posed by the journey for Shirley and her travelling companion, Beth, and how they dealt with these forces as tourists and travellers. Shirley's letters home were reported in the country press and reminiscent of soldier's wartime letters home that described their tales as tourists in foreign lands. The narrative will show that Shirley, as an Australian country girl, was exposed to the cosmopolitan nature of the metropole, as were other women. The paper will explore how Shirley was subject to the forces of modernity and consumerism at a time when rural women were often limited to domesticity.

Keywords: women's travel writing, letters, diaries, agency, traveller, tourist

1. Introduction

It is not unusual or extraordinary for young Australian women to exercise their agency and travel overseas today; however, it was not always so. This story is about the travel experience of Shirley Dunk, a young woman from the country town of Camden. She gave me access to her papers, "my box of memories" as she called them, from her trip to England in 1954 with her best friend, Beth Jackman. Her journey archive included letters, diaries and photographs. And as historian

Tom Griffith writes in *The Art of Time Travel* the archive is "one of the primary launch pads for the historian's time travel" (11). Shirley's journey archive was the launching pad for my time travel into a new world.

Shirley's experience as a traveller and tourist going to London was far from unique, and much to my surprise, this project has tapped into a rich vein of untold stories of women with similar travel experiences. As I have discovered, many women from ordinary backgrounds undertook this adventure. "Mum always talked about her trip" was a common refrain (O'Brien et al. 2019). This work is a qualitative study that explores an untold story of women's history – tales from the shadows if you like – a form of radical history that details "the struggles of disempowered people" (Irving and Cahill 1). The work illustrates that contemporary travellers and tourists have much in common with those from the past.

Shirley's travel archive fits into a rich history of women travel writers, especially in the 20th century as it became easier "for women of all classes to travel" (Fish 672). Cheryl Fish argues that 20th century women's travel writing linked to motion, gender, technology and progress and that women's travel journeys were the "twentieth-century version of the 'quest'" (672). Leyla Giray Alyanak maintains that women's travel writing "is more than about places – it's about how women cope with being women in a foreign land" (n.p.). Alyanak identifies its origins to the 17th century and Frenchwoman Marie Catherine le Jumel de Barneville, Baroness d'Aulnoy, who travelled extensively in Spain and England. (n.p.). The genre of women's travel writing gradually expanded as women progressively learnt to write and travel for leisure with the introduction of the railway. Women recording the intimate details of their journeys became a popular pastime. Collections of women's travel writing, including diaries, are held in libraries (National Library of Australia 2020; State Library of NSW 2020) and other archives. Some women have had their writing published (for example, Tasma and Clarke, 1995) or have self-published (for example, Colman 1996) and women's travels have drawn the attention of scholars (Pesman 1996; Woollacott 2001; Bridge et al. 2009).

2. The Extraordinary Journey of Going to London

Across Australia, thousands of young single women exercised their agency and travelled to London and beyond from the mid-19th century. In the immediate post-war years, the majority of the 30,000 Australian-born who lived in the United Kingdom were women in their 20s (Bridge, et al. 01.2). Angela Woollacott in *To Try Her Fortune in London* calls these journeys a pilgrimage and describes how they were a life-changing experience for many women (19). Historian Ros Pesman argues that these journeys were a metaphor for a passage that was also a rite-of-passage (184). An extraordinary travel journey that was not at all ordinary (11).

Woollacott has argued that Australian women in London were perceived as modern because they had the vote, were "more athletic and physically fit than English women" and were "travellers and tourists" embodying new technology of travel. Steamships represented the modernity of the 20th century, where the travel experience was for relaxation and enjoyment and showed the sophistication of the traveller (20–21). The sea-passage reflected and captured some of the style and comfort of the grand North Atlantic Ocean liners. Shirley Dunk travelled on the RMS Orcades, which was built for the Orient Line in 1947 and was the most modern, and fastest ship on the Australian trade. The ship had "a sense of style and the feeling of old-world luxury" offering a "new standard in accommodation [with] multiple saloons, shops, a hair salon, hospital, swimming pool and a range of cabin choices." The ship carried just over 1500 passengers on a passage of 31 days (McFadzean and Churchward n.p.). The passage was an epic journey for any young traveller and visited exotic port locations at Colombo, Port Suez, Naples, Marseilles, and Gibraltar.

For young Australian travellers, the journey was extraordinary if only examined from the cost of the fares. Shirley paid A£95 for her one-way sea-passage from Sydney to London, which was 63 times her weekly wage of 30/- per week as a clerical and sales assistant at Clintons Electrical in Camden. The alternative air-flight on the "Kangaroo Route" was much more expensive at £525. The air route had seven stop-overs, a flight time of over 70 hours using the propeller-driven airliner Lockheed Constellation and carried 29 passengers (Qantas 2019, n.p.). The introduction of jet aircraft in 1959 ended any notion of a romantic journey by creating a quick and efficient link to Europe (Qantas 2018, n.p.).

Pesman, who travelled to Europe in 1961, argues that there was a commonality of experience amongst these female travellers (2). Initially, there were the months of pre-departure preparation and community farewells, followed by the journey made up of the sea-passage, sight-seeing of new places and sometimes working overseas. At the same time, women produced an extensive written record, which was stored away once they returned home (11–12). Pesman argues that young women travelled overseas for a host of reasons including holidays, recreation, self-improvement, recognition, professional experience, adventure, romance, escape and fulfilment of aspirations, and modernity was part of this mix (9). The imperial metropole of London offered new modern experiences in the arts and urbanity that were not available in Australia (Woollcott 4).

3. The Modern Country Girl

Camden's Shirley Dunk has identified herself as a modern country girl and modernity has been part in her life in the form of fashion, the movies and other types of consumerism. She presented herself as a representation of the "Modern Girl" that "emerged around the world in the first half of the twentieth century." Alys Eve Weinbaum

and the Modern Girl Around World Research Group argue that "the 'modern girl' denoted young women with the wherewithal and desire to define themselves in excess of conventional female roles and as transgressive of national, imperial and racial boundaries." Shirley, and other young country women, were influenced by visual representations of the "Modern Girl" in posters, magazines, journals, and films. The consumption of beauty products and associated fashions "enabled" country women to exercise their agency as "social actors" and "craft themselves as modern" influenced by advertising and movie stars (Weinbaum 1, 9, 12–13, 18, 20).

In 1953 Shirley presented herself in a photoshoot as an up-to-date stylish young woman in a Dior-inspired home-made dress well-aware of the latest fashions (Aulsebrook 2019). Modernity was on display weekly at the Paramount Movie Theatre in Camden and Shirley was a big movie fan. Sociologist Catherine Driscoll in her book *The Australian Country Girl* argues that the country town movie theatre was a significant cultural experience of "modernity," and played a "crucial role in the visibility of 'modern girls'" (24). Film historian Jessica Freame maintains that movies were an important site for representations of the "ideal" woman in the 1950s. She argues that this imagery re-enforced an "idealised version of femininity, marriage and family" that was associated the "safety and security" of the past during the anxiety of the Cold War period. (n.p.). Shirley and her work colleague, Beth, were not to be confined by representations of "ideal womanhood" and associated links to domesticity, social restrictions or gender expectations. They exercised their agency, and sought adventure and new horizons outside their lives in the country town of Camden (Rorke 2019). Shirley says that her travel aspirations were assisted by the increased affluence of the post-war years and a new sense of entitlement that came with it (Rorke 2020).

The sense of escape that Shirley and Beth sought was a common theme of travel stories by other women. Camden's June Clinton, a contemporary of Shirley, was encouraged by her mother to travel, see the world and have an "exciting life," not an ordinary one like her own that had been confined by marriage and domesticity. June travelled to London in 1953, and her daughter Melissa says that she found the journey a life-changing experience. June considered herself a modern young Camden woman and smoked cigarettes in a holder, cut her hair short and wore smart, fashionable clothes that were the trend in London (Baker 2019).

Another Camden escapee was 25-year-old traveller Annette. She left Sydney on a cargo ship in 1958, escaping a marriage proposal and seeking to further her career as an artist and writer. She spent six weeks at sea and landed in Norway. Annette had departed with the expectation of work in London that failed to eventuate. She found a job and stayed eight years, living in France and England (Annette 2019). Escaping loss caused by the Second World War was top of the list of reasons for going to England for 24-year-old Camden school teacher Patricia Fraser. In 1947 Fraser left Camden because of feeling hollow and lonely after the death of her husband. Fraser had married a Camden airman in 1944 who was killed in action shortly after their

marriage (Colman 32–37). The aftermath of the loss and chaos of the Second World War sometimes created opportunities that women eagerly took up.

Bexley-raised 25-year-old Enid Wilmot refused to be confined by gender expectations and domesticity when she left Australia in 1948. Enid had served in the WAAAF in the Second World War and her daughter Jo, a Camden resident, says that her mother was escaping the expectation that she would return to traditional life and "the confines of home, people's expectations or censure, and disappointment in love." Jo feels that Enid was "looking for adventure, new experiences, variety and wanting to discover more about the world" (O'Brien 2019, 340). Enid left Australia for Fiji, then journeyed to New Zealand, stayed four years and eventually arrived in London in 1954, lasted for ten months, then travelled to Canada and eventually returned to Sydney in 1956. Enid was a city girl who loved parties, music and theatre and was worldly-wise by the time she left Australia. City girls, unlike their country counterparts, had access to educational, entertainment and employment opportunities that were often denied rural women who lived in small, closed, and sometimes, isolated communities. Modernity shaped Enid's life in Sydney well before she travelled overseas and made her "cosmopolitan and independent." Jo says, "Her journey was not the trip of a life-time – just another interesting place to go" (O'Brien 2019). Often these desires were inter-generational. Historian Jan Twomey argues that escaping a conservative society was part a mix of reasons that motivated military nurses going off to the First World War (2019), including ten from Camden (Hokin 2017). The Camden contingent was a small part of over 2000 nurses who served overseas. Many wanted to extend and enhance their professional experience, while others were looking for adventure, demonstrating a sense of patriotic duty and a desire to care (Twomey 2019).

Shirley was far from the first Camden woman to feel the attraction of metropolitan London. Husband-hunting was high on the agenda of colonial women from wealthy families who travelled to England. One of the earliest was Elizabeth Macarthur, a member of the Camden female elite. She did the Grand Tour of Europe in 1860 with her parents, James and Emily Macarthur of Camden Park, where she met her future husband. After marrying British naval officer Captain Arthur Onslow at age 26 years in 1867, she travelled to England between 1887 and 1891 with her children. She attended her son James graduation from Cambridge BA LLD in 1890. She returned to England between 1892 and 1894 when she purchased a house in London; in 1902 she attended the coronation of Edward VII, and in 1911 she died in England. Elizabeth's daughter Sibella accompanied her mother on these trips and, after her mother's death, travelled to London in 1920, 1927, 1932 and 1937. The Macarthur Onslow women were financially well off and enjoyed the privilege of travelling to Europe regularly. They developed social, cultural and economic links to 'home' in England that functioned across three levels – local, provincial, metropolitan – Camden, Sydney, and London, which consolidated their status in New South Wales (Willis 2014, Chapter One).

4. Travellers and Tourists

The departure of Shirley and Beth for England was a notable social event in their home town of Camden and was marked by community farewells reported in the local press – Pesman has called them pre-departure rituals (151). Over 80 friends from Sydney and Camden attended "an enjoyable function" held at the Craigend tea rooms in Camden, where there were skits and other entertainment. At the end of the night, Shirley and Beth received some gifts, and everyone enjoyed the "portmanteau" cake (*Camden News*, 17 December 1953). The previous year June Clinton and Enid Clifton were similarly farewelled before they went to England. The Camden CWA Younger Set gave Enid and June going away gifts, and there was a farewell at the home of Mr and Mrs Arthy of Rose Bay (*Camden News*, 18 December 1952). On their departure from Sydney, June and Enid were sent off by a "crowd of friends" at the Sydney wharves on the ship the SS Maloa (*Camden News*, 24 December 1952). Similarly, Camden teacher Patricia Fraser had farewell parties when she left the local area in 1947 (Colman 45). Pre-departure parties were a public affirmation by the Camden community of the desire by these young women to see the world and escape the community's social restrictions. It created an apparent paradox where a rural community allowed its brightest and best young women to leave and freely roam the world with no restrictions.

Historian Richard White argues that the sea-passage was a vital part of the trip and prepared these travellers for their arrival, heightened their anticipation, increased their knowledge giving an air of modernity and establishing useful contacts among fellow passengers (11.6). The sea-passage was a relaxed entry into Shirley and Beth's travel adventure and allowed them to develop useful contacts. Shirley recalls flirting and making good friends with one of the ship's stewards, George, who made a helpful contact once both women disembarked in England (Rorke 2020). For others, the sea passage was a life-changing experience, like, 24-year-old Brisbane-raised Narelle Beck who travelled to London in 1961. Her daughter Mandy says that Narelle met her future husband, Milton, on the ship and they married the following year at Holburn in London (Perrin 2019).

5. Arrival and Settling-In

Shirley and Beth were confronted with a range of challenges on their arrival in metropolitan London and became pre-occupied with establishing the foundation of their working holiday. The women were unfazed by the difficulties of establishing a daily routine in a large city. Experiencing everyday life in London was an education for both women with many firsts in their lives: organising ration cards; banking arrangements; mail collection; somewhere to live and to write home; coping with homesickness and just being away from their familiarities of home (Dunk 1954a,

n.p.). Shirley and Beth took on the world with a fresh-faced innocence and demonstrated their adaptability and resilience.

Setting up a house was an early challenge. Initially, Shirley and Beth stayed at the YWCA, then a bed-sit in Earls Court for a month before renting a room at George's house at Fulham. George came and went depending on his rostered voyages. Both Shirley and Beth found work in mid-February at the offices of the Shell Co. in Bishopsgate for seven months and "loved being there." After a short break in October, they found more work in November until they left for Sydney in early December. Shirley worked at an up-market shoe shop, and Beth did office-work (1954a, n.p.). The weather was a recurrent theme of Shirley's trip-book and pre-occupied many of her thoughts. In their first week, the Camden women experienced the cold of a London winter, and Shirley noted the temperature at 27°F (-3°C) on the 2nd February, their second day in London. The following day they visited Trafalgar Square and the fountains were frozen over. The water sprays "were like great Stalagtites hanging over the pond part of the fountain." The women were feeling the cold "around the neck, ears and feet" so they went shopping and bought "a cashmere scarf, fur-lined gloves and boots." The weather was always on their mind and was variously described in Shirley's letters as "lousy," "freezing" or just plain "awful" (1954a, n.p.).

Shirley and Beth's journey was a working holiday on a budget, and they were always conscious of their tenuous financial position, and spending was restricted to essentials. Shirley and Beth cut their lunches when they went to work (1954d), used public transport and walked everywhere. In April Shirley's finances were running low (1954h) and her mother sent her money mid-year (1954k). Shirley again wrote to her mother about money in August, saying that it was "impossible to save over here" (1954n) and asked her mother for a loan. The following week her father sent her £60. Shirley wrote that she felt Beth was in a worse financial position than herself (1954n). Both women kept to cheap entertainment which included going to the "pictures" (1954g) and lots of sight-seeing.

6. Writing Home

From the start of the trip, Shirley established a letter-writing routine. It became the emotional centre of her life away from home. Christopher Hager calls letter writing a "dialogue with home" (14), and Shirley's letters illustrated how her life was intertwined and shaped by others around her. Shirley's letters are an unfiltered view of the world as she experienced it and a travelogue of her journey. A regular ritual for Shirley and Beth was picking up letters on a Saturday morning from the London branch of the Commonwealth Bank, after which they went sight-seeing. There were "long faces" when there was no mail. Letters took 12 days to arrive from home (1954g) and Shirley wrote, "you do not know what a letter from home

does" (1954i), and they were always appealing to their family for more letters from Australia (1954j).

Letter writing inspired Narelle Beck to travel to London in 1961 when she visited her English penfriend, Patricia Page. As a young girl, Narelle regularly wrote to Patricia for over ten years and on her arrival in London moved in with the Page family. Narelle's daughter, Mandy, says her mother was excited to head off on the adventure of a working holiday and viewed the journey as an opportunity to see the world. Narelle and Patricia spent the next 50 years writing to each other, and Mandy says they "shared their experiences and feelings in their letters." Narelle's letter-writing was a crucial emotional centre in her life (Perrin 2020). Camden teacher Patricia Fraser was a prodigious letter writer and recalled that during her time in Great Britain she wrote 256 letters to Australia (Colman 54).

Shirley and Beth were always eager for news from home (1954k). Shirley's mother sent copies of the *Camden News* every two weeks (1954e) maintaining an emotional connection with family. Similarly, during the First and Second World Wars, Camden women included the local newspaper in comfort parcels sent to Camden soldiers, and their thank-you letters appeared in the *Camden News*. Historian Christopher Hager found that American families regularly sent local newspapers to their men in the army during the American Civil War. They wanted to hear news from home (73). Local newspapers were a rich source of local news and gossip and a direct emotional link to family and friends at home. The newspapers re-enforced a traveller's sense of belonging and community identity and an extension of the community's social and familial networks (Willis 2018).

7. Sight-seeing

Richard White has described travel as "adventure, exploration and discovery" (11.3) and Shirley and Beth's sight-seeing activities fitted that description. Both women were naturally curious and inquisitive and sought out new experiences throughout their journey. They were both determined to see the world and did what ever it took within their limited budget to see the sights of London and beyond, and documented their adventure. Sight-seeing for Shirley and Beth fell into several categories beginning with the exotic ports of call on their sea voyage. In Colombo Shirley thought that the shopping was good and noted that "the shops sell everything," and she sought out "bargains" in the "native sector" (1954a, n.p.). Shirley was excited about how differently the locals dressed and wrote that the women and children were "beautifully dressed. I haven't seen such gorgeous colours in all my life, and the material is magnificent. It is mostly Lavon [style] and Chiffon" (1954a, n.p.).

Week-day and weekend sight-seeing was squeezed in and around work commitments, and after their Saturday morning routine of picking up their mail. Even

a lunch-time visit to the London Stock Exchange fitted their schedule. London sight-seeing included London Bridge, Trafalgar Square, Westminster Abbey, Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace, Houses of Parliament and lots of other historic locations. At weekends they visited Brighton, Windsor, and Dover in March (1954a, n.p.). Limited finances constrained Shirley's sight-seeing, and at Easter, when they went to Dover and Canterbury, they travelled by bus because "it was cheaper than the train" (1954h). In May they stood outside "all day" to see the Queen drive past Big Ben and Shirley wrote that the views were "marvellous" after they ate their cut lunch (1954k; 1954a, n.p.).

Weekly church attendance was part of the routine, and while sight-seeing Shirley and Beth attended church services at Westminster Abbey in February, and Canterbury Cathedral at Easter in April. They met the choirmaster who had visited Camden's St Johns Church at home and thought the service at Canterbury Cathedral "was a wonderful experience to see and hear the Archbishop preach. We stayed for two services." Shirley felt that "this is one Easter we shall never forget" (1954a, n.p.). Their Canterbury visit was reported in the Camden press and stated that the women were "most impressed with the beautiful Cathedral, the choir, the procession and exquisite robes and the experience was one never to forget" (*Camden News*, 13 May 1954).

Weekend outings included several sites linked to the scouting movement that occupied Shirley and Beth's time in Australia – they were cub leaders in the Camden scout troop. The women's athleticism fitted the imagery of "the Australian girl" from novels of the early 20th century. Historian Sharon Crozier-De Rosa argues the Australian girl was imagined as a "beauty," "healthy," "robust," "tomboyish," and a "real pal" (250). Woollacott contends that Australian women were recognised in the United Kingdom for their athletic bodies (182). Shirley and Beth fitted these stereotypes, and both regularly played tennis while in London (1954g). They confirmed these representations of Australian womanhood when they spent a weekend with the Hertfordshire Scout troop at their camp in March (1954a, n.p.). Shirley recorded that both of them played games with the scouts "in the woods." She wrote that "I never did so much running in all my life" (1954f). In August the women visited the Gilwell Park scout camp (1954n), the home of leadership training for the global scouting movement, while earlier in the year they had seen the Imperial Scout headquarters in London and the Baden Powell museum (1954b).

8. Extended Sight-seeing and Visiting Relatives

A European summer holiday in June was the first of Shirley and Beth's extended sight-seeing journeys. They went to Belgium and Holland for ten days with two friends (1954l) and visited Ostende, La Panne, Dunkirk and Brugge. In the late summer, they teamed with another couple, hired a station wagon and went on a

three-week road trip around England, Wales and Scotland (20 August –12 September). The *Camden News* reported their adventure at home in September and "described" it in "glowing words" as "3 wonderful weeks" (*Camden News*, 16 September 1954). Shirley meticulously recorded the detail of the trip: they covered "2500 miles in a 1948 Austin station wagon; averaged 37.5 miles per gallon; with hire charges of £9 per week; plus insurance of £4/-/9; used 68 gallons of fuel; and travelled on average 121 miles per day" (1954a, n.p.). Travellers Narelle Beck and husband Milton also undertook a road trip after they were married and set off in an old standard Vanguard around Europe, taking in many of the sights (Perrin 2019).

Shirley was an astute observer of her surroundings and provided a social and economic picture of country life in England, Wales and Scotland on her trip. She described a rayon factory at Greensfield in Wales, sheep farming methods in Scotland and the workings of a cider brewery at Little Copse in Devon. She noted that the brewery could "make ½ million gallons and 18 gallons [was] made from 1 ton of apples." Shirley asked permission to inspect a coal mine at Plean in Scotland and compared it with the Clinton mine in Burragorang Valley near Camden. She observed that the Scottish countryside "was like you see on calendars where sheep are roaming in the hills. Was awfully pretty and enjoyed it very much" (1954a, n.p.).

The dark shadow of the Second World War was part of Shirley and Beth's sight-seeing experience. Shirley wrote that there was still evidence of the war with fortifications and destruction at Naples, Marseilles and Dunkirk. She noted that while at Antwerp in June, "one could see the damage made in wartime" (1954a, n.p.). In 1947 Camden teacher Patricia Fraser found London to be "sad and weary, the stress and strain still evident in the devastation and the worn looking faces" (Colman 55).

Part of the travel experience for many Australian women who visited the United Kingdom was visiting family relatives. Shirley and Beth left this activity until the end of their holiday, and travelling by bus visited family relatives at Manchester, Durham and Buckingham. They were shown the local sights and caught up on family news and gossip, and then expected to tell all their stories to those at home in Australia. Exchanging gifts was part of the visiting ritual as was the obligation of sending gifts to family and friends at home in Australia. To fulfil these commitments, Shirley got busy shopping early in the trip. She packed her first gift parcel for Australia two weeks after her arrival in England in February (1954c) and continued the practice throughout her trip. Historian Emma Gleadhill argues that gift-giving was a cultural practice of women and showed affection between giver and receiver. Gift-giving was part of a souvenir culture that supported female sensibilities and emotions (Gleadhill 2019). Shirley's gift-giving was a tangible expression of her affection and love for those at home. Shirley was sending home part of the 'old country,' a little sample of their cultural heritage.

9. Conclusion

Camden's Shirley Dunk and Beth Jackman set out on their transnational adventure negotiating the world as both travellers and tourists. Modernity was the essence of their experiences, yet they retained their identity as country girls and viewed the sights and their travel experience through that lens. The cosmopolitan nature of metropolitan London shaped their daily lives and how they navigated London's urban life and their travel experiences across the United Kingdom and beyond. Shirley and Beth had several sites of consumption throughout their journey that included: their daily existence in London; sight-seeing in and around London; their road trips; their purchase of souvenirs for family and friends; the cost of their transport; and a host of other sites. For Shirley, the journey was a pilgrimage, a life-changing experience, and a once in a life-time adventure and rite-of-passage. When interviewed, Shirley talked nostalgically about her trip sixty years ago as a part tourist and part traveller. Her journey was one of the most significant events in her life.

There were commonalities of experience amongst these women travellers. For example, traveller Patricia Fraser said that she participated in Camden farewell parties, and travelled throughout the United Kingdom and Europe on a "very meagre budget." She created a 700-page travel diary, worked as a relief school teacher in Scotland and after her return to Australia in 1949 re-married (Colman 91). Narelle Beck wrote a memoir for her family on her return called "Our Fortunate Life" (Perrin 2019), while Fraser published her story as a memoir called *Just a Simple Soul* (Colman). Travellers recalled the nostalgic memories of their journey, and for their families, this "was something that Mum always talked about."

Escape was a common theme amongst these travellers while others sought career advancement, adventure and freedom. Flight from social expectations, the confines of family life and the gender expectations of domesticity informed Shirley and Beth's decision to travel. Influenced by modernity and consumerism, they sought adventure and new horizons. For Shirley this meant not returning to her old job and as early as June 1954 got her father to ask around Camden businesses for another job (1954m). On her return to Australia, she moved out of home, lived at Bondi, worked in Sydney city, and delayed getting married until she was 28 years old. Maturing during her year away from Australia Shirley developed a more comprehensive view of the world and the opportunities it could present to her as a "Modern Girl."

This article only hints at the individual travel stories that are part of a larger narrative of young Australia women acting as travellers and tourists and going to Europe. These stories are part of women's history that is still hidden in the shadows of the past and remains mostly untold. The lives of some of these women have been the subject of study by family historians. I have benefited from their assistance in the compilation of this paper. This area of research is a rich area for furthering inter-disciplinary studies, especially those interested in genealogy, biography, gender and tourism studies.

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Counterspaces of Resistance: Peter Carey's *Bliss*

Abstract: The article discusses how Peter Carey's 1980 novel *Bliss* constructs and examines various counterspaces both in and beyond the text. First, it shows how the plot juxtaposes the consumerist middle-class suburban model of life with an alternative lifestyle, presenting the attractions and limitations of both, yet preferring rather the latter. Secondly, at the level of literary convention, the text activates the strategies of comic social realism only to juxtapose them with elements of fantasy, fairy tale and myth, thus undermining the representational powers of the former and hinting at other possibilities of representation. Finally, the film adaptation of the novel shows how even rebellious or critical texts may become 'domesticated' or absorbed by the dominating logic of cultural production, thus once again demonstrating the ambivalent position of works of art in general, and this novel in particular. The article argues that the ambivalence engrained in the text is an intrinsic feature, not only of Australian culture or heterotopias but of most cultural products and practices inevitably entangled in the double logic of conforming and resistance.

Keywords: Peter Carey**, counterspace, heterotopia, resistance, suburb, realism

1. Introduction: Heterotopia and Counterspace

Published in 1981, Peter Carey's first novel, *Bliss*, apart from being an original and engaging novelistic debut of the then little known Australian writer, provides the reader with an interesting discussion and critique of the values and lifestyles of white Australian society and with the revision of novelistic canons. The novel was described as a faithful literary portrayal of a certain period in Australian cultural and social history; as Graeme Turner observes, "[it] was the perfect chronicle of the seventies, with both its advertising hustlers and its hippies experiencing boredom with Australian suburban life" (137). The growing affluence of the Australian middle class, its social and cultural expansion with the resulting

consumerism, Americanisation, suburban sprawl and hypocrisy constitute the subject of the novel's plot and the object of critical scrutiny. Similarly, at the formal level, the novel critically challenges the conventions of social realism commonly used to depict the life and problems of social classes as it introduces elements which counter and alter the novel's seemingly realistic character. Finally, being soon adapted for the screen, the novel once again engaged with the cultural and social logic of the society it portrayed as it simultaneously played the role of the critic and participant. Thus, it seems that the most characteristic feature of the novel's position in relation to social milieu, novelistic conventions and popular culture is its ambiguity, perhaps best described by Linda Hutcheon as a "complicitous critique" (4). The novel challenges the social, cultural and novelistic practices from within, offering textual mirrors in which the former are reflected and confronted with other, competing models. Thus, its critique operates via a presentation of counter-models or counter-spaces which serve as sites of resistance to the dominating social or aesthetic values.

The notion of a counter-space or another space, which both reflects and challenges the existing *status quo*, draws on Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, which similarly describes the process of constructing alternatives to the existing power structures, not in the distant future or alternative reality but in the existing world. Foucault points out that while utopia is literally a no-place, that is a place which physically does not exist, a site without a place (24); in contrast heterotopia is a place which does exist in reality and "in which the real sites [...] are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). Hence the name "hetero-topia": another place, a different place, a counter-site reflecting upon the common real places. Foucault mentions a number of examples illustrating such heterotopian places claiming that they usually perform one of the two functions in relation to the real places: either that of illusion, or that of compensation. According to him, it is precisely compensation that lies at the bottom of utopian spaces which were hoped to make up for the imperfections of the existing world. As Foucault points out, "their role [is] to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (27). It seems, however, that with time utopias of compensation turned into utopias of illusion, or even disillusion, and instead came to expose the illusory nature of such hopes, of the possibility of existence of 'utopian' places, and of utopian ideas themselves. Heterotopias, in contrast, constructed within the existing world, hint at the possibilities of other orders, logics and arrangements located not in the future, the past, an alternative reality or geographically distant locale but in the here and now. Their function is to raise an awareness of the possibility of other ways of being and living, perhaps better suited to our needs. Heterotopias, then, become countersites of resistance and sites of hope, offering alternatives, if only mental, to the existing solutions.

The concept of heterotopia or counterspace is particularly relevant to Peter Carey's novel *Bliss* as the text systematically offers counter-models to the dominating

social and cultural practices of its times and it does so at least at three levels. The following analysis will discuss how the novel constructs the alternatives within the represented world, at the level of convention and in its function as a text of culture. It will show how, firstly, in the plot, it collides the fashionable and seemingly attractive, consumerist middle-class suburban model of life with an alternative lifestyle, presenting the attractions and limitations of both, yet preferring rather the latter. Secondly, at the level of literary convention, the text activates the strategies of comic social realism only to juxtapose them with elements of fantasy, fairy tale and myth, thus undermining the representational powers of the former and hinting at other possibilities of representation. Finally, its cultural afterlife shows how even rebellious or critical texts may become 'domesticated' or absorbed by the dominating logic of cultural production, thus once again demonstrating the ambivalent position of works of art in general, and this novel in particular. I argue that the ambivalence engrained in the text is an immanent feature, not only of Australian culture or heterotopias, anchored as they are in the existing reality, but also of most cultural products and practices inevitably entangled in the double logic of conforming and resistance.

2. Heterotopia of Place: Suburbia Versus the Outback

The plot of *Bliss* describes in six parts the crisis and subsequent change of life of a fictional character, the middle-aged, middle-class, provincial advertising agent Harry Joy. The change is precipitated by his heart attack and subsequent heart operation, as a result of which he reassesses both his own life and the role played by his family and friends, coming to the conclusion that it was false, wrong and harmful. Perceiving his existence as literally a stay in Hell, only thinly masked by superficial pleasures, Harry gradually decides to change it radically and to abandon his family, his job, his friends and his comfortable lifestyle. Commenting on his nine-minute clinical death he says: "it was a warning […]. I saw Heaven and Hell. There is a Heaven. There is a Hell" (29). Deeming his life as a stay in Hell, he tries to escape it, with the resulting picaresque adventures taking him in turns to a luxurious hotel, a mental institution, a suburban boring mansion and the Australian outback, transforming him from the quintessential, if inauthentic Good Bloke into a calm and low-profile woodlander. The novel, then, in an existentialist fashion presents the trajectory of this change leading from false bliss, through trials and tribulations, to an authentic existence *sensu* Sartre. In his essay *Anti-Semite and Jew* Sartre observes that "authenticity […] consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks it involves, in accepting it […] sometimes in horror and hate" (90). In a similar way, the novel's protagonist, Harry Joy, moves from the inauthentic social role, through various intermediary personas, to the true self.

In the text, all these stages of transformation are connected with particular spaces which reflect the ideas probed, rejected or accepted by the character and the narrator. The inauthentic stages of the character's existence are embodied by the suburban comfort of a provincial life, regulated by social conventions and pretences. The world of an Australian small town is governed by the middle-class public opinion of neighbours and its unspoken rules of conduct, by comfort and lack of ambition. Until his heart attack Harry feels in this environment like fish in water; Bettina, his wife, hates the town and its smallness passionately. As the narrator describes,

> She hated its wide colonial verandahs, its slow muddy river, its sleepy streets, its small-town pretensions. She loathed the perpetual Sunday afternoons, the ugly people, the inelegant bars and frumpy little frocks. Here, [she felt] marooned on the edge of the Empire. (24)

For an ambitious woman, the provincial and suburban model of life designating her to the role of a housewife is deeply harmful and reductive. As Don Fletcher observes, the suburban ideal, which has embodied the aspiration to own one's own home, "was perhaps always a flawed notion of utopia" (40) generating rather than solving numerous problems. For various groups of people and for various reasons the suburb turns out to be a trap. Fletcher notes, for instance, that "the geographical distancing from the work place, prized on the one hand, also has isolated women from access to work and has participated in the 're-domestification' of Australian women," turning a male utopia into a female dystopia (40). Also for the youth, provincial suburbia is the cage of boredom, stifling their need for adventure and action. Finally, for all its inhabitants, the suburb offers only one path of life, in the novel equalled with consumerism. The main protagonist's occupation – advertising – is emblematic of the consumerist suburban life as, in contrast to the popular vision of it as 'creative industry,' instead of creating, advertising merely sells that, which has to be produced by others. Kelly Oliver concludes that the dreamt-of suburb turns out "to be emotionally and creatively oppressive – a sign that physical space reflects and affects the psyche of those who live there" (1).

Connected with the small-town suburban lifestyle are the regulating institutions such as the police and the mental hospital, both represented in the novel as sadistic and profit-driven. On his journey towards conscious existence, the main character is both intercepted by the police and institutionalised in a mental hospital only to find out that far from being helpful or understanding, caring or protective, both institutions focus on the execution of power and violence, usually because of mercenary reasons, with no concern for other values or aims. Both are represented as totalitarian in their denial of individuality and humanity of the people they seemingly take care of. As Don Fletcher concludes, generally "public and political institutions feature in this novel, entirely in a negative way" (40), emphasising the

falseness and cruelty of the society regulated by rules and principles of middle-class consumerism. It comes as no surprise, then, that virtually all the characters depicted in the novel want to escape from the suburban paradise and finally manage to, although for most of them the escape turns out tragic as it leads to their death or suicide. Hinting at the cancer epidemic, which is to devastate the community in the future, the novel clearly shows how literally lethal its values and lifestyle are. Most of the characters die or perish; only for two of the protagonists, Harry Joy and Honey Barbara, is the escape possible.

The alternative space, contrasted to the suburb and the city, is offered by the Australian outback, removed from society, difficult to access, primitive, harsh, yet closer to the true needs of a human being. Only in the last part of the novel, arriving at the Bog Onion Road quasi-hippie vegetarian rural community, is Harry Joy able to reach peace and harmony with himself, other people and nature. Living simply, cutting and growing trees, cultivating plants and producing his own food, he is able to lead a sensible life, create and become a full person. His ability to finally tell important and meaningful stories becomes a manifestation of his restoration. A poor teller of stories, Harry did not understand even the ones he used to tell or repeat earlier on; it is only while living in the outback that he sees their point and function, and partly through this, finds his role and place in life and community. As the narrator observes,

> He was necessary. […] He could tell a story for a funeral and a story for a birth. When they sat around the fire at night he could tell a long story just for fun. […] He never thought of what he did as original. It wasn't either. He told Vance's old stories, but told them better because he now understood them. He retold the stories of Bog Onion Road. And when he told stories about the trees and the spirits of the forest he was only dramatising things that people already knew [...]. And what began as a game ended as a ritual. (290–291)

Far from being a shaman, he becomes to the community a bard and a storyteller, a guardian of communal memory and a producer of their history. His stories become foundational myths for people who are refugees from other, inauthentic cultures and who attempt to build a new one, true to their genuine selves. Only by combining a natural lifestyle with storytelling is the main character able to achieve integrity and fullness, to have peace, lead a satisfactory life, be finally happy in love and reach the eponymous bliss.

Thus, it is the outback which serves as a heterotopia to the suburb, contrasting pretence, consumerism and death with authenticity, creativity and life. Although the novel does not idealise the woodlands showing the natural life as harsh, primitive and also, in some sense, limiting, in the narrative it is this natural rather than city life that is presented as a viable alternative to a poisonous false existence. The outback offers a glimpse of hope and possibility which seem to be lost in the suburb,

thus alluding to the traditional dichotomy of nature and society, country and city, the authentic and the false, the living and the lethal. In so doing, Carey's novel re-imagines white middle-class Australian life and takes a critical stance towards its 'Americanisation' and ensuing consumerism.

3. Heterotopia of Convention: Social Realism Versus Fantasy

Likewise, at the level of form does the novel clash and contrast at least two kinds of conventions which function as counter-models to one another. Dominating is social realism, that is the set of novelistic techniques aiming to represent – in Ian Watt's words – "the circumstantial view of life" (32), and based on the premise that "the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under the obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms" (32). Accordingly, *Bliss* abounds in descriptions of places, houses, landscapes and views; it introduces plausible characters modelled on human beings equipping them with names and professions, and amply describes their looks and personalities, characteristic features and behaviours. At a larger scale, too, the novel dramatises actually existing and observable experience, probable situations and social problems. Finally, in its juxtaposition of different lifestyles and ideas of life, it also touches upon important contemporary debates. Thus, its affinities with the conventions of social realism seem hardly debatable.

Significantly, this realistic frame is interwoven with conventions of other genres, such as for instance the fairy tale. As André Jolles points out, it is one of the characteristics of the latter genre to operate with generalities (cf. André Jolles' theory). Similarly, Carey's novel, apart from the abundance of descriptive details and factual accuracy, introduces interesting indeterminacy when it comes to its spatio-temporal setting or character construction. It is never stated clearly, for instance, where and when exactly the novel is set: no place names or dates are ever given which would enable the reader to locate the 'provincial town' of the novel in some precise geographical space; it is only indicated that it is Australia. Apart from the name there appear only some names of Australian plants and the descriptions of nature that may anchor the plot in this particular place. Likewise, it is only the description of the milieu that allows one to set the action in contemporary times – no dates or time markers are offered, apart from the relative measures of time that indicate its duration. As a result, the plot of the novel seems to be set, in a fairy tale-like fashion, 'once upon a time,' in an unspecified land, giving the novel the air of generalisation characteristic of moral tales. Similarly, the seemingly realistic characters resemble types rather that fully individualised figures: Bettina is a frustrated wife, Harry – a man undergoing a mid-life crisis, with Honey Barbara playing

the role of a good fairy. Their telling names – Joy and Honey, just as the names of companies or policemen (e.g. Krappe Chemicals or Detective Herpes) – function as emblems and introduce ideological contrasts reminiscent of fairy tales. Finally, the plot of the novel, moving in a circular fashion from bliss, through test, to bliss re-established and redefined, follows Vladimir Propp's formula of fairy-tale plots. Moreover, the novel introduces also clear impossibilities at the level of the events, such as for instance the already mentioned cancer epidemic, the three deaths of Harry Joy announced by the narrator, or the non-existent species of trees inserted into the seemingly accurate descriptions of nature (cf. Siwoń 127). As a whole, then, the novel emerges as a mixture of social realism and fairy tale conventions. Juxtaposed rather than seamlessly mixed, the two genres reflect and contrast each other, with the fairy tale functioning as a heterotopic mirror to social realism. The intrusion of the fairy tale, apart from providing the novel with a degree of universalism, additionally emphasises the constructed, fabulatory nature of the story told and its fundamentally fictional character, obliterated by the illusionist techniques of social realism. Despite its detailed descriptions, accuracy and plausibility, the story told is a novel, not a report – and the fairy-tale elements remind the reader of its status.

This strategy is further emphasised by other features of the novel, one of which is the construction of narration with its intruding, omniscient narrator who heavily relies on the rhetorical figure of prolepsis. As Christer Larsson defines it, prolepsis "is a representation of a future event as if it has already taken place" (176); it briefly informs the reader of the future consequences of described events. Prolepsis is used to control the story and marks the conscious artistic shaping of the narrative material. Larsson argues that the extensive use of prolepsis in Carey's novels "indicates a perception of time as closed and an awareness of the revelatory potential of the narrative" (176). Agreeing with his conclusions one may observe, too, that the "revelatory potential of narrative" is based on a premise that the latter is constructed and that the revelation follows from its conscious and planned design. Indirectly, then, the use of prolepsis draws attention to the rhetoric of the story, its organisation and teleology, and thus makes prominent the constructedness and artifice of the thus told plot.

Finally, the very plot construction may be interpreted as one more element which, despite its chronology and causality, draws attention to its constructed rather than 'natural,' report-like character. The plot of *Bliss* contains numerous embedded stories told at various points by different characters, whose relationship with the main plot is not always immediately apparent and emerges only later in the novel. The text, especially in the figure of Harry Joy, emphasises the importance of telling stories (not necessarily true ones), of their healing and explanatory potential, of their myth-making role. Thus, both at the level of structure and at the level of the theme, the novel celebrates the art and value of fabulation, presenting it as equally important as the art of telling the truth or reporting reality.

The latter juxtaposition in turn may be seen as emblematic for the discussion concerning a postmodernist poetics which, in Brian McHale's classical formulation, draws attention to the ontological aspects of literature and its potential of creating possible worlds (11). Read as a postmodernist text, Carey's *Bliss* may be interpreted as an interesting case of the interpenetration of both postmodernist approaches to fiction, that freely expose its fictionality and emphasise creativity via a series of textual devices, and the more traditional ones focused on its revelatory potential. Moving from social realism to the fairy tale, introducing realistic details along fantastic ones and celebrating both fabulating and reporting, the novel becomes a site of tension between older and newer conceptualisations of novel writing. The latter feature seems a characteristic trait of Carey's works, noticed by A.J. Hassal and Christer Larsson. Larsson writes that

> Carey's novels are usually treated as works of postmodern fiction. This is obviously appropriate, but it can also be limiting […]. Carey does play [postmodern] games with his readers, but he is also skilled in more traditional methods of storytelling, and this blend of innovation and tradition makes his novels extremely complex and intriguing. (176)

In keeping with this characterisation, *Bliss* may be read as a novel which treats Modernist and Postmodernist poetics as counter propositions concerning the role and methods of storytelling. Viewed from the point of view of convention, each of them becomes a counterspace of resistance to the other and an alternative to be considered.

4. Heterotopia of Culture: The Novel Versus Its Adaptation

Finally, one more area of oscillation between contrasting concepts, this time cultural, is the novel's afterlife, that is its film adaptation produced already in 1985 (Siwoń 129). Interestingly, its screen version in many important ways did resist, or even reject, the critical attitude of the novelistic version of the story. In his analysis of Ray Lawrence's film Krzysztof Siwoń notes that, in contrast to the novel which devotes a lot of attention to the hellish aspects of middle-class Australian contemporary life, the film focuses on, as he claims, "painting an affirmative vision of provincial Australia" (136; trans. B.K.). This affirmation involves a number of reductions and simplifications which diminish the ambivalent stance of the novel. One area of reduction is the representation of the setting. Constantly showing idyllic, paradise-like landscapes full of lush greenery and introducing 'natural' soundscapes filled with bird noises, the film eliminates the contrast between destructive suburbia and healing outback, instead creating a uniformly calm and optimistic vision of Australia, far removed from the novel's predominant pessimism. While the novel

contrasted the nightmarish aspects of middle-class life with a natural lifestyle, criticising the former and clearly privileging the latter, the film tends to suspend the contrast altogether and creates a more even and peaceful vision of both.

Additionally, the film version tends to simplify the ambiguities that make up so much of the novel's complexity both at the level of plot, and at that of convention. For instance, the intrusive, omniscient narrator of the text, who is very important as it introduces a metafictional level to the novel, in the film is reinterpreted as the voice of the character of Harry Joy, only much older, telling the story of his life to his grandchildren. This shift, on the one hand, clarifies and simplifies the narrative situation: the narrator becomes a part of the represented world, his omniscience is easily explained and his narrative antics – much reduced – treated as elements of his storytelling. Yet, this change has serious consequences as it eliminates both the novel's metafictional level and the elements of the fantastic (for example the three deaths of Harry Joy), depriving the film of the fairy tale-like aspects characteristic of the literary version. As a result, the film presents one character's life with little chance to treat it as an example of larger social and cultural processes whose ramifications may be worth considering. The change is not, then, only technical; rather, as Krzysztof Siwoń observes, "reading *Bliss* and watching its film adaptation, one faces two contrasting visions of Australia" (136; trans. B.K.). More importantly, while the novel is a site of tension between various visions of Australia, its lifestyles, novelistic conventions and different poetics, oscillating between affirmation and resistance, rethinking and countering propositions, the film eliminates this tension altogether, presenting one vision and one poetics.

To some extent, this change – perhaps inevitable – may be explained by both the realities of film adapting and by the features of Carey's writing. Analysing popular adaptations of Carey's postmodernist novels, Theodore F. Scheckels observes the negative consequences of reducing ambiguity (91–92), which to some extent he treats as an inevitable side effect and a cost paid while adapting postmodernist fiction, notoriously difficult to adapt. In contrast to realistic novels with coherent plots and social orientation, such literary devices as metafiction, narrative ambiguity, fragmentation or lack of closure, characteristic of postmodern works, may often travel poorly across the novel/film divide. Adapted to the poetics of popular film, postmodern novels may lose some of their complexity and result in simpler versions of the stories. Likewise, the practice of aesthetic mainstreaming, identified by Robert Stam as characteristic of popular cinema may be seen as another element enhancing the simplification of film adaptations in general, and the adaptations of complex novels in particular. Stam defines it as a form of self-censorship motivated by a wish to satisfy the expectations of the widest audience possible and concludes that

Adaptation is seen as a kind of purge. In the name of mass-audience legibility the novel is 'cleansed' of moral ambiguity, narrative interruption, and reflexive meditation.

Aesthetic mainstreaming dovetails with economic censorship, since the changes demanded in an adaptation are made in the name of monies spent and box-office profits required. (43)

Both factors then – the intrinsic complexity of postmodernist fiction and the mainstreaming tendency of popular cinema – may be seen as contributing to the simplification and loss of ambiguity.

Taking into account the complex and ambivalent structure of the novel and the relatively simpler version presented in the adaptation, the novel and the film may be also treated as counterspaces reflecting one another and introducing alternative perspectives and propositions. The novel, systematically privileging natural life, narrative complexity and generic hybridity, may be seen as a site of resistance to the film, less complex formally and ideologically. Interestingly, in this case it is the novel which may be treated as a heterotopia, a counter-space to the film's vision, investing it with complexity and ambiguity. Thus, the novel's central interest in the themes of conforming and resistance and its dramatisation of the choice between a comfortable but false life and searching for authenticity are not limited to the plot and characters only. The comparison of the novel as a whole with its cine-matographic afterlife transgresses the novel-internal level and moves the analysis to the external, cultural context and the processes that affect the novel, not as a work of art only but also as a product. Caught in the marketing logic of contemporary society, the novel which advocates non-conformism, paradoxically changes into a film, which seems to praise the very values that the literary version problematises or questions. Thus, considering the novel and its film adaptation, one may come to the conclusion that the interplay of the counterspaces of resistance, so important to the novel's setting, plot, characters, themes and conventions, finally come to include the novel itself.

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Rich Ornaments and Delightful Engines: The Poetics of Failed Festivity and Figural Automation in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*

Abstract: The present study focuses on the poetics of failed festivity in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, tracing analogies between early modern festival culture, in particular the Joyous Entry of the Renaissance prince into the city, and the machinery of the play, which is set in motion by Titus. The principal element of this machinery is the figure of Lavinia, who can be seen as the inverted version of such wonders of occasional architecture and civic pageantry as the automaton, the breathing sculpture and the automatic waterwork. One of the major problems explored is the confrontation of reality and fiction, or human flesh and art, in the manifestly echoic universe of the play, where the objectified automaton-like figure responds to the actions of its animators with its own stirring.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia, automaton, sculpture, automatic waterwork, Joyous Entry

1. Introduction

The opening scene of William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is set against a rather reductive vista of the city of Rome, whose architecture is limited to the Capitol and the tomb of the Andronici; the austerity of the setting is echoed by the geometric rigour of the arrangement of figures on stage. The play's Rome is thus laden with the symbolic associations of its "white and spotless" marbles (1.1.182),[1] such as political power, timeless grandeur, generational continuity, as well as emotional detachment. The austerity of the space implied is echoed by a sequence of formal

speeches: the self-recommendations of the two brother-candidates for emperor-ship are soon followed by an equally stylised eulogy on Titus phrased by the most uncannily verbose of the play's characters, i.e., Marcus Andronicus. This is the city that Titus, heralded by Marcus as the "gracious triumpher in the eyes of Rome" (1.1.170), enters, his arrival beautified by the train of conquered barbarians.

With its focus on ritualised civic praise of martial accomplishment, the opening section of Shakespeare's *Most Lamentable Roman Tragedy* initially promises to offer some dramatic insight into the values forming the ideological landscape of the ancient triumph.[2] However, the play soon departs rather far from the standard version of the Roman ceremony. Titus's salutation speech, for instance, addressed to the city of Rome, instantly lapses into a funeral eulogy for his sons killed in battle. In its opening line, the first line Titus delivers in the play, Rome is hailed as "victorious," which would seem to suggest that what will follow will be rather conventional expression of the ancient victor's humility; however, the city is also described as being dressed in its "mourning weeds" (1.1.70). Much in the same vein, the display of coffins of Titus's sons – called, rather prophetically, a "safer triumph" (1.1.176) – far exceeds the conventional allusions to the *memento mori* motif made during the ancient rite of entry into the city, where the victor was often accompanied by a person reminding him of his own mortality. The human sacrifice in front of the Andronici tomb, to move to the play's first scene of dismemberment, is both un-Roman and misplaced: the sacrificial offering crowning the ancient tri-umph would have been held at the city's main temple and would not have involved the slaughter of men. Most crucially, the sudden death of Mutius at the hands of his own father for "barr[ing] [Titus's] way in Rome" (1.1.291) is an outbreak of violence entirely out of the spirit of the ancient triumph.

On its most basic level, the ancient victor's triumphal entry into the city was a potent exorcism of violence and a precaution against mutiny. As noted by Jacek Żukowski, "The *portae triumphalis* erected in the vicinity of the Porticus Octavia and the temple of Bellona, and then on the Field of Mars performed the function of cleansing warriors, separating the realm of the *militia* from the realm of the *domus*" (79– 80; trans. A.Ż.). Actual violence was also replaced with its mere representa-tion: the staging of mock battles beyond the city walls, where they would be safely contained within the domain of fiction. In Shakespeare's play, by contrast, the city is an unwilling witness to a veritable triptych of violence, Alarbus's sacrifice and Mutius's murder flanking the scene of Lavinia's first rape, or kidnapping, which results in the emergence of the uncanny poetics of failed festivity which perme-ates the entire play. In accordance with the rule of temporal syncretism typical of Elizabethan drama, the tragedy resonates not only with references to the ancient triumph but also with more contemporary allusions to the hauntingly beautiful yet somewhat elusive universe of early modern festival culture.

2. The Joyous Entry

One of the most sumptuous forms of early modern festival, whose spirit – in a rather paradoxical twist – informs much of Shakespeare's savage tragedy of mutilation and ravishment, is the so-called Joyous Entry. A Renaissance version of the ancient Roman triumph, the *Joyeuse Entrée* was in its very essence a curious blend of civic pageantry, theatre and the visual arts. These diverse disciplines were all employed to celebrate the arrival of a prince or monarch or his spouse into their dominion, "with the people look[ing] on as their representatives enter[ed] into a contract with the ruler which the festival [brought] into being" (Watanabe-O'Kelly 16). Serving to promote what J.R. Mulryne calls "the iconography of power" (1–2), this multidisciplinary spectacle depended for much of its effect on the visual and ideological transformation of urban space, which was largely achieved with the help of the so-called ephemeral architecture erected for the occasion. The early modern festive cityscape was thus punctuated with temporary edifices, made of wood, cardboard and papier mâché, such as triumphal gates laden with emblematic decorations and sculpted or painted likenesses of historical and allegorical figures, parting obelisks, theatrical scaffolds, and platforms for musical ensembles.[3] The space of early modern festival was also a particularly welcoming ground for mechanical or pseudo-mechanical contraptions placed atop occasional architecture, such as, for instance, eagles flapping their wings as sign of salutation.[4] Equally prominent was the presence of live performers in the guise of living sculptures, Hermione-like, who could enter into a tactile relationship with the prince entering the city: a relatively common sight was children as *putti*, suspended on ropes from the tops of triumphal arches, crowning the royals passing beneath with rose or laurel wreaths. Many such automaton-like wonders, whether genuinely mechanical or not, responded to the motion of the approaching sovereign by their own stirring, thus providing the audience assembled along the route of the entry with visible proof of the strength of the prince's agency, a manifestation of his quasi-divine ability to animate the inanimate. For all the density of its emblematic and allegorical message, the central wonder of the early modern triumph was always the miracle of motion. As stated by Michael Witmore in his study of mobility in the context of English civic pageantry, "extra- or non-allegorical significance that these celebrations may have had for a non-courtly audience […] stemmed from the interaction of humans with machines – in particular their joint capacity to produce a particular kind of charmed movement" (110–111).

Apart from Titus's allusion to Rome's "mourning weeds," there is no mention in the opening scene of the play of the costume of occasional architecture donned by the city for the purposes of civic pageantry. In the austere universe of Shakespeare's Roman tragedy, though, where human bodies are reduced to objects, the function of occasional architecture is projected onto the most thoroughly objectified of its figures, namely, Titus's daughter Lavinia. Already in Act 1 scene 1 she is accorded

a clearly decorative function, as well as being firmly set within the civic context: in Bassianus's words, she is "Rome's rich ornament" (1.1.52). The use of the word "ornament" in the play is, in fact, restricted to Lavinia: in what is one of the most disconcerting images of Shakespeare's tragedy of dismemberment, her severed hands are retrospectively described by Marcus as "sweet ornaments" (2.4.18). The decorative impulse is also present in the lines of Saturninus, who, enraged at Bassianus's usurpation of what he thinks is rightfully his, claims that Lavinia has been won by "him that *flourish'd* for her with his sword" (1.1.310; emphasis mine). More importantly still, Lavinia's presence in the scene of her father's triumph is of a distinctively echoic nature: like Titus before her, she pays homage to her deceased brothers, while simultaneously greeting the victor. Her first line, "In peace and honour live Lord Titus long" (1.1.157) thus echoes Titus's words immediately preceding it: "In peace and honour rest you here, my sons!" (1.1.156).

When Bassianus claims her as his rightful betrothed, Lavinia is also disparagingly called "that changing piece" (1.1.309) – a phrase which, apart from its blatant objectivisation, foretells the transformative nature of the character, who will soon morph into an "object" that "kills" (3.1.64). Throughout the play Lavinia's portrayal will thus shift between the image of the sculpture – an uncanny concretisation of the literary topos of the *signa spirantia*, i.e., a breathing sculpture with only the voice lacking (*vox sola deest*) – and that of the automaton, i.e., a mechanical contraption moving in a seemingly unaided way. A spectacular feat of mechanics with its roots in the classical antiquity, the Renaissance automaton owed much of its popularity to the late 16th-century translations of treatises by the mathematician and engineer Hero of Alexandria, the author of *Pneumatica* and *On Automatons*. In a number of key scenes of the play the heroine also resembles a combination of the two forms mentioned, namely, an ingenious waterwork, i.e., a blend of the sculpted fountain and the automaton that was to be found in countless early modern gardens. All such *mirabilia* were eagerly exploited by the makers of early modern festival, not least because they depended for their effect on imitating life with its natural processes. One of these natural processes is motion.

Another distinctive feature of the Joyous Entry was the constant fluctuation between fiction and reality: its audience were thus expected to temporarily suspend their disbelief and witness the transformation of their city into ancient Rome[5]; select viewers would also interact with performers in the guise of allegorical figures or personified abstractions. A space of unceasing confrontation of reality and fiction, or, more specifically, human flesh and art, Lavinia's body is thus the principal element of the play's festive machinery. This machinery is set in motion by the figure of Titus; in doing so, he is acting in a manner akin to the self-fashioning of the Renaissance prince, who wanted to be seen as the actual animator of occasional architecture and the driving force behind civic pageantry. Titus's control over the material tissue of the spectacle, however, is rather short-lived: already in the opening scene of the play his power over the "ornament" is fated to be usurped.

Lavinia can thus be seen as the nucleus of the play's larger scheme of festivity that goes awry.

3. The Echoic Principle

Another proof of Lavinia's centrality in Shakespeare's poetics of the failed triumph is the fact that her echoic stylisation, so prominent at the outset of the tragedy, spreads from the figure of the heroine onto the entire fictional universe of the play. The notion of repetition – and the related idea of imitation – is embodied in the echo-device which plays a major part in the "double hunt" (2.3.19) of Act 2, where the wild game is not "the panther and the hart" (1.1.493), as Titus would have it, but Bassianus, Lavinia and the Andronici.

Having announced his intention to "wake the emperor and his lovely bride / And rouse the prince, and ring a hunter's peal, / That all the court may echo with the noise" (2.2.4–2.2.6), Titus is immediately answered by the sounds of hunting, followed by the appearance of the imperial family, Saturnine jokingly chiding the general for rousing brides at so early an hour. For all its repetitiveness, the echoic reverberation inspired by Titus in the hunting scene turns out to be uncannily operative: it propels the emperor and his family into motion, literally making them cross the boundary between the city and the forest and enter "a place […] by nature made for murders and for rapes" (4.1.55–4.1.58). The machinery of the play's failed triumph is thus activated by means of harsh sound, in a manner not unlike the machinery of the early modern civic pageantry, which jostled into motion at the sound of exploding cannon and the flourish of cornetts or trumpets. The same auditory effects were also part of the soundscape of the early modern hunting ceremony, which was in itself an entertainment of a strongly celebratory nature. As noted by Edward Berry, "the ritual dismemberment of the hart," the noblest type of game, "may be said to enact human domination over wild nature but at the same time acknowledging implicitly the wilderness in human nature itself" (78). This dual character of hunting also makes itself felt in its Romanised version by Shakespeare; for all its ceremonial appeal, it still adds a visceral element to the seemingly pristine Roman setting. Titus's invitation to hunting is also inherently aggressive; "the uncoupling of hounds and making a bay […] pushes merriment to the edge of assault. It mimics the final stage of the hunt, when the hounds are released and the exhausted and encircled animal stands at bay to meet its death" (Berry 81).

According to the early modern theory of the senses, sound was capable of probing the deepest regions of the human soul; the sense of hearing was associated with the listener's openness, penetrability, and susceptibility to manipulation (Folkerth 33, 68). As the peal inspired by Titus is not only reverberated by the walls of the emperor's palace but also literally penetrates its interior, the palace, and by extension, the entire city is defined as a site where primary instincts are strongly

at play. The direction of sound in the scene also foretells the future fate of Lavinia, who will soon be violated by Chiron and Demetrius. Just as in the first scene of the play, where Titus's daughter acts out the part of occasional architecture, also in the forest scenes the character of Lavinia is associable with the play's architectural, viz. Roman, setting. In the scenes to come, having been brutally mauled and deprived of her "spotless chastity" (5.2.176), she will still have much in common with the state of Rome – headless at the outset of the play and degenerating through its course, its marbles quickly stained with blood.[6] Lavinia's scenic presence is thus essentially repetitive, not just in the sense of echoing other characters' words or movements, or even in the more general sense of re-enacting, with some variation, the trauma of Philomel, but also in the sense of being imitative: not just of her mythological precedent but also of the play's settings.

In accordance with the play's poetics of failed festivity, Titus is soon bound to lose control over the machinery of the spectacle, in particular the manifestly artful quasi-architectural contraption of Lavinia's body, in favour of several other characters. These figures are also associable with some of the main actants in the Joyous Entry the way it was conceived of in the early modern period. The principal figure to usurp Titus's command of his "deer" (3.1.91) in the hunting scenes is Aaron, who knows how to, in his own words, "ravish a maid or plot the way to do it" (5.1.129), and advises Chiron and Demetrius on how to proceed with the matter. In doing so, Aaron resembles the principal designer or artificer employed by the city council to give material substance to the iconographic programme of the Joyous Entry, which was usually devised by some of the most prominent writers and scholars of their age. With some notable exceptions, such as Rubens's activity at the court of the governors of the Southern Netherlands, the function of the chief designer was usually assigned to architects, who were expected to produce detailed designs for festive architecture and supervise the joint efforts of painters, sculptors and carpenters erecting it. A notable English example is the architect and joiner Stephen Harrison, whose sumptuous folio entitled *The Arches of Triumph* (1604) documents a group of triumphal arches he designed for the purposes James I's royal entry into London, a spectacular entertainment scripted by Thomas Dekker in collaboration with Ben Jonson.[7] Given the prominence of festive lexicon in Shakespeare's play, it is hardly coincidental that Aaron's role is summarised in one of its last lines as that of the "chief architect and plotter of these woes" (5.3.121).[8] Viewed in this context, Aaron-the-designer takes over the function of the animator of Lavinia-as-occasional architecture, a role Titus had envisaged as his own.

4. Automated Sculpture

Aaron's sculptural design results in the emergence of what is one of the most haunting theatrical images to date: "Lavinia, her hands cut off, and her tongue cut

out, and ravished" (2.4). Apart from some rather troubling horticultural connotations, Marcus's poetically phrased expression of horror at the hands that have "lopped and hewed and made [Lavinia's] body bare / Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments / Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in" (2.4.16–2.4.19) brings to mind the image of Lavinia's body as an uncanny *arteficialium*, or a man-made thing which is meant to imitate natural life processes. When set in the context of Renaissance festival culture, the duo Chiron and Demetrius can be seen as a particularly grim version of artists or craftsmen who were expected to give material substance to the chief architect's design of festive architecture. This makes the names of Lavinia's maimers gain ghastly ironic resonance, as they are both connected with the idea of the manual handling of matter. The name "Demetrius," the follower of the goddess Demeter, who was once herself raped by Poseidon in the form of the stallion, can be also associated with the Latin *demeto*, which means to "mow, reap, cut down" (Levith 44). "Chiron" has its origins in the Greek word *kheir*, meaning "skilled with the hands"; the centaur Chiron was credited with inventing surgery (*Theoi Greek Mythology*). In a more artistic vein, still, the name "Demetrius" also invokes the notion of hyperrealism: the ancient sculptor Demetrius of Alopece earned his name for an extreme form of mimeticism of style (Lucian 3:242). Pliny, whose *Naturalis Historia* Shakespeare was thoroughly familiar with, notes that Demetrius's portrait sculptures were so "lifelike that they were unflattering" (Pliny the Elder; qtd. in Mayor 98). The reductive presence of Lavinia, deprived of the "sweet ornaments" of her hands, and thus reduced to the visual essence of the human shape in its verticality, as well as muted, thus unable to vocalize her inner thoughts, is disconcertingly "lifelike" and "unflattering" in the sense that it draws our attention to the material dimension of the human body, the body as thing. The human flesh is here levelled down to sculpting material – one of the same status as any other organic substance used by sculptors, such as ebony or wood. The emergent object, i.e., Lavinia-as-sculpture, enters the domain of the miraculous or, differently put, the province of the liminal. As noted by Naomi Conn Liebler, "liminality in the form of ambiguity is a conditional premise of Shakespearean tragedy" (122); such liminality, one could add, was also typical of the multidisciplinary realm of early modern festival.

In his discussion of Renaissance civic pageantry as "spectacle of motion," Witmore notes that, in its very essence, it was a "sequence of push and pull, action and reaction" (117). These words could also be used as a perfect summary of Shakespeare's depiction of Lavinia, a figure not only constantly oscillating between art and reality, nature and culture, but also fluctuating between stillness and motion. In all of her scenes Lavinia is either set in motion, automaton-like, or described as vigorously moving, to be repeatedly made to freeze, either alone or with some other figures, to the effect that she resembles an independent sculpture or a constituent part of a sculptural group. After the relative calm in the opening scene of the play, where she kneels in front of the family tomb and asks Titus's blessing, she is seized

by Bassianus and carried away with the help of Marcus. At the outset of Act 2 she is once again passive; in her own words, she has "been broad awake two hours and more" (2.2.17); with a host of other characters, however, she is soon propelled into motion in the hunting scene. Temporarily immobilised by Chiron and Demetrius, who succeed in "pluck[ing] a dainty doe to ground" (2.2.26), towards the end of Act 2 she is seen "fly[ig] away so fast" (2.4.11), only to be stopped by Marcus. She is once again made to move as she is taken to Titus, who trusts her with his severed hand. After some offstage reading in Lavinia's chamber comes Act 4 scene 1, where she pursues her nephew Lucius, tossing Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and scribbles the names of her violators in the sand with a staff supported by her stumps. Resembling some form of pseudo-mechanical contraption or automaton, which were set in motion so as to create a lifelike impression, and restlessly crossing spatial and ideological boundaries, Lavinia is thus a vital element of the play's imagery of failed festivity.

The uncannily festive appeal of the *tableaux vivants* featuring Lavinia is strengthened by the very structure of Shakespeare's play, where the scenes with the moving heroine are not only set off by moments of relative calm and motionlessness but also flanked by a different type of "stills," i.e., elaborate speeches addressing the subject of her plight. One of these speeches, which is – perhaps not that paradoxically in light of the play's treatment of opposites – full of references to motion, is the forty-five-line *blazon anatomique* recited by Marcus upon finding his disfigured niece in the forest. After all the murder and violation of Act 2, this elaborately phrased eulogy promises to offer some relief from the play's atrocity and dynamism. However, these expectations are soon thwarted. The heroine, who has been "fl[ying] away" (2.4.11), "straying in the park" and "seeking to hide herself" (3.1.88–89), is once again "plucked to the ground," i.e., immobilised by the roughly regular metre of the passage, its overtly ekphrastic frame, as well as multiple references to Lavinia's former beauty and grace, musical and vocal accomplishment and overall perfection. The impression of stasis is further intensified by Marcus's retelling of Lavinia's plight:

> Fair Philomela, why she but lost her tongue
> And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind:
> But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee;
> A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
> And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,
> That could have better sewed than Philomel. (3.1.38–3.1.43)

In listing the details of Lavinia's gruesome ordeal which have already been revealed by Chiron and Demetrius in the preceding scene, Marcus does not say anything the audience – or, for that matter, also Lavinia – would not know. Although his speech is notably tautological in nature, its sheer length is a suggestion that it is meant to serve some other function.

In his linguistic command of Lavinia-as-sculpture Marcus veers surprisingly close to Aaron-the-architect. Marcus's use of some disconcertingly erotic imagery in the description of the ravished female body, for instance, which has been the subject of much critical interest and readerly outrage, is less cryptic in light of the famous classical anecdotes on ancient viewers' passionate responses to lifelike statues, including Pliny's famous tale of a man who so "intimately" embraced Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos that he left "a stain bear[ing] witness to his lust" on the statue (36, 21). Taking into consideration the Aaron-inspired sculptural stylisation of Lavinia in the scene, the puzzling eroticism of Marcus's description can be seen as a distant echo of the Pygmalionesque fantasy of making love to a sculpture or automaton. More importantly still, while the Moor employs Tamora's ruthless sons as his instruments, Marcus resorts to language as an equally potent means of usurping control over the liminal machinery of Lavinia's body. In doing so, he assumes a role akin to the presenter, or explicator, of the wonders of early modern festival. While clearly meant to ravish the general public with its sheer multi-sensory splendour, occasional architecture was also a backdrop for some rather intricate emblematic and allegorical messages, which needed to be elucidated for the benefit of those in the know. One way of doing this was to provide select audience members with festival books or brochures that were often printed prior to the actual entry[9]; another solution was to include such explication in some of the speeches delivered as part of the entertainment; finally, it was not infrequent to have a presenter figure comment on what was being shown. Reverberating with classical allusion, Marcus's presenter-like description of Lavinia in Act 3 scene 1 is not unlike Chiron and Demetrius's lopping and hewing of her body: his *blazon anatomique* imposes another layer of artificiality on Lavinia's flesh, leading to her further objectification, to the effect that her corporeal frame appears to be more of a thing than a living human being.

As observed by Justin Kolb, in Shakespeare's time the word "thing" still retained some of its Anglo-Saxon sense of a collective body of a judicial or deliberative nature, thus being "an object of concern or inquiry," while at the same time denoting a separate entity (56). Lavinia-as-a-thing is, in fact, an object of constant inquiry: the play is punctuated with repeated attempts to divine her meaning: "Alas, sweet aunt, I know not what you mean" (Young Lucius, 4.1.4); "What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?" (Marcus, 4.1.8); "Fear her not, Lucius; somewhat doth she mean" (Titus, 4.1.9); "How now, Lavinia? Marcus, what means this?" (Titus, 4.1.30), to mention just a few examples. The sheer number of such remarks indicates that this wondrous hybrid of life and art is as strange to the figures of the play as she is to its readers or viewers – *strange* in the sense of being alien, but also bizarre, like an item in the early modern *Kunstkammer*, the cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities – and that it ultimately evades satisfactory interpretation.

Marcus's description of Lavinia in Act 2 scene 4 is structured around a set of failed attempts to vocalise his niece, who is the *vox sola deest* type of sculpture.

His queries, "Cousin, a word; where is your husband?" (2.4.12); "Speak, gentle niece" (2.4.16); "Why dost not speak to me?" (2.4.21), are all fated to remain unanswered. In the essentially reductive universe of Shakespeare's play, mimetic artistry is thus irreversibly associated with voicelessness. This blend of ideas also informs Marcus's ill-timed praise of Lavinia's eloquence and the melodiousness of her voice, which morphs into a eulogy to her cut-off tongue:

> O that delightful engine of her thoughts,
> That blabbed them with such pleasing eloquence
> Is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage
> Where like a sweet melodious bird it sung
> Sweet varied notes, enchanting every ear. (3.1.82–3.1.86)

While being another allusion to the story of Philomel, the description is also a potent element of Lavinia's presentation as the automaton. The image of a caged bird, coupled with the word "engine," can be associated with a particular form of early modern lifelike mechanical contraption, i.e., the avian automaton, which was a frequent visitor to Renaissance gardens and curiosity cabinets. Such artificial birds were equipped with mechanisms that could set them in motion and sometimes also with systems of wind pipes serving to imitate bird's song. As observed by Wendy Beth Hyman, the avian automaton soon came to be employed by early modern poets as "a metonymy of their own poetic making" (161). As the mechanical bird, or the tongue, is torn out of its cage, or the mouth, its voice – and, by extension, the poet's voice – is muted. Faced with all the atrocities of the play, poetic language – or, more generally, the language of all art – is no longer capable of grasping the true essence of reality.[10] This is probably one of the reasons why Marcus's elaborate ekphrastic speeches seem to be so disconcertingly out of place when set beside all the horror that has inspired them.

     The conflation of automation and voicelessness is also at the heart of the play's climax, namely, the garden scene in Act 4 scene 1, where Lavinia scribbles her mutilators' names in the sand with a staff held in her mouth. In doing so, the heroine transforms into a scenic version of the writing automaton, predating by two hundred years the famous Jacquet-Droz clockwork "writer," its mechanism "encased within the child-sized figure" (Nocks 34). Despite its strongly dynamic appeal, the garden scene presents the moving Lavinia as a creature devoid of any agency, whose actions are essentially echoic. Her animation in the scene is the kinetic reverberation of the motions of Marcus, who "writes his name with his staff, and guides it with his feet and mouth" (4.1.68) and asks his niece to imitate his motions in an attempt to temporarily mend the broken machinery of her body. The whole routine is preceded by Marcus's delineation of "this sandy plot" (4.1.69), or the acting area, his instructions for the Andronici to sit down by his side, and, finally, his appeal to the gods for inspiration: "Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury /

Inspire me, that I may this treason find" (4.1.67). In seeking divine guidance, Marcus is not unlike one of the designers of the early modern triumph asking to be inflamed by *furor divinus*. His voice sounds thoroughly authoritative, and his command over Lavinia-as-automaton is here at its strongest.

For all its automation and seeming dehumanisation, Lavinia's writing spree in the garden scene is distinguished by a high degree of emotional intensity. Heightened emotionality already makes itself felt in her interaction with another figure acting as the animator of the play's festive machinery, whose presence in the scene discussed can easily be overlooked, namely, Young Lucius. At the outset of Act 4, he rushes into Titus's family garden, voicing the following complaint:

> […] my aunt Lavinia
> Follows me everywhere, I know not why.
> Good uncle Marcus, see how swift she comes.
> Alas, sweet aunt, I know not what you mean. (4.1.1–4.1.4)

Not unlike Marcus, who propels Lavinia into motion with his own stirring, Young Lucius also initiates a peculiar kind of kinetic routine which is to be acted out by the female character. However, when set beside Marcus, Titus's grandson turns out to be a less calculating, more instinctive animator of Lavinia's body. In fact, he makes her follow the exact route he takes only because he is fleeing from her in panic, which means that he is both manipulating his aunt and being manipulated by her. A fine connection between Lavinia and Lucius can thus be deduced from these lines, a connection which is an echo of a more general parallel that has been drawn between the figure of the child as it was understood in the early modern period and the puzzling presence of the automaton:

> What the machine is to motion, childhood is to human being: both child and automaton, in the early modern period, lack a deliberating soul that can be understood to motivate their actions. A cognitive deficit in the agent thus becomes a theatrical asset. Perhaps the child, the machine, has less soul. But it also has more life. (Witmore 117)

For all the reductiveness of the play, Lavinia-the-automaton's lack of agency is not tantamount to lifelessness, which makes it impossible for readers or viewers at the theatre to fully distance themselves from her bodily presence. This visceral quality, in turn, accounts for the unprecedented emotional appeal of the garden scene.

While being the climax of Marcus's command over Lavinia's body, the scene described differs from all the other scenes of interaction of the two characters, which is mostly due to the conspicuous lack of any ekphrastic frame or aestheticizing description that would accompany this stunning spectacle of motion. Marcus's verbal activity is here limited to a mere several lines; however, his relative silence is a perfect

illustration of the unease experienced by all of the Andronici at the sight of Lavinia's frantic attempts at writing. The same can be said of Young Lucius's wild flight from his aunt. The garden scene is thus a perfect dramatic rendering of what the roboticist Masahiro Mori calls the "uncanny valley effect," i.e., the eerie sensation one experiences as one spirals from empathy into disgust and horror upon one's encounter with a near-to-perfect humanoid; a dip in feelings which results from trying to come to terms with the robot's lifelike appearance and motion (98–99).

5. The Waterwork

Another element of the play's poetics of automation is the mechanised garden waterwork. This type of ingenious aquatic contraption was frequently a variation on mythological subject matter, which makes it a particularly fitting motif for the presentation of Lavinia, whose plight echoes the tale of Philomel.[11] Aquatic imagery figures rather prominently in Marcus's *blazon anatomique* in Act 2 scene 4. One-fourth of his speech is actually taken by the description of Lavinia's loss of blood:

> Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
> Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
> Doth rise and fall between thy rosèd lips,
> Coming and going with thy honey breath.
> But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee,
> And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.
> Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame,
> And notwithstanding all this loss of blood,
> As from a conduit with three issuing spouts,
> Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face
> Blushing to be encountered with a cloud. (2.4.22–2.4.32)

It should be noted that Lavinia-as-waterwork as pictured by Marcus not only bleeds but also blushes, Shakespeare's lines echoing here the famous description of the blushing cheeks of Lavinia's namesake in *The Aeneid*, and "turns […] away [her] face in shame" (2.4.28). Her animation in the scene is reminiscent of the animation of constituent parts of early modern automatic waterworks. With its predominance of verbs related to motion, which create the impression of blood running in a closed circuit, this description thus brings to mind the Renaissance garden fountain where mechanical pumps ensured a continuous, circular flow of water. Such contraptions were believed to reconcile the otherwise incompatible forces at work in nature: stillness and motion, steadiness and fluidity, thus making it possible for the owner of the garden to symbolically master time (Davis 174–175). Once again the play's poetics of failed festivity proves to be inextricably connected with the theme of power.

To return to the realm of early modern festival, Marcus's description of the blood-spitting-and-drinking fountain has also been interpreted as "a dark, deviant version of the festive occasional architecture associated with civic pageantry," with Lavinia resembling the "conduits running with wine during royal entries" (Cunin 59). This reading of the tortured female figure helps explain the otherwise puzzling conflation of Lavinia's blood with her "honey breath." *Joyeuse Entrée* would have entailed a special kind of multisensory perception of the wonders of occasional architecture, with rose water and incense being among the favourite fragrances used by the authors of such entertainments.

The affinity between Lavinia and the automatic waterwork is further developed in the scenes where Titus attempts to re-establish his command over the broken machinery of her body. In a striking combination of the poetic and the macabre so typical of the play, he advises his daughter on how to take her own life:

> Or get some little knife between thy teeth,
> And just against thy heart make thou a hole
> That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall
> May run into that sink, and soaking in,
> Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears. (3.2.16–3.2.20)

For all its traumatic appeal, Titus's grim fantasy creates the impression of a design for some intricate hydraulic contraption. Not unlike Marcus, whose aestheticising lines succeed in temporarily freezing Lavinia, Titus comes up with a haunting image of his daughter as a fountain in reverse, where the liquid would flow into the device instead of being pushed out of it. Titus's quasi-sculptural design here subverts the ideology of the Renaissance garden, which was to be seen as the earthly reflection of the Garden of Eden, with the Fountain of Life at its centre. The tears soaking into the aperture would here bring death instead of life. One of the key themes in this passage is the motif of boundary-crossing, which is so prominent in the hunting scenes preceding all the play's horrors. The line of demarcation here infringed, however, is not the ideological division between culture, or Rome, and nature, or the woods, but the infinitely more tangible boundary between the inside and the outside of the human body, the intimate barrier between the outer world and the inner self. Still, there is some thematic affinity between the scenes discussed: were Titus's design actually realised, tears soaking into the flesh would be a form of infiltration, not unlike the spreading of sound in Act 2 scene 2. Ironically, by encouraging Lavinia to take her own life, Titus is trying to step back into the role of the animator of her automated self.

One of the reasons why Titus's aquatic design is not executed is that it entails violation of the laws of physics governing the workings of the human organism: tears are supposed to re-enter the body instead of leaving it. By contrast, a more conventional route is taken by the blood of Chiron and Demetrius in Act 5 scene 2, following Titus's announcement of his intention to "martyr" them: "This one hand

yet is left to cut your throats, / Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold / The basin that receives your guilty blood" (5.2.181–5.2.183). Once again one is presented with an image of a hydraulic contraption, this time involving several figures, where Lavinia functions as a prominent element of the sculptural group, collecting the villains' blood into a vessel supported by her stumps. With the execution of this design Titus finally re-establishes his command of the automated machinery of the spectacle. His manifestation of power, however, does not mean that the broken universe of the play has been mended. The murder of Lavinia in the last scene of the play is shocking but thoroughly in line with Shakespeare's poetics of failed festivity: after the conclusion of the Joyous Entry the short-lived wonders of occasional architecture were always dismantled, some of their costly fabrics torn apart by the crowd, not infrequently in fits of ritualised frenzy.

Notes

1   All quotations of *Titus Andronicus* are from the 1994 *New Cambridge Shakespeare* edition by Alan Hughes.

2   Considerable sections of *Titus Andronicus*, including Act 1 scene 1, are generally held to be the work of George Peele (see, for instance, Chapter 3 in Vickers 2002). However, the play's collaborative authorship is beyond the scope of the present study, the principal reason being that it does not affect the thematic integrity of the entire text, especially when it comes to its festive imagery.

3   The complex interaction between ephemeral and urban architecture is expertly discussed in Mulryne, De Jonge, Martens, and Morris (2018).

4   One of the highlights of the coronation entry of Edward VI into London (1547) was the display of automata: a lion befriending a phoenix, and another lion being crowned (Witmore 114–116).

5   On the appropriation and adaptation of the tradition of the Roman triumph by the makers of early modern festival, see McGowan 2002.

6   Further affinities between Lavinia and Rome are discussed in Smith 1996 (327–328).

7   In her discussion of Harrison's lavishly illustrated book, J. Caitlin Finlayson notes the presence of "a draughtsman's compass and/or a rule (or measuring scale) […] at the bottom of each illustration," further observing that "these architectural tools point towards the drawings as artificer's designs, in proportion and measured […], thereby establishing the authority of this folio as a visual record of the devices" (179).

8   For a comprehensive discussion of the architectural lexicon as used in the play, see Cunin 2012.

9   Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly defines early modern festival books as "individual

publications issued by the body organizing the particular festival" (22). For further information on printed records of early modern entertainments, see Watanabe-O'Kelly 2002 (21–23).

10 Lavinia's disfigured body has been described as a "speechless emblem […] a work of art (made by Shakespeare) designed to show the limits of art and artful language" (Kendall 306).

11 Henry IV's gardens at Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1598), for instance, boasted a grotto with the figure of Perseus descending from the ceiling and killing a dragon, accompanied by the fettered Andromeda and the drinking Bacchus. Salomon de Caus's *Les Raisons des Forces Mouvantes* (1615), which he dedicated to Elizabeth of Bohemia, contains a plate with a cave with a pan-pipe-playing Cyclops and the goddess Venus seated in a shell drawn by dolphins (LaGrandeur 45).

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Identity, Fidelity, and Cross-Cultural Relationships in Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly*

Abstract: *Almayer's Folly* (1896) by Joseph Conrad challenged the conventions of the fictional romance while confronting the need of native-born Malayans and other Asian individuals to find voice and identity in an imperial context. Along with the narrative voice in this text are the many other voices of those who have been colonized. Fidelity to one's identity and openness to relationships across cultures lies at the crux of this study. Conrad's critics of the 1950s and 1960s dismissed his first novel as a romance with a weak subplot. However, that subplot, about Almayer's daughter Nina and her love affair, sets forth moral claims of loyalty and fidelity that must be taken into account. For her relationship with a Malay prince expresses a love that is binding and enduring, one that crosses boundaries and divisions and is an apt model for our culturally convergent world. Conrad creates a dialectic of intercultural subjectivities to make a point about identity, loyalty, and self-fashioning. Whereas Almayer is portrayed as foolish and inflexible, his daughter, Nina, faces significant issues of identity, as she has to choose between the traditional, indigenous heritage of her mother and her father's modern European aspirations. With *Almayer's Folly*, Joseph Conrad showed himself to be an international novelist who could develop a story with an inter-racial and intercultural cast of characters.

Keywords: Joseph Conrad, Almayer, Malay, Europe, identity, narrative, fidelity, ethics, cross-cultural, colonial

1. Introduction

Almayer's Folly (1896) by Joseph Conrad challenged the conventions of fictional romance while confronting the need of native-born Malayans and other Asian individuals to find voice and identity in an imperial context. Along with the narrative voice come the many other voices of those who have been colonized. In Conrad's novel, among these subaltern voices there is Nina Almayer, wrestling with cultural identity. As

a child of a colonizer and a native Malayan, her hybridized identity "calls into question the naturalness and legitimacy of hegemonic identities," as postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha suggests (151). Inclined toward romance, she is engaged in what Stuart Hall refers to as "the production of identity" in "an act of imaginative rediscovery" of her mother's indigenous roots while she wrestles against the signifying practices of the colonizer that might reduce her individuality (423). Following *Almayer's Folly*, Conrad extended the issues of identity, fidelity, and cross-cultural relationship across what became a Malay trilogy with *Outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue*.

Conrad's critics of the 1950s and the 1960s dismissed his first novel as a romance with a weak subplot. For example, Thomas Moser objected to the sub-plot romance between Nina and Dain Maroola as contrived and lacking "moral and psychological interest" (12). This essay argues that critics like Moser missed a significant point: the subplot concerning Nina Almayer and her Malayan lover Dain Maroola is central to the identity politics of the novel. Rather than being a plot that can "obscure the meaning of the novel," as Moser contended, it paral-lels and supports the novel's main plot by underscoring the moral significance of fidelity in this cross-cultural relationship. As John H. Hicks has observed, the moral claims of loyalty and fidelity must be taken into account in this story. The growing love of Nina and Dain Maroola is not only sensual and sexual, as some critics have insisted; it is a higher love that is binding and enduring, one that crosses boundaries and divisions and is an apt model for our culturally conver-gent world. This cross-cultural relationship and the mutual fidelity and sense of identity it exemplifies are key thematic threads in Conrad's novel, as this essay shall demonstrate.

Conrad's narrative focus on Almayer and his daughter Nina – a female of mixed racial background – foregrounds the issue of silencing and marginalizing of the female and native voice by the imperial center. With *Almayer's Folly*, Joseph Conrad showed himself to be an international novelist who could develop a story with an inter-racial and intercultural cast of characters and create a dialectic of inter-cultural subjectivities to make a point about identity, loyalty, and self-fashioning. Almayer's daughter, Nina, faces significant issues of identity, as she must choose between the traditional, indigenous heritage of her mother and her father's modern European aspirations. In this way, Conrad's novel reflects what was occurring in the British Empire overseas, as well as in the Dutch colonial possessions, and at home in London before the turn of the 20th century. The novel's many voices and inner unease mirror a kind of potential transformation of culture fostered by emi-gration, commercial interest, and the convergence of Eastern and Western people. At a time when Britain believed in the superiority of its civilization, readers could read in Conrad's fiction of the ingenuity of Malay people and the hapless machi-nations of Conrad's Dutch characters. The novel challenged British readers with a subtle critique of European imperialism laced with anthropological relativism and challenges to their own imperial identity.

Conrad gives his readers Kasper Almayer: an ambitious fool in quest of a colonial fortune, who loves his daughter, Nina. In *A Personal Record*, Conrad wrote that he envisioned a man with "incredible assumptions and grandiose dreams" (76). Almayer lives with the illusion that the achievement of material prosperity alone will result in human dignity. He is the protégé of Lingard, who has married him to his adoptive Malay daughter: a move which is supposed to signal her acceptance into the world of the Europeans. Lingard believes that this adopted Malay woman and her daughter Nina can attain the benefits of Western civilization. He is mistaken, for both become women with divided allegiances. Money alone cannot wipe away all the cultural differences, condescension, and racial prejudices that surround these women. Almayer deals commercially with Malay natives and Dutch traders, but he is thoroughly unable to deal with his wife, a Malay woman. Outspoken and strong, she has been placed in the untenable position of being "at odds with her Malay people and their traditions," as Hicks observes (22). Through her and the other Malay natives who appear in the story, Western readers of *Almayer's Folly* are presented with an environment that, for them, embraces the exotic reaches of the Pacific. However, by this they are reminded of the pathos of life at home and of how belief or ideology may conflict with practice. For Mrs. Almayer can see that, in contrast with the religious sisters' claims about Christian love, tolerance and love are not practiced toward her (42–43). As Hicks has pointed out, Mrs. Almayer turns against Almayer to assist the Malay trader Lakamba, who is in competition with him (24–25). She is suspended between the white and Malay world and falls into isolation (22).

Nina Almayer is in a similar liminal position, caught between cultures. Nina is held by her father as "the inner meaning of his life" (Conrad 2002, 102). Kasper Almayer rationalizes his greed for gain by assuming that he is pursuing this course for Nina's sake. He believes that she will have a fine future someday by escaping to Europe. However, Nina is attracted to Dain Maroola and their romance stands in marked contrast to her father's romantic illusions. Dreaming of Western commercial conquest and financial success, Kasper Almayer anticipates "millions" from speculation before his deal with Lingard collapses. Meanwhile, Nina's identity lies on the cusp of a new, multi-racial, multi-ethnic world. In her, the alterity of the Malay people within a colonial context is rendered problematic. For Nina can make her own choices in moral autonomy. She will not be subordinated to her father's schemes and visions of success. She says to him, "Can I not live my own life, as you have lived yours?" (190). Nina discovers her sense of purpose and individuality. She realizes that she and Dain Maroola must move on in their lives to "the great blue sea that was like life" (168). However, Kasper Almayer rejects Dain Maroola. For all his claims of love for his daughter, he is hostile to him and is against Nina's happiness because her choices are against his own self-interest. Almayer calls their affair sensual (176–178). While Nina insists "I love you no less than before" (180), much like Shakespeare's Lear, Almayer casts her off. "I

shall never forgive you," he says (181). Nina's choice feels to him like a betrayal of his goals (190). He seeks to erase her footprints; caught in the illusions of his subjectivity, he destroys his bond to her (195).

2. Revising the Fictional Romance

Conrad inverted the conventions of the romance novel. While his early novels involve maritime stories and narratives set in the Malay Archipelago and make use of the romance form, they also contest this form with innovations. Almayer, a rather naive and self-deluded trader in a remote area, dreams of riches. However, his romantic vision is faulty. He expects to become an heir to his mentor Tom Lingard's legacy. He has married Lingard's adopted Malay daughter with this expectation, but Lingard has lost his money and vanished in Europe. The story is problematized as Almayer, searching for gold, involves Dain Maroola, a Balinese ruler, in his quest. When Almayer's daughter Nina then falls in love with Dain Maroola, Nina is forced to search for her identity, even as her mother returns to her native roots. European colonialism is implicitly indicted when the Dutch arrive and arrest Dain Maroola, asserting that he has sought to overthrow their rule of the region. Much to Kasper Almayer's dismay, Maroola escapes and runs away with Nina. This romance underscores the conflict between their love and Almayer's quest for material acquisition.

The decision of Nina and Maroola corresponds with Conrad own strong ethic of duty, honor, and fidelity. They resolve to be true to themselves and realize a sense of purpose. Bertrand Russell wrote of Conrad that "his point of view, one might say, was the antithesis of Rousseau's. Man is born in chains, but he can become free. He becomes free, I believe Conrad would have said, not by letting loose his impulses, not by being casual and uncontrolled, but by subduing wayward impulses to a dominant purpose" (82, 84).

Contrary to the reviews of several of the novel's earliest critics, this was no conventional romance. With this first novel, Conrad immediately established his difference from his contemporaries. In *Almayer's Folly* Conrad works with the romance form but he weaves a series of tragic notes through it. The romantic affair does not have what we would consider a 'happily ever after' conclusion. Conrad's European readers encountered the Malay region portrayed in a way that is less appealing than in other romances of the period. Conrad also appears critical of the Eurocentric worldview. Almayer's daughter, Nina, chooses her native Malayan heritage against the European. She struggles with whether she is European or Malayan. The Westerners, meanwhile, appear prejudiced and demeaning toward her. In contrast with Kasper Almayer's foolishness, the Malayans appear crafty and intelligent. There is also an undertone of critique of the entire European imperialist enterprise. The rise of colonial presence and power is countered with questions

about the integrity of a declining man like Almayer and the prejudices and behavior of the Dutch. Almayer, living in a daydream of the future, has placed his hopes in becoming rich for his daughter. However, she plans to run off with Dain Maroola. In contrast with the typical heroine of Victorian romance fiction, Nina is an assertive young woman who chooses her own path. Her strength of character shows itself in her break with her father and with European values and her embrace of her Malayan heritage. With *Almayer's Folly*, Conrad writes a novel that is indeed different from conventional romance fiction.

With *Almayer's Folly*, Conrad's British readers were confronted with more than a conventional boy's adventure tale, as in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* or Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Beneath Conrad's presentation of Almayer's foolish quest lies a moral interrogation of imperialist commerciality and colonial identity. Conrad's narrator critiques the adventurism and motives of European colonizers. From the first page of the novel, Almayer's thoughts are "often busy with gold" (3). He is an inflexible man who clings to a notion of identity that is based upon material gain. He lacks fidelity to deeper moral principles and fails to support cross-cultural relationships despite being married to a Malaysian woman and having a daughter who is both of Malay and European ancestry. His materialistic romance gravitates away from fidelity to his daughter and his wife, and he subsumes his identity beneath crass goals. Indeed, he loses the ground of his own identity to wistful dreams and the exploitation of the Western colonizers.

In contrast to her father, Nina performs her identity between the codes and traditions of East and West, as Robert Hampson has indicated. Following the thought of Homi K. Bhahba, we will see in the character of Nina a third space, a liminal and hybrid space of indigenous and European, besides the East/West binary (38). Her identity is unstable rather than fixed; she is in process of constructing her selfhood. In this character we may see how Conrad's moral vision is carried in the novel's intersecting relationships across racial and cultural lines. For love arises in this struggle to declare her integrity and her connection with her Malay lover amid the play of history and culture and power. This becomes an ethical relation of loyalty by which she actualizes her identity as an individual.

3. Post-colonial Readings

While Joseph Conrad was certainly a man of his time, carrying the attendant prejudices of his period, he was not the "thoroughgoing racist" that Chinua Achebe, writing in a different, post-colonial context, imagined him to be. Nor is his Nina a weak character who simply gives in to the attractions of Dain Maroola. She says that he is "the new principle of her life" (103), "the reason and aim of life" (152) and declares: "And I mean to love. I mean to follow him" (180). However, to follow him does not mean to subject herself entirely to him but, rather, to adopt Malay

traditions and assert her identity. It is not self-abnegation but a reclamation of her life to say, "Now I am Malay" (180).

Contrary to New Critical readings that followed F.R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition*, a post-structural and post-colonial reading of *Almayer's Folly* will see Nina's search for identity and meaning as pivotal for an understanding of the novel. Nina's quest cannot be dismissed as merely "high flown sentiments," as Thomas Moser declared in his reading of the novel (53–54). Conrad was not merely creating, as Moser held, a romantic love sub-plot for melodrama because "most novels he knew […] included a romantic love story" (50–52). Rather, Nina's affair with Dain Maroola is a crucible in which she develops her sense of identity and a commitment of love and fidelity that transcends sensuality, as John H. Hicks has recognized. As Harry Sewhall has pointed out, the relationships across racial and cultural divides were not even mentioned by F.R. Leavis, who called *Almayer's Folly* mere "adjectival studies in the Malayan exotic" (218).[1] The rational Western mind is positioned in a binary, or dualism, against this stereotype of Eastern passionate nature. Mrs. Almayer, in *Almayer's Folly*, Kasper Almayer's wife and Nina's mother, stands at this divide. She is, as Christopher GoGwilt has pointed out, a *nyai* figure in whom questions about domestic respectability arise (423–424). As language tries to define her position within her mixed marriage with Almayer, she is his wife, but with the *nyai* connotations of housekeeper, concubine, or mistress.

A pronounced imperial subtext pervaded late Victorian England. The British reader's nationalist pride was shaped by the exhibition of artifacts from imperial territories, popular entertainments, images in galleries, and books. These exhibitions and spectacles, music hall shows and gallery imports, presumed to support this nationalist and imperial identity. In contrast, Kasper Almayer's daughter, Nina, who is not Malay or Dutch, cannot locate herself in either culture. Her voice reveals her as a character that is caught in between cultural worlds, "shivering and helpless as if on the edge of some deep and unknown abyss" (XI, 42). She lives amid two contradictory social systems and is unable to live in either. Unlike Rudyard Kipling's character Kim, who makes intelligent use of his multi-cultural background, Nina Almayer is caught in the tension of her liminal position: she is Dutch and Malay, West and East, a woman caught in between two worlds.

Joseph Conrad's own situation as a Polish expatriate was clearly similar to this. His identity as a writer living in England was as fluid as the ocean he had come from as a sailor. Conrad began writing *Almayer's Folly* in London in May 1889, after returning from service in the South Pacific. He was a quiet, reflective East European wondering at the energy of imperial London. In mid-1891, he rented rooms at 17 Gillingham Street near Victoria Station. London was a place of long walks and exploration for Conrad. In many of his early works, a returning sailor sees the city: a metropolis that clearly intends to express its preeminence and world role in its architecture. Yet, Conrad gives us a view of another London from the deck of the Nellie at the start of his novel *Heart of Darkness*. We see London in the grimy

jumble of its outskirts depicted in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* as the *Narcissus* travels up the Thames. This is not the stable city of imposing public monuments, a great financial district, and well-defined streets and avenues. In *Almayer's Folly*, Conrad, sitting in his rooms in London, gives his readers a region far away. Imaginatively recreating Malaysia, he recalls the far reaches of the Empire.

4. Crafting *Almayer's Folly*

Conrad completed *Almayer's Folly* on April 24, 1894. To Marguerite Paradowska he wrote on April 24 at 11 a.m.:

> My dear Aunt, I regret to inform you of the death of Mr. Kaspar Almayer, which occurred this morning at 3 o'clock. It is finished. A scratching of the pen writing the final word, and suddenly this entire company of people who have spoken into my ear, gesticulated before my eyes, lived with me for so many years, becomes a band of phantoms who retreat, fade and dissolve – and are made pallid and indistinct by the sunlight of this brilliant and somber day. (1940, 153)

Clearly, the novel was never intended to provide a realistic portrayal of Borneo. "Well, I never did set up as an authority on Malaysia" (130), Conrad wrote to William Blackwood, December 13, 1898. Despite this denial of realism, the story may have been, in part, drawn from types. In *A Personal Record* (September 1919), Conrad recalls meeting with "Almayer" and producing "an exact rendering of authentic memories" (25). It has been said that the character of Kaspar Almayer was drawn from William Charles Olmeijer of Berouw. Conrad drew upon his experience of the Vidar. Almayer is of Dutch background, a man who came to Borneo to be the agent of Tom Lingard. Ford Maddox Ford called Lingard Conrad's "most typical hero," possessing "an adventurer's romantic glamour" (*Personal Remembrances*, 167). Lingard appears in three Conrad stories: *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), and *The Rescue* (1920), one of his last published works. Almayer is described by Ian Watt as "a Borneo Bovary" (51) who devotes his life to an obsessive fantasy. Watt also examines Conrad's narrative method and what it may owe to Flaubert (55–67). Almayer "illuminates the literary traditions Conrad drew upon and how he addressed technical problems of fiction" (Watt 55).

Indeed, the novel typifies Conrad's emerging craft as a novelist. However, it begins to unleash a critique of imperialism that Conrad would continue in *Heart of Darkness* and other stories. *Almayer's Folly* was well-received and there were laudatory reviews in *The Daily Mail* as well as in *The Saturday Review*. However, it was primarily viewed as a romance. H.G. Wells called it "a very powerful story indeed." *The Sun* named it "Book of the Week," calling it "a splendid region of romance" (9 June, 1895). H.L. Mencken commented, "If it is not a work of absolute genius, then

no work of absolute genius exists on this earth" (qtd. in Allen 14). The rapacity of the Dutch colonists, the struggles of Nina for identity, as an Asian-born woman, and the dilemmas of the novel's Malay characters were downplayed in these reviews.

Likewise, de-emphasized were the existential situation and linguistic dilemmas of Almayer and his daughter Nina. Almayer must choose whether to speak in Malay or in English. As the Russian Formalist critic Mikhail Bakhtin says, "[c]onsciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of having to choose a language" (295). The environment compels a person to orient himself or herself amid many languages. Almayer is the fool, the dreamer seeking fool's gold in the imperial context of Malaysia. Generally surrounded by the sounds of Malay, he is excited to hear the European speech of the Dutch traders. He chooses to speak in a European language.

Nina, who is caught between two societies, the Malay and the Dutch, belongs to neither. Her speeches reveal her personal and linguistic struggle. She is representative of anyone who is mediating two different cultures, such as a person raised in a bi-lingual family. Nina searches to belong and to give voice to her self-understanding. Often, Conrad's characters like Nina stand out from society, much like the heroes of Greek tragedy. They act in isolated worlds, dealing with their inner problems. Conrad gives us tragic heroes who to work out their relationship with society. Unlike the Greek heroes, they are not high-born and there is little glory that they move toward. They have moral, or what we might call inner, issues to contend with. These inner problems are mirrored in the external landscape, or in events. Nina's romance with Dain Maroola and her relationship with her mother persuade her to embrace her Malay culture. Yet, her fundamental struggle to define her identity is an existential one. Her choices are ones that she must make unaided. Even as her father, Almayer, falls further into his Don Quixote-like daydreams, Nina must find the resolve to be self-creating and to face the world on her own.

Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that the figure of the fool is introduced into fiction for the purpose of "making strange" the conventional world. Bakhtin writes:

> By representing stupidity, the novel teaches prose intelligence, prose wisdom. Regarding fools or regarding the world through the eyes of a fool, the novelist's eye is taught a sport of prose vision, the vision of a world confused by conventions of pathos and by falsity. (404)

Conrad sought to cut a path through such pathos and falsity toward truthfulness. He wished to render life clearly. In 1895, in his "Author's Note," Conrad writes:

> The picture of life, there as here, is drawn with the same elaboration of detail, coloured with the same tints. Only in the cruel serenity of the sky, under the merciless brilliance of the sun, the dazzled eye misses the delicate detail, sees only the strong outlines, while the colours, in the steady light, seem crude and without shadow. Nevertheless, it is the same picture.

And there is a bond between us and humanity so far away. I am speaking of men and women – not of the charming graceful phantoms that move about in our mud and smoke and are softly luminous with the radiance of all our virtues; that are possessed of all refinements, of all sensibilities, of all wisdom – but, being only phantoms, possess no heart. (21)

Conrad's Malay people are human and imperfect. As John McClure has pointed out, "Conrad challenges the European representation of Malays as uniformly savage and inferior" but does not create an idyllic image of them (158). The Malay people do have agency and they scheme against the colonials. We see this again in *An Outcast of the Islands*: a story with its action set before *Almayer's Folly*. Like its predecessor, *Almayer's Folly* inverts the romance tradition. To this story would later be added a third novel, *The Rescue*, creating a Malayan trilogy. *An Outcast of the Islands* centers upon the experiences of Peter Willems, who is a protégé of Tom Lingard. Upon becoming a clerk for Hudig and Company, Willems embezzles money to pay off his gambling debts. As he tries to pay back this money, his criminal embezzlement is discovered. Trust and fidelity now are broken within this group of men. Meanwhile, Lingard has developed a trading monopoly. Offering Willems a second chance, he leads him along the secret route to Sambir, the more remote area where Almayer lives. The novel deals with the perplexities of Willems' affair with Assa, the daughter of a Brunei leader and his betrayal of Lingard's secret path to Sambir to an Arab trader, thus destroying Lingard's monopoly. Almayer sends for Willems' wife and son from the trading post where they had been abandoned. Willem is clearly an anti-hero, one guilty of the crime of betrayal. There is clearly no fidelity, loyalty, or moral code in his character. Conrad provides a moral tale that probes this lack of moral fiber in this character. In writing about this novel, one may again consider how the community and its values establish a moral standard that its members must abide by for the sake of solidarity and harmony. Willems is an outcast because he does not act responsibly. He neglects his wife, cheats his employer, and he blames others for his failings. Almayer is naïve and distracted by dreams of wealth and progress; Willems is corrupt.

Willems' self-centeredness is at issue. He lives by the illusion of his presumed superiority to the islanders: a false colonial delusion of grandeur. His clear lack of moral rectitude indicates that his sense of privilege is not merited. His condescension toward the islanders and his disregard of them is exposed as a prejudice linked with his lack of moral quality. This suggests a distorted identity, one that lacks the fidelity that secures one's moral center. In the figure of Willems, one may see Conrad pointing to the moral failures of the West in its colonial endeavors. One may further consider how this novel interrogates Western civilization from the standpoint of Eastern, or non-Western values.

5. Conclusion

Cross-cultural relationship and community may today be viewed as a theme that Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* is reaching toward while questioning it. Conrad was ever concerned with an ethical code that centered upon loyalty and fidelity. Likewise, he was often concerned with how the isolated individual could relate within a community, whether of sailors, or indigenous people. Conrad was also a master of the uses of point of view and irony. In the early years of the twentieth century there were, of course, critics, who could see how Conrad was recasting the romance novel as a critical tool forged with irony. Novelist-critics like Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and E.M. Forster all wrote about Conrad's work during his lifetime. Richard Curle in *Joseph Conrad: A Study* (1914), Hugh Walpole in *Joseph Conrad* (1916), and Wilson Follett in *Joseph Conrad: A Short Study* all produced useful studies. Curle called Conrad a realistic romanticist and inquired into his uses of irony. Follett was intrigued by Conrad's sense of the individual's struggle in an impersonal universe and one's need for human community. He begins to point to themes, such as the notion that this is an indifferent universe, that appear consistently throughout Conrad's novels.

After Conrad's death, several commentaries on his work appeared. Notable was Ford Maddox Ford's *A Personal Remembrance* (1924). Ford, a collaborator, friend, and sometime financial supporter of Conrad, offers thoughts on Conrad's writing methods and how some of Conrad's works emerged. Ford's recollections ought to be supplemented with other documented evidence, however. Some critics say that his book carries some biographical and historical inaccuracies and some embellishments. Likewise, Jessie Conrad's *Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him* (1926) has to be examined carefully, with a degree of curious skepticism. It appears that her information is colored by the attitude of a particular school of Conrad scholarship concerned with his reputation. Edward Garnett, the publisher's reader, was quick to dispute some of the material in this account. Facts have been established that run counter to some of the assertions in this book. G. Jean-Aubry's *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters* (1927) soon appeared, based upon biographical material and a collection of letters. Later critics, like Zdzislaw Nadjer, have identified Conrad's resistance to imperialism as deriving from his family's experience with Czarist Russia.

Throughout much of Conrad's writing there is a concern with identity amid the flux of experience. As Conrad experiments with point of view, the identity of any given character is seen from various points of view. Within the cross-cultural relationships we see in his works, fidelity to a code remains a moral center. This affirmation of fidelity to a moral code links Conrad's fiction with a long Western tradition, even as he raises questions about choice and chance and life in the modern world.

Almayer's Folly, Conrad's first novel, is rich with the lyricism that would appear in subsequent works. This lyricism anchors his work in a faithful respect

for Western literary traditions. Ian Watt has pointed out that some of Conrad's early "lyrical flights" are like those of a Greek chorus in their formal qualities. This is a stylistic mode which appears in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. Perhaps with respect to Nina in *Almayer's Folly* this mode may suggest the moral voice of the Greek chorus that comments on the predicaments of Antigone or the Trojan Women. Nina, like Antigone, must remain true to her roots, her ancestry, and her sense of the higher call of love and dignity. John Palmer suggests that *Almayer's Folly's* elaborations sound more like fin de siècle lyrics disembodied from any structure whatever (8). Yet, *Almayer's Folly* sets forth strong beginnings of the critique of the human community which would follow in Conrad's ship symbols: the abandonment of refugees on the sinking *Patna* in *Lord Jim*, the ship sailing in cloudy night ambiguity in "The Secret Sharer," or the ship stuck in the river-mud of the Congo that symbolizes the futile and stalled colonial enterprise in *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad gives us his character Marlow in "Youth" and *Heart of Darkness* to address this community and its disintegration. Marlow seeks to maintain his identity and his sense of fidelity to the European community's colonial enterprise. He wishes to be faithful to a cause and a mission that he has embarked upon and he has to balance his code with his encounter with a new culture. There is skepticism in Marlow's voice, as he is on a voyage into the dark places of ambiguity. He offers a moral framework, one that is indeed metaphysical, that seeks the human soul and moral center of humanity. He looks beyond the material, commercial enterprise that so enamored Kasper Almayer. Conrad works toward an ironic modern mode, one quite different from the romance novel, a narrative enriched by modern symbolic and rhetorical methods.

Notes

1   Frederick Karl claimed that Willem, in Conrad's subsequent tale An *Outcast of the Islands*, had a passion for a "native seductress" and was thereby "cut off from civilization and "civilized feeling" (101). As Sewhall observed, Karl never defines what he means by "civilized feeling." Ian Watt sees Conrad's male character in *An Outcast of the Islands* as a victim of a seductive women: "Willems succumbs to a beautiful Malay girl" (73).

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On the Idea of the Secondary World in Susanna Clarke's *Piranesi*

Abstract: The paper seeks to explore the concept of the secondary world as developed in Susanna Clarke's 2020 fantasy novel *Piranesi*. The analysis is conducted in the context of the evolution of the literary motif of fairy abduction between the classic medieval texts and its current incarnations in modern speculative fiction. The argument relates the unique secondary world model found in Clarke's novel to the extensive intertextual relationship *Piranesi* has with the tradition of portal fantasy narratives, and discusses it in the context of the progressive cognitive internalisation of the perception of the fantastic which has taken place between the traditional medieval paradigm and contemporary fantasy fiction.

Keywords: fantasy, secondary world, fairy abduction, medieval, C.S. Lewis, Susanna Clarke

1. Introduction

It is a widely acknowledged fact that the significance of a newly created literary work may be measured by its influence on the successive generations of authors, whose future contribution to, and perception of, a given literary genre will be determined by their appreciation and response to the new contribution to the canon. It is also, however, becoming increasingly appreciated that the mark of the impact of a text upon its native literary tradition may be discerned in the extent to which the classic works and motifs which have first provided the formative influence in the given work's creation will be redefined by the novel context that the new work bestows on them. Such a perspective on the evolution of literary tradition has become the cornerstone of Brian Attebery's theory for the explanation of the intertextual template behind modern fantasy's reappropriation of myth (2014, 18–42). Also, Attebery's application of the concept of the "fuzzy set," defined in his 1992

study *Strategies of Fantasy*, based on the idea of the literary genre as a constantly evolving body of texts related to one another by their indebtedness to a central core of seminal works (106), seems to point the way towards a new awareness of the role of the intertextual context in the shaping of our appreciation of the literary merits of a particular piece of creative fiction.

The present argument is designed to follow in the footsteps of this mode of critical evaluation and trace the conceptual roots behind the idea for the secondary world which is developed in Susanna Clarke's 2020 fantasy novel titled *Piranesi*. We shall attempt here to examine how the consecutive layers of the novel's intertextual context contribute to the formation of a distinctly original treatment of the concept of the fantastic secondary world that we find in Susanna Clarke's narrative. Clarke's first epochal novel, *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, redefined the respective positions of the mode of fantasy and the classic 19th century formal realist fiction and, consequently, extended the scope of historical and cultural reference for the fantasy genre. In *Piranesi*, Clarke develops a new reformulation of the connection between the contemporary understanding of the Tolkienian concept of the secondary world and the notions concerning the metaphysical reality which descend to us from the tradition of classical philosophy, as well as modern psychological models. Another thing which the novel problematises is the nature of the relation of the Tolkienian tradition of subcreated reality[1] to the historically conceived medieval literary tradition of the literary incarnation of the fairyland and the marvellous realm located beyond the ordinary scope of Nature.

2. Fairy Abduction: The Medieval Tradition

It seems that the most opportune way to commence a discussion of these aspects of the novel is to look beyond the artfully woven suspense of the narrative which skilfully operates a whole wealth of post-modernist narrative conventions to conjure up a complex interplay of psychological relationships and to follow the basic sequence of the storyline. Here we meet a young writer/intellectual/academic Matthew Rose Sorensen, who applies his customary penchant for analytical scrutiny and acumen for meticulous record-keeping to the task of deciding on an appropriate topic for his next book project. As we follow the protagonist's deliberations which get pinned down in his journal in the form of successive pros and cons, we learn about his idea of writing a book about Laurence Arne-Sayles, a notorious figure of the academic world, famous for his controversial views about the existence of alternative worlds. We also learn that Arne-Sayles has been exerting a strong, and frequently unhealthy, influence over his circle of young followers, indulging, at the same time, in a clandestine lifestyle of violence and promiscuity, which has led him into collision with the law. As the

consecutive entries get recorded in the journal we may learn somewhat about Matthew Rose Sorensen's character and priorities. As incentives to researching the story Sorensen mentions the appeal which such a "sexy subject" involving a "transgressive thinker" may have for gaining a wider interest in his project. As disincentives he mentions difficulties with accessing information and competition from other publications on the topic.

The intertextual context is difficult to overlook here. In the figure of a young, ambitious and egotistic scholar pursuing a methodical deliberation upon the question of finding a research project which would take him beyond the ordinary scope of academic endeavour and win him fame and recognition we easily recognise a trope of Marlowe's incarnation of Dr Faustus. The scene, recorded in the form of an entry in Sorensen's journal, clearly links with the opening scene of Marlowe's play. Sorensen plainly echoes Faustus in his ambition, competitiveness and an analytical cast of mind and, as Faustus before him, he succumbs to the temptation of pursuing a research project where the thrill of redefining barriers and winning renown is inextricably linked with real danger.[2]

Yet the story of Matthew Rose Sorensen will not follow the stage of the initial transgression in the direction of spiritual temptation, but will instead hark back to the motif of entrapment in other worlds as the young, ambitions intellectual ends up being imprisoned against his will in a secondary world where he undergoes a mental transformation caused by his interaction with the alternative reality. This particular theme finds its oldest corresponding incarnation in the fairy abduction motif, which functioned across the various genres of European medieval literature (Wade 9–38; Lewis 122–138). It is in the context of this particular narrative motif that the idea of the fairyland crystallised across the hierarchy of medieval genres, finding its way into the folk ballad, the romance, and the dream allegory. It is to this underlying template that the basic narrative structure of Susanna Clarke's story must be traced. We cannot but notice how the story of a resourceful woman's successful endeavour to win back a man imprisoned in an alternative reality, which is told in the ballad of *Tam Lin*, is traceable through the subtlety of psychological drama that unveils in the course of the novel.

Now, the medieval notion of alternative reality was typically conceived of in the context of two cornerstone mental propensities of that age: the notion of the marvellous[3] and the concentric mode of spatial perception.[4] The first idea concerned altering the features and qualities of the natural environment by permanently affecting the elemental structure of its constituent parts. This happened by virtue of the operation of natural, or else black, magic, by means of which it was possible to extract more intensity from the four elements of which every natural creation was composed, or change their internal balance. As the ratio of this marvellous addition to Nature was believed to increase steadily as one moves away for the balanced familiarity of the centre into the peripheral unknown, the concept of the magical fairyland was inextricably linked to the idea of the perilous Outside, first

localised, and then superimposed upon the geographical layout of the known world. As a fragment of Ranulph Higden's chronicle *Polychronicon* from 1342 illustrates:

> Among these wondres and othere take hede fat in the uttermeste endes of the world falle ofte newe meruailles and wondres, as thei kynde pleyde with larger leue priueliche and ther in the endes than openliche and nye in the myddel. Therfore in this ilond beef meny grisliche meruayles and wonders. (*Capitulum XXXIV*, *De incolarum moribus*, n.p.)

The medieval notion of the magical fairyland provided the template for the basic concept of the secondary world which has been such a ubiquitous motif in modern fantasy literature from the work of Tolkien until the present day.[5] However, the idea of the alteration of the character of the natural environment through the operation of magic usually survives there in a more imprecise, conventionalised understanding, its original form being rendered oblique by the advent of the cognitive apparatus of empirical science. The spatial connection of the realm of alternative reality to the primary world is much more transformed here as, from Tolkien onwards, the fantastic secondary worlds do not connect with the primary reality in any form of spatial continuum, but are, instead, organised around conceptual framework of reference expressive of an ideological core.

3. The Motif of the Evil Magician / Evil Scientist

This basic motif of entrapment in an alternative reality traverses a long way before it reaches the story of *Piranesi*. Instead of a malicious fairy, or an evil magician, the villain of the piece is the stock literary character of the evil scientist. Although ultimately rooted in the Faustian tradition, this type of character emerges fully in the context of the Gothic novel. The idea of a transgression beyond the natural circuit of knowledge and power allotted to man, which defined the evil scientist's identity, has assumed various incarnations through centuries. First, there was the medieval idea of relying on the help of the damned spirits to strain and twist the elemental structure of Nature to gain control over natural phenomena and the texture of material reality. Then progressively the concept of transgression evolved to denote the wilful venturing beyond the currently ethical norms whereby the obsessive desire to penetrate the mysteries of Nature brought destruction upon the aspiring challenger. In consequence, the protagonists of *Frankenstein* or *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* carry enough sympathy to become elevated from mere villains into doomed and tragic heroes. At the same time, the character of the evil scientist makes its way into speculative fiction by virtue of such works as H.G. Wells's *Island of Dr Moreau* and C.S. Lewis's *Space Trilogy*. Here, the idea of transgression consists in the scientist's fanatical commitment to an ideology which

justifies compromising ethics as well as reason and rationality in the pursuit of a goal where the appeasement of personal ego is disguised as a noble effort dedicated to the progress of all humanity.

This is important inasmuch as it is the specific character of the main antagonist(s) of the story that determines the precise conceptualisation of the alternative reality that we find in *Piranesi*. As the persona of C.S. Lewis looms continuously over Clarke's narrative it will come as no surprise that, in the characters of the unscrupulous academics – Laurence Arne-Sayles and Valentine Ketterly, we clearly recognise an echo of the union of the hopelessly misplaced idealism of Lewis's Weston with the cynical pursuit of practical gain represented by Devine – the villains of Lewis's *Space Trilogy*.

Still more immediately, the character of Ketterly is linked to the amateur scientist/magician of Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*. The two respective characters not only bear an identical surname, but they also share the same desire to gain unprecedented power by virtue of gaining access to a different reality:

> I don't mean another planet, you know; they're part of our world and you could get to them if you went far enough – but a really Other World – another Nature another universe – somewhere you would never reach even if you travelled through the space of this universe for ever and ever – a world that could be reached only by Magic. (2001a, 20–21)

Thus, the Ketterly of *The Magician's Nephew* represents the figure of a supremely unimaginative and mediocre egotist who seeks to find compensation for his congenital low-esteem in gaining access to the magical powers available in an alternative reality where magic is interwoven with the ontological fabric of reality. After finding out that the childhood gift he received from his sinister fairy godmother is a box coming from Atlantis, where the art of commuting between worlds was routinely practised, Uncle Andrew attempts to gain access to the long-lost knowledge of the Atlantean civilisation, and use it to master magical powers, by developing ways to travel between alternative worlds with the help of rings working on the principle of magic.

The intellectual aspirations of Uncle Andrew's intertextual twin, Dr Valentine Ketterly of *Piranesi,* are, in practical terms, identical, inasmuch as here also the access to an alternative reality is seen as an opportunity of gaining knowledge which would enable the scientist to achieve the ultimate aim of wielding unrivalled power in the primary reality:

> The Other believes that there is a Great and Secret Knowledge hidden somewhere in the World that will grant us enormous powers once we have discovered it. What this Knowledge consists of he is not entirely sure, but at various times he has suggested that it might include the following:

1.   vanquishing Death and becoming immortal
2.   learning by a process of telepathy what other people are thinking
3.   transforming ourselves into eagles and flying through the Air
4.   transforming ourselves into fish and swimming through the Tides
5.   moving objects using only our thoughts
6.   snuffing out and reigniting the Sun and Stars
7.   dominating lesser intellects and bending them to our will
The Other and I are searching diligently for this Knowledge. (Clarke 8–9)

The other similarity between the two Ketterlys is that, despite their obsessive ambition and obstinate intellectual arrogance, both share the same characteristic of being deeply unimaginative and hopelessly reliant on received ideas and opinions. Just as the egotistic passion of Uncle Andrew is wholly determined by the whimsical fancy of the fairy godmother and cliché notions of a long-lost secret knowledge, so Valentine Ketterly's intellectual aspirations remain completely determined by the scientific discoveries of his initial academic mentor, Laurence Arne-Sayles, who stumbles upon the existence of alternative realities in the wake of a ruthlessly pursued, but also strikingly visionary, intellectual endeavour.

What is important in both cases is that, in the course of the aggressive pursuit of unrestrained self-gratification, both Ketterlys similarly succeed in demeaning the concepts and ideas they initially inherit and vulgarise them out of recognition. However repulsive the character of Arne-Sayles will emerge in the course of the narrative, we cannot deny the sheer intellectual scope of his vision. It is arguable that behind the malice and self-indulgence of the elder scholar lies a true intellectual passion, albeit unrestrained by any considerations of professional propriety or ethical constraints. It may consequently be no particular paradox that it is the weight of Arne-Sayles' momentous discovery that transforms the character into the selfish monstrosity that he finally becomes.

4. The Secondary World: The Platonic Tradition

Again, at the root of Arne-Sayles' ideas we find an echo of C.S. Lewis's own philosophy. In his rejection of the stance of arrogant superiority based on superficial ideas of progress, as well as the sensitivity to the uniqueness, sophisticated nature and abiding value of the mental and philosophical models prevalent in bygone civilisations, the character of Arne-Sayles perceptibly takes after views expressed in Lewis's academic writings as well as his fiction (Danielson 43–57).[6] Yet, in Susanna Clarke's fictional world, Arne-Sayles' academic pursuit of the lost reality of mental interaction between the ancient man and the natural world around him takes him beyond mere speculation:

The knowledge we seek isn't something new. It's old. Really old. Once upon a time people possessed it and they used it to do great things, miraculous things. They should have held on to it. They should have respected it. But they didn't. They abandoned it for the sake of something they called progress. And it's up to us to get it back. We're not doing this for ourselves; we're doing it for humanity. To get back something humanity has foolishly lost. (66–67)

Once, men and women were able to turn themselves into eagles and fly immense distances. They communed with rivers and mountains and received wisdom from them. They felt the turning of the stars inside their own minds. My contemporaries did not understand this. They were all enamoured with the idea of progress and believed that whatever was new must be superior to what was old. As if merit was a function of chronology! But it seemed to me that the wisdom of the ancients could not have simply vanished. Nothing simply vanishes. It's not actually possible. I pictured it as a sort of energy flowing out of the world and I thought that this energy must be going somewhere. That was when I realised that there must be other places, other worlds. (88)

The idea of the existence of secondary worlds based on an alternative system of natural interrelations is in itself as old as the medieval concept of the fairyland which has proved so seminal for modern fantasy fiction. However, the concept of a secondary world being a tangible expression of abstracted mental constructs and consequently shaped by a more directly ontological presence of abstract ideas brings this variant concept of the secondary world into a more direct contact with the tradition the Platonic philosophy:

I found this one. This is what I call a Distributary World – it was created by ideas flowing out of another world. This world could not have existed unless that other world had existed first. Whether this world is still dependent on the continued existence of the first one, I don't know. (Clarke 90)

Thus, in the wake of a process of intellectual deduction, Arne-Sayles is able to determine the existence of a parallel world formed by ideas conceived of in the primary reality and, consequently, dependent upon a constant feedback from it, although existing on a distinct ontological plane. The dichotomy between the realm of the superficial material reality and the world of eternal perfect ideas originates, of course, in the context of the Platonic doctrine which separates the physical and metaphysical spheres of existence and which finds its most classical representation in the famous allegory of the cave developed in Plato's *Republic.* Indeed, the most central themes invoked by Plato in his allegorical parable become central topics also in Clarke's narrative. In the course of the novel, Clarke clearly echoes the idea of imprisonment in an alternative, inferior reality, as well as the concept of sensory illusion caused by exposure to the mere reflection of the true forms of the

eternal Ideas. Most crucially, the idea of the mental privation of a self-imposed captivity and the influence of the natural environment on the powers of perception and, consequently, on the intellectual scope of the individual human psyche, which constitute key elements of the Platonic vision, become cornerstone themes around which the conceptual fulcrum of the narrative revolves.

We cannot fail to be reminded here about Plato's concept of the *hyperuranion*, or *topos hyperuranios* – a "place beyond heaven" – an alternative metaphysical realm occupied by the ideal forms which may be glimpsed in the imperfect qualities present in the multifarious entities occupying the physical reality.[7] The Platonic concept clearly differentiates here between the world filled in by material objects existing in physical dimensions and the more ontologically pristine nature of the realm of ideas, which functions on the ultimate, fullest level of existence. This latter reality is subject to no material limitations of time and space, and represents what we came, in the course of history, to identify with the metaphysical:

> The place beyond heaven – none of our earthly poets has ever sung or ever will sing its praises enough! Still, this is the way it is – risky as it may be, you see, I must attempt to speak the truth, especially since the truth is my subject. What is in this place is without color and without shape and without solidity, a being that really is what it is, the subject of all true knowledge, visible only to intelligence, the soul's steersman. Now a god's mind is nourished by intelligence and pure knowledge, as is the mind of any soul that is concerned to take in what is appropriate to it, and so it is delighted at last to be seeing what is real and watching what is true, feeding on all this and feeling wonderful, until the circular motion brings it around to where it started. On the way around it has a view of Justice as it is; it has a view of Self-control; it has a view of Knowledge – not the knowledge that is close to change, that becomes different as it knows the different things which we consider real down here. No, it is the knowledge of what really is what it is. And when the soul has seen all the things that are as they are and feasted on them, it sinks back inside heaven and goes home. (Plato 247c–e)

Yet, although there is no doubt that the Tributary World discovered by Arne-Sayles echoes the Platonic tradition, it is also evidently distinct from the *hyperuranion* in many ways. First, it appears that it is the physical, material reality that constitutes here the original template reflected in the character of the Secondary World. The ideal forms which are embodied in its reality are, ultimately, products, of human civilisation and its cultural legacy, within which they function being subjected to the same natural processes of growth and decay which govern the intellectual life of human communities and cultures. The inherent "mutability" of the source reality affects here the nature of the Tributary World by allowing the passage of time to modify and erode its texture in a way corresponding to what we know from the Primary Reality:

Before I had seen this world, I thought that the knowledge that created it would somehow still be here, lying about, ready to be picked up and claimed. Of course, as soon as I got here, I realised how ridiculous that was. Imagine water flowing underground. It flows through the same cracks year after year and it wears away at the stone. Millennia later you have a cave system. But what you don't have is the water that originally created it. That's long gone. Seeped away into the earth. Same thing here. (Clarke 91)

The dependence of the passage of time on the existence of physical dimension has also been conclusively determined by classical philosophy.[8] It is not surprising therefore that the Tributary World of *Piranesi* is filled in by physical embodiments of abstracted values and concepts located in a physical reality where spatial dimension function on the basis of the aesthetic canons embodied in the classical sense of proportion. Thus, although the Tributary World exists in a more tangible, immediate relation to the realm of metaphysical concepts and ideas, it does in no way protect against change, suffering and death constituting part of its reality.

Yet, it is in the interaction between the physical and metaphysical fabric of this secondary world with the human psyche that the true nature of this particular reality is manifested. In a remarkable conceptual *tour de force*, *Piranesi* conjures up a secondary, quasi-Platonic, half-metaphysical world which functions in an inverted relationship with the world of physical reality. Moreover, the Tributary World embodies a perception of reality of which the cornerstone is a lack of clear distinction between the physical and the metaphysical. Crucially, this particular mode of perception not only predates the conceptualisation of the distinction between the two which is one of most important contributions of Platonism and Aristotelianism to the legacy of classical philosophy, but constitutes an earlier, divergent form of human perception which had been characteristic of the early natural philosophers, and which was effectively obliterated by the advent of the Platonic thought. It is for this reason that the Tributary World allows for the interaction with the physical reality of the natural environment and, consequently, is not exempt from the passage of time and is subject to physical decay.

Consequently, although the mental models, conceptual abstractions and symbolic emblems which are embodied in the statues characterise the secondary world of the House as one functioning on a level closer to the metaphysical dimensions of Plato's *hyperuranion*, it soon becomes evident that it is in the interaction of the environment of the House with human psyche that the true nature of the reality of the Tributary World is manifested. Although a sufficiently profound contact of the human mind with the physical environment of the House can by no means be taken for granted whenever a human being enters the secondary reality, yet it is in that interrelation that the full potential and character of the House is allowed to emerge. This is because the Tributary World of *Piranesi* constitutes in its essence a *hyperuranion*, as it would have been conceived by the early classical philosophers

of Nature. The metaphysical reality is here not the ultimate source of its physical counterpart, but it is rather that both are related in a harmonious continuum whereby the tangibly physical gradually progresses into an ever more finely woven elemental core of Nature. Hence by being able to attune one's perceptive powers and general frame of mind to the underlying texture which pervades the secondary reality, one enters here into a mental state whereby the ancient mode of closer, more intimate and instinctive interaction with the natural environment which once characterised the early human cultures and civilisations is generated in the psyche of whoever is exposed to the influence of the reality of the House.

As the mind of the human resident gradually adapts itself to the new surroundings and is, in turn, shaped by the specific character of the alien habitat, it is gradually ushered in onto different plane of existence where the alternative world is not a reflection of a different ontological layer, but is perceived as a fully autonomous, distinct reality. Thus, as the Beloved Child of the House conceives of the reality of the House as equal, if not superior to the primary world, he articulates his case in terms of the Platonic dualism whereby the more overtly metaphysical character of the environment of the House becomes a proof of its higher ontological status:

> "Yes," said Raphael. "Here you can only see a representation of a river or a mountain, but in our world – the other world – you can see the actual river and the actual mountain."
> This annoyed me. "I do not see why you say I can *only* see a representation in this World," I said with some sharpness. "The word 'only' suggests a relationship of inferiority. You make it sound as if the Statue was somehow inferior to the thing itself. I do not see that that is the case at all. I would argue that the Statue is superior to the thing itself, the Statue being perfect, eternal and not subject to decay." (Clarke 222)

5. The Fairyland of the Mind

Thus, the ultimate reality of the secondary world created in *Piranesi* is only fully existent inside the mind of a human inhabitant if he is able to survive a prolonged exposure to the environment of the House without suffering mental collapse trying to hold on to the sense of reality one recalls from the Primary World (as seems to happen in the novel to the unfortunate James Ritter). In the case of Matthew Rose Sorensen, the traumatically harsh disintegration of personality he undergoes ends in the birth of a new identity. As Sorensen becomes the Beloved Child of the House, the ambitious and cynical investigative author becomes a figure whose inner calm, serene tranquillity and quiet mental resilience are most fully incarnated in his organic link and devotion to his new environment. Because the Tributary World is here in itself a reality abstracted from the model of mental awareness and operation

which once characterised the traditional human civilisations, the half-metaphysical environment of the House comes to full ontological fruition as it forcefully imposes itself upon the psyche of its sole inhabitant.

It is this feature of the Tributary World that prevents both Arne-Sayles and Ketterly from ever penetrating its mystery and finding out about its true character. Both scholars persistently treat the seemingly lifeless and monotonous spatial environment of the House as a pathetic relict of once vibrant mental construct, a "Labyrinth" full of potential physical danger and the ever-present threat of "amnesia and mental collapse." The obsessively egotistic Arne-Sayles finds the derelict state of the physical environment of the House to be evidence of the disintegration of whatever the Tributary World once embodied and thus a personal insult to the visionary scope of his genius. Ketterly, on the other hand, is fully absorbed in balancing his high-minded disgust towards the House against his obsession to wrench the supposed secrets from the perilous environment without endangering his physical and mental safety. In either case it is the overblown personal ego of the two scientists that prevents them from gaining mental access to what the secondary world truly represents. This is despite being in possession of all the necessary theoretical knowledge about what kind of worldview the Tributary World would have to embody and how some form of existential humility and self-surrender would have to precede any form of interaction with the mental orientation which once characterised the "Ancient Man." Thus, a persistent aura of subtle, bitter comedy pervades the scenes when the two academics fail to notice how all the character and potential of the House is incarnated in the figure born from the remnants of Sorensen's disintegrated personality and the new awareness brought about by the contact with the new reality. Hence, it is only the Beloved Child who is able to come to the realisation that the core powers resident within the reality of the House cannot be extracted, or isolated, from their native environment:

> I realised that the search for the Knowledge has encouraged us to think of the House as if it were a sort of riddle to be unravelled, a text to be interpreted, and that if ever we discover the Knowledge, then it will be as if the Value has been wrested from the House and all that remains will be mere scenery. (Clarke 60)

This particular aspect is indeed of crucial importance in determining the character of the secondary world as developed in Clarke's novel. As we have already observed, the traditional medieval concept of the fairyland as an alternative reality was transformed in modern fantasy literature. Instead of a world located at the edge of the familiar primary reality of Nature where the concentration of the marvellous has had the effect of altering the native propensities of the four elements, the modern idea of the secondary world introduces a wholly autonomous parallel universe with no common spatial template underlying its relationship with the primary reality other than a portal point where a penetration into the alternative

reality could be made.[9] What takes place in *Piranesi* is that the secondary world, in its ultimate shape, becomes the property of the individual mind. This happens despite the fact that the individual mind in which the secondary world is incarnated does not exert control over the reality it becomes submerged in.

Now, the idea of psychological transformation taking place in a person spending more than the proscribed, limited time in the magical world is a common motif in the medieval narratives about the fairyland, as well as the modern fairy-tale tradition which trails behind it. Its most common incarnation is the stock motif of avoiding food and drink while staying inside the fairyland, which may be, for instance, found in the romance of *Thomas of Eclerdoune* and its ballad sibling – *Thomas the Rhymer*, where the idea of the harmful "ferlie fude"[10] is prominent.[11] Yet, is it in the context of the narrative motif of fairy abduction that the idea of losing memory of the primary reality and, with it, a vital part of one's personality, comes to the fore as an element characterising the impact of a prolonged sojourn in an alternative reality. Arguably, the most poignant example of such a treatment of the motif appears in the romance of *Sir Orfeo*, where the fairy enchantment transforms the human inmates of the King of Fairies into lifeless effigies:

> Than he gan bihold about al,
> And seighe liggeand within the wal
> Of folk that were thider y-brought
> And thought dede, and nare nought.
> Sum stode withouten hade,
> And sum non armes nade,
> And sum thurth the bodi hadde wounde,
> And sum lay wode, y-bounde,
> And sum armed on hors sete,
> And sum astrangled as thai ete;
> And sum were in water adreynt,
> And sum with fire al forschreynt.
> Wives ther lay on childe bedde,
> Sum ded and sum awedde,
> And wonder fele ther lay bisides
> Right as thai slepe her undertides;
> Eche was thus in this warld y-nome,
> With fairi thider y-come. (*Sir Orfeo* 387–404)

It seems indeed easy to discern an obvious parallel between the sorry state of the Fairy King's unfortunate victims and the condition of James Ritter, or indeed the other thirteen "dwellers" of the House. Yet, it is in the description of the mental condition of Orfeo's beloved wife that we may appreciate the full extent of the

psychological trauma that Lady Eurydice must have undergone if the effects cause her facial expressions to become unrecognisable:

> Ther he seighe his owhen wiif,
> Dame Heurodis, his lef liif,
> Slepe under an ympe-tre –
> Bi her clothes he knewe that it was she. (*Sir Orfeo* 405–408)

It thus takes no particular stretch of imagination to discern the clear intertextual relation linking the passage describing Eurydice's former self-struggling to reassert control over her current psychological inertia caused by the enchantment, and the remnants of Matthew Rose Sorensen's disintegrated personality emerging from under the benevolent custody of the Beloved Child of the House:

> To a levedi he was y-come,
> Biheld, and hath wele undernome,
> And seth bi al thing that it is
> His owhen quen, Dam Heurodis.
> Yern he biheld hir, and sche him eke,
> Ac noither to other a word no speke;
> For messais that sche on him seighe,
> That had ben so riche and so heighe,
> The teres fel out of her eighe. (*Sir Orfeo* 319–327)

> Instantly, and to my huge embarrassment, I started crying. Great creaking sobs rose up in my chest and tears sprouted from my eyes. I did not think that it was me who was crying; it was Matthew Rose Sorensen crying through my eyes. It lasted for a long time until it tailed off into braying, hiccupping gulps for Air. (Clarke 215)

Needless to say, the idea of the loss of memory and consequently the ability to recognise the people and places which defined one's existence in the primary reality has continuously been one of the most characteristic effects of fairy enchantment in the fairy tale tradition as well as various forms of modern fantasy.

Most immediately, it functions as an important element in *The Magician's Nephew*, where it affects both children as soon as they find themselves in the "Wood between Worlds" – the residual space located in between the various parallel universes:

> The strangest thing was that, almost before he had looked about him, Digory had half forgotten how he had come there. At any rate, he was certainly not thinking about Polly, or Uncle Andrew, or even his Mother. He was not in the least frightened, or excited, or curious. If anyone had asked him "Where did you come from?" he would

probably have said, "I've always been here." That was what it felt like – as if one had always been in that place and never been bored although nothing had ever happened. (Lewis 2001a, 25–26)

Thus, the motif of the disintegration of personality incumbent on staying in an alternative reality and being exposed to an interaction with its environment has been a staple motif in fantasy narratives regardless of whether they located the secondary world on the outskirts of Nature, or in parallel spatial dimensions. Indeed, if we again turn our attention to work of C.S. Lewis we shall find an intertextual trail leading us from *Piranesi* into *The Silver Chair.* There we find the character of Prince Rilian, the rightful heir to the kingdom of Narnia spending years of captivity in the underground domain of the Queen of Underland. The parallel resides here primarily in the theme of magic-induced amnesia, which renders the character unable to reclaim a proper grasp on his natural mental powers and, consequently, puts him at the mercy of his captor, towards whom he consequently develops an unhealthy psychological attachment and dependence.

This toxic relationship between the captor and his victim constitutes the most articulate expression of the mental collapse and destruction of personality which characterises Rilian's imprisonment in the underworld, where a routine of placid existence under the enchantment is punctuated by violent spells where the Prince's former self struggles violently and desperately to reassert control over his personality:

> You must understand, friends, that I know nothing of who I was and whence I came into this Dark World. I remember no time when I was not dwelling, as now, at the court of this all but heavenly Queen; but my thought is that she saved me from some evil enchantment and brought me hither of her exceeding bounty. (Honest Frog-foot, your cup is empty. Suffer me to refill it.) And this seems to me the likelier because even now I am bound by a spell, from which my Lady alone can free me. Every night there comes an hour when my mind is most horribly changed, and, after my mind, my body. For first I become furious and wild and would rush upon my dearest friends to kill them, if I were not bound. (Lewis 2001b, 621)

The pattern of the traumatic coexistence of the disintegrated remnants of the captive's original personality and the newly emergent self which came into being in the wake of his interaction with the new environment and conditions of life is obviously replicated in *Piranesi*, where its function is as much to hark back to literary tradition as to herald a new textual context:

> I was sitting cross-legged with my Journal in my lap and the fragments in front of me. I turned away slightly, not wanting to soil any of them, and vomited on the Pavement. I was shaking. (187)

It is evident that both narratives draw directly upon Plato's allegory of the cave, but the uniqueness of Clarke's vision in this respect consists in a number of new departures. The narrative presents not only a process of mental breakdown caused by years of captivity in a secondary world where the exposure to the harshness of physical conditions is coupled with being subject to the impact of daily contact with a different form of reality. It also traces the formation of a new personality which develops through the prolonged interaction with the alternative reality. While the new personality differs from any psychological profile that could have formed in any human being living currently in the primary world, it is, nevertheless, wholly consistent, surprisingly resilient and, most importantly, it allows the individual to live a life of tranquillity and quiet confidence, making the most of the existential possibilities of the secondary world the character is confined to. This circumstance creates a novel context for the motif of magic-induced amnesia, as it is the act of self-surrender involved in the process of forgetting one's former existence that allows for the new, cohesive personality to emerge.

No doubt, the successful nature of this transformation is possible due to the fact that the environment of the House is ultimately made up of the accumulated weight of the concepts and impulses which once defined the core of humanity. Despite the process of steady degradation and alienation from its ontological source which the subsidiary world has in recent centuries been subject to, it appears that its foundations are way more wholesome for the human mind that the unpremeditated contempt for humanity which is implicit in the fairy glamour. In this context it becomes crucial that the environment of the House was, in fact, destined to realise its full potential in the interaction with the human mind. Although the statues filling its space exist in an objectively definable "outside" space, their ultimate reference to the abstract model existing in the human world of the primary reality, which originally inspired their existence is ultimately negotiable within the human intellect. This circumstance becomes clear as the protagonist reflects on the relation between the identity of his rescuer and the relevant emblematic image which would have represented her in the quasi-metaphysical environment of the House:

> I think of Raphael and an image – no, two images rise up in my mind.
> In Piranesi's mind Raphael is represented by a statue in the fortyfourth western hall. It shows a queen in a chariot, the protector of her people. She is all goodness, all gentleness, all wisdom, all motherhood. That is Piranesi's view of Raphael, because Raphael saved him.
> But I choose a different statue. In my mind Raphael is better represented by a statue in an antechamber that lies between the forty-fifth and the sixty-second northern halls. This statue shows a figure walking forward, holding a lantern. It is hard to determine with any certainty the gender of the figure; it is androgynous in appearance. From the way she (or he) holds up the lantern and peers at whatever is ahead, one gets the sense of a huge darkness surrounding her; above all I get the sense that she is alone,

perhaps by choice or perhaps because no one else was courageous enough to follow her into the darkness. (Clarke 242)

It is thus in the human mind that the ultimate reality of what the House represents emerges in its ontological fullness, though what the various statues may potentially represent will inevitably exceed the cognitive capacity of one particular individual. The House thus essentially conserves the collective understanding of humanity in the form of a metaphysical potentiality ready to be incarnated in the individual intellect according to its capacity. It is, consequently, important that the cruelty involved in forcing the psychological transformation upon the unfortunate Matthew Rose Sorensen was more the result of the twisted mentality of Valentine Ketterly and not, in any way, a "conscious design" of the House. Thus what essentially happens in *Piranesi* is that the evil magician imprisons his victim in a fairyland full of hidden benevolence which he neither discerns nor controls.

It is the focus on the internal psychological perspective that constitutes another vital element which the novel brings to the literary tradition represented in the motif of fairy abduction. In the standard form of the medieval narratives, the ubiquitously pursued external focalisation allowed to convey the importance of the psychological impact of captivity in the fairyland in the form of the powerful understatement of desultorily reported psychosomatic phenomena. A poignant example of this may be seen in the passages describing the condition of Lady Eurydice in *Sir Orfeo*.

6. The Context of the Modern Narrative Techniques

Yet, the juxtaposition of the respective passages from *Sir Orfeo* and *Piranesi* describing the corresponding mental condition of the fairyland inmate would also serve as a vivid illustration of the difference which the evolution in narrative techniques has made to the presentation of the motif. One of the earliest examples of a literary text where this new perspective forms a vital dimension of the narrative would be found, again, in the Narnia narratives of C.S. Lewis, where the psychological focus gradually develops out of the tradition of Christian *psychomachia*, as we find it developed in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.* Most crucially, however, it is the episode in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* that combines the traditional motif of captivity in a land on the verge of the primary reality with the idea of being entrapped in a mental dysfunction. There we find the account of the psychological trauma of the unfortunate Lord Rhoop resulting from his prolonged sojourn on the Dark Island where "dreams come true." Here we find a vision of a magical entrapment where both the character of the alternative reality and the impact upon the victim undergoing the captivity are first and foremost, psychological. It is also this episode that is very directly recalled in *Piranesi* in the intertextual link centring on the figure of the albatross heralding a release from the

long confinement, in accordance with the bird's traditional symbolic connotation of freedom and purity.

Indeed, in recent history of the modern fantasy genre we find a number of significant examples of texts which transcend the relatively traditional narrative and stylistic conventions pursued by C.S. Lewis and which make more extensive use of the stylistic apparatus developed in the modernist and post-modernist novel in order to present the consequences of entrapment in a secondary world from the perspective of the internal psychology of the character. The most notable examples of this new form of the fairy abduction narrative would be, for instance, Terry Pratchett's *Wee Free Men* and Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*. Although both novels make extensive use of the motif of *psychomachia*, it is the second novel that *Piranesi* most resembles in its denouement. In both narratives, the idea that a prolonged stay in the alternative reality inflicts a mental transformation upon the protagonist which is profound enough to render him unable to return to his former lifestyle and identity is a key element in both cases, but it is only in Susanna Clarke's novel that we end up with the identity of the central character of the story being split up into three distinct personalities each reflecting on the others in a typically post-modernist collage/polyphony of narrative voices.

In consequence, we find the story narrated by three different characters. Matthew Rose Sorensen relates to us the event prior to his imprisonment in the alternative reality through the journals read by the Beloved Child of the House, on whom the nickname "Piranesi" is bestowed by his captor. It is through his narration that we learn of the events happening in the Tributary World, which becomes his natural habitat. The third, nameless narrator relates to us the events which take place after the creature born and shaped in the half-metaphysical reality of the House chooses to follow the memory of Matthew Rose Sorensen into the primary reality. Although, upon leaving, the Beloved Child takes with him the memory and understanding of the secondary world where his personality was forged, his identity does not survive contact with the very different reality of the primary world and the withdrawn, though kind, and even altruistic, persona which emerges at the end of the narrative is as distinct from the enthusiastic nobility of the inhabitant of the House as he is from the vigorous self-confidence and ambition of Sorensen.

The third narrator's most distinguishing trait is his unique insight into the deeper fabric of the primary reality, and it becomes evident that this specific shape that his identity takes is the result of the fact that the secondary reality of the House, with its more direct recourse to the metaphysical dimension, remains part of his consciousness:

> In my mind are all the tides, their seasons, their ebbs and their flows. In my mind are all the halls, the endless procession of them, the intricate pathways. When this world becomes too much for me, when I grow tired of the noise and the dirt and the people, I close my eyes and I name a particular vestibule to myself; then I name a hall.

> I imagine I am walking the path from the vestibule to the hall. I note with precision the doors I must pass through, the rights and lefts that I must take, the statues on the walls that I must pass. (243)

Thus, the primary reality, as experienced by the third narrator, differs from the consensual outlook of its average dweller who has never experienced contact with the alternative reality of the House. It is then visible that it is the ultimately internal, psychological character of the reality which Tributary World can potentially engender in the mind of its human inhabitants, that has the potential of being carried on outside the physical boundaries of the secondary reality, allowing greater insight into, and understanding of, the more profound texture of the metaphysical dimension of the primary reality:

> I thought that in this new (old) world the statues would be irrelevant. I did not imagine that they would continue to help me. But I was wrong. When faced with a person or situation I do not understand, my first impulse is still to look for a statue that will enlighten me. (241)

Yet, the outcome of the situation is that the uniqueness of the vision that the third narrator inherits from the Beloved Child has the inevitable result of distancing him from other inhabitants of the primary reality, while his constant awareness of the personalities of Matthew Rose Sorensen and the Beloved Child causes his own personality to remain fragmented, if not actually schizophrenic. All this has the effect of enveloping the nameless persona in a detached environment of wistful loneliness and social disconnection:

> People were walking up and down on the path. An old man passed me. He looked sad and tired. He had broken veins on his cheeks and a bristly white beard. As he screwed up his eyes against the falling snow, I realised I knew him. He is depicted on the northern wall of the forty-eighth western hall. He is shown as a king with a little model of a walled city in one hand while the other hand he raises in blessing. I wanted to seize hold of him and say to him: *In another world you are a king, noble and good! I have seen it!* But I hesitated a moment too long and he disappeared into the crowd. (244)

This circumstance is all the more paradoxical if we realise that it was the fear of loneliness and lack of human contact that motivated the Beloved Child to leave the reality of the House in search of a new life in the world once inhabited by Matthew Rose Sorensen. As it turns out, the decision resulted in the emergence of yet another psychological identity – one destined to a lifetime of balancing on the verge of two complimentary, yet also incompatible realities, never fully belonging to either of them.

7. Conclusion

It seems, therefore, that the redefinition of the motif of fairy abduction which takes place in Susanna Clarke's *Piranesi* resulted in the development of a conception of secondary reality which is, in its essence, an autonomously mental construct, although it emerges through contact with a physical reality. As the ultimate reality of the Tributary World of the House becomes incarnated inside the human mind, the person bearing its mental imprint will never be truly free of its impact and, consequently, will never be truly able to abandon it, no matter what manner of rescue will release him from inhabiting the physical dimensions of the tangible reality which originally engendered it. However benevolent and mind-broadening the sojourn inside the reality of the House may still have been for the persona that emerges at the end of the narrative, there is no denying the fact that the fairyland which becomes a state of mind is significantly harder to conclusively abandon than would be the case with any form of physical incarceration which has been conjured up in the traditional literary incarnations of this type of motif where the fairyland is merely a physical place.

Thus, the concept of the secondary world we find in *Piranesi* emerges from a creative redefinition of some of the cornerstone motifs of speculative fiction which are bestowed a new vitality and relevance by reflecting a new context upon their resident textual tradition. In this sense, the distancing of the concept of the secondary world from the context of physical reality seems to constitute a natural departure which brings it into a closer contact with the modern sense of psychological realism, yet it also constitutes a revaluation of the ontological duality implicit in the classic Tolkienian model of the secondary world reaching back to the earlier manifestations of the idea of the fairyland. It is in this context that Susanna Clarke's narrative marks a significant new reference point in the long history of the imaginative conceptualisation of the idea of the secondary world in modern literary tradition.

Notes

1   For more background see James 2012, 62–78; Mendlesohn/James 2012, 43–60.
2   Given the importance of intertextual relations of a variety of the novel's motifs to the work of C.S. Lewis is also significant that the character of Matthew Rosen Sorensen finds his close counterpart in Mark Studdock of *That Hideous Strength.*
3   For more background on the medieval understanding of the marvellous, see Saunders 2010, 1–116; Gurevich 52–56.

4   For an in-depth treatment of the issue of medieval space perception, see
     Zumthor 1–47; 51–55; Martin 154; Gurevich 37. The relation of medieval
     space perception to the contemporaneous notion of the marvellous is
     extensively discussed in Erickson 6–8; 27–38 and Saunders 2010, 207–233,
     Saunders 1993, 1–24, 141.

5   On the modern concept of the secondary world see Wolf 20–60.

6   As a character, though, Arne-Sayles is probably more traceable to Timothy
     Leary.

7   For a more extensive discussion of this aspect of Platonic philosophy, see
     Reale 37–116.

8   As in the classic Aristotelian definition, "time is the measure of motion"
     (*Physics*, Book IV, part 10–13).

9   For more on portal fantasy, see Mendlesohn 2008, 1–58.

10   The Romance of *Thomas of Eclerdoune*, l.145

11   On the motif of tabooed gifts in fairy abduction narratives, see Wade 109–146.

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A New Voice for an Ancient Story: Speaking from the Margins of Homer's *Iliad* in Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*

Abstract: Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* (2011) is an imaginative rewriting of Homer's *Iliad*. The writer uses the strategy of transfocalization and enters the text from the point of view of Patroclus. His fresh look offers a new critical perspective both on the moral world of the epic and on Achilles, the great Greek hero whose complex personality and tragic *hubris* Patroclus observes with emotional understanding. Miller transforms the Homeric sparing narrative of the friendship between Patroclus and Achilles into a touching love story built on their mutual devotion, and locates this narrative at the heart of a world of ruthless violence. This paper will consider the writer's use of hypertextual adaptation in the novel from the perspective of the change in the narrative focus of the source, and discuss her objectives and methodology.

Keywords: Madeline Miller, Achilles, Patroclus, Homer, hypertextuality, *Iliad*, re-writing, trauma, love, death

1. Introduction

> In the story of Patroclus
> no one survives, not even Achilles
> who was nearly a god.
> Patroclus resembled him; they wore
> the same armour.
>
>   (Louise Glück *The Triumph of Achilles*)

Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* (2011) is an imaginative recasting of Homer's *Iliad*, one of the most powerful myths in the Western tradition. This article will consider the writer's use of hypertextual adaptation in her novel from the

perspective of the change in the narrative focus of the hypotext and discuss her choice and methodology. In order to do so, the paper will make use of Gerard Genette's theory of hypertextuality, which he discusses in *Palympsests* (1997), and that he describes as follows: "By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted" (5). Indeed, he adds, "there is no literary work that does not evoke (to some extent and according to how it is read) some other literary work, and in this sense all works are hypertextual" (9). The analysis will argue that Miller's *The Song of Achilles* is a "re-vision" of Homer's epic poem from the writer's female perspective; it is "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" (Wittig 35). Miller engages in a sustained dialogue with the hypotext and re-reads it with different objectives in mind: first, she questions and deconstructs the hierarchy and morality of the epic, by entering the *Iliad* through the text's 'unconscious' and exploring its silences, textual spaces that allow for a problematization of the narrative's moral world. She reconfigures it by installing a different set of values and priorities, and offers an anti-war reading of the epic. Second, she rethinks the gender dynamics of the source text, and flouts its categorization of gender roles and construction of masculinity and sexuality resting on the traditional phallocentric paradigms of patriarchal society. Her novel moves center stage a homoerotic relationship barely hinted at in the *Iliad*, a reconfiguration that is relevant to our socio-cultural landscape and contemporary debates on gender and sexuality. Furthermore, she valorizes male vulnerability, which in the classical epic world is disparaged as something pertaining to the feminine sphere, thus inscribing a more fluid role model of masculinity.

Miller's representation of Achilles and Patroclus' relationship opens the possibility of a critical engagement with two sets of theoretical frameworks: gender studies and psychoanalysis. As for the first group, particularly useful are those gender theorists who interrogate the way that systems of power construct certain gendered subjectivities along the disjunctive axis of the normative and the deviant, with this latter to be morally censured because subversive of the status quo. To this end, a precious critical insight is offered by Judith Butler's ideas. Key to her argument is that gender is not an essential, biologically determined quality or an inherent identity, but is *performed,* based on, and reinforced by, societal norms. Butler rejects the view that there might be "intelligible" genders, "which in some sense institute and maintain relations of continuity and coherence among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire," and that those "who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility" are "incoherent" gendered beings (23). This insight sweeps away any possibility of pathologizing sexuality that deviates from such "coherence" and "intelligibility," as in the case of the novel's two heroes. Psychoanalysis, in particular Julia Kristeva, will help decode some psychological traits of Patroclus' personality.

Miller achieves the objectives she has in mind in two major ways. First, by the strategy of transfocalization: she enters the story from its margins and adopts the point of view of Patroclus, an exiled young prince. Though close to Achilles, the *Iliad*'s central figure, Patroclus occupies a marginal position in Homer's poem when alive, moving in the shadow of the Greek hero; yet, paradoxically, he becomes crucial in the plot's development once he dies. Miller foregrounds Patroclus' pivotal role as his death is the spring for Achilles' reaction and activates a chain of events that will have momentous consequences in the Iliadic narrative, leading to Achilles' own death in the end. "Minor-character elaboration," as this contemporary literary form is defined by Jeremy Rosen, has been quite popular over the last decades. It is a genre in which a minor character from a canonical text is transformed into the narrator-protagonist of a new text. This choice allows a writer "to simultaneously exploit both the timeless value of the classics and ostensibly oppositional political energies" (Rosen 144). Miller's oppositional strategies aim to deconstruct traditional gender representation, freely explore same-sex desire, and take a clear anti-war stance.

Indeed, Patroclus' fresh perspective captures the tangled amorality of politics and takes a critical view of a materialistic, acquisitive war which he condemns for the devastation that it wreaks on communities and on households; for its waste of life and senseless cruelty; for the plight of the female victims of war. At the same time, he contrasts the different motivations – more or less noble and idealistic – behind the warriors' choice of going to war and underscores what warrior values signify a true hero.

Second, Miller establishes an ongoing interaction also with other classical authors to complement her narrative in those episodes excluded from the *Iliad* that are functional to complete her own re-reading of the story. In her re-visioning of Homer's text, the paper claims, she introduces significant transformations: first, her new "song" is both a celebration of Achilles the warrior, the quintessential hero of epic poetry, and of Achilles the private man scrutinized in the intimacy of his affections. What is more, this narrative perspective allows Patroclus to emerge from the partial obscurity where the epic poem had confined him and to take center stage; from this textual position, he can voice his most personal feelings and take a critical stance on the power dynamics between characters and the ongoing struggle for dominance based on a strategy of aggressive arrogation of roles. Miller empowers her narrator with agency and invests him with "a more significant […] role in the value system of the hypertext" (Sanders 50), a shift that opens alternative contending perspectives on the world of the *Iliad* and maps a new psychic geography to be explored.

2. A New Voice for a Different Story

The Song of Achilles is a first-person intradiegetic narrative told by Patroclus, a change of perspective that gives the reader a closer view of this character and his

psychology, and offers a modern take on an ancient epic. Miller departs in a number of crucial aspects form Homer, using also other literary sources, palimpsestic presences that are incorporated in the life trajectory of the two protagonists. Patroclus' gentle voice first weaves his own story, starting from childhood to adolescence when, at the age of ten, he is introduced to Achilles, a meeting that will change their future forever. Miller gives an overview of these early years in the first two chapters without dwelling on them, and soon shifts to their growth and education, a period to which the writer devotes a substantial section (chapters three – ten). Then she moves to their participation in the Trojan War, which unfolds from the text's margins, and ends with their death. Their relationship, and not the War of Troy, is the main focus of *The Song of Achilles*, and the process of their physical and psychological growth, as well as the transformation of their friendship into intense love.

As Miller herself states in an interview published on her website, the central inspiration behind her book was the need to understand *why* the great half-god Achilles had a "reaction so shocking in its intensity," so incommensurate, when hearing about Patroclus' death and, consequently, to inquire into "what it was about Patroclus and their relationship that could create that kind of crisis" (2014). Patroclus charts the whole arch of his short life, and his voice continues to relate events taking place even after his death and cremation, when also Achilles falls and they are reunited forever, a structural choice that adds an uncanny atmosphere to this final section.

The title, however, is slightly deceptive as, for most of its length, the novel does not focus exclusively on Achilles, being above all a sort of *Bildungsroman* that plots Patroclus' growth into adulthood, side by side with the Greek hero, and explores from inside the couple the beginning of their acquaintance and the blossoming of their profound emotional bond. Yet, Patroclus' story is deep down a song to extol the man he loves and to disclose the lover beneath Achilles' bloodshed and fury, in order to reveal the 'other' Achilles: the young man who honors and respects the value of warrior brotherhood and is ready to die to defend it. Achilles and Patroclus epitomize the perfect bond of unconditional loyalty and allegiance between human beings, and care for each other, so theirs is a model of human relationships at large.

The Song of Achilles starts much earlier than the episodes at the heart of Homer's epic; besides, whereas the *Iliad* ends with Hector's funeral rites, the novel covers also Achilles' death, the fall of Troy and the departure of the Greek fleet. Miller does not change the accepted events of the epic poem but takes a freer approach to some characters. The central questions at the core of Miller's re-reading concern two aspects that, in the *Iliad*, are rather shadowy: the first hinges on the characterization of Patroclus who, though central to the action of the *Iliad*, has little textual space and lacks depth. The second issue is the nature of his relationship with Achilles, as mentioned before. The article will discuss the reason why Miller

makes of Patroclus the voice and critical conscience of the novel, what she achieves through this shift of perspective, and what agenda she pursues in portraying the relationship between the two young men in explicitly erotic terms.

To answer these questions, Miller looks beyond the *Iliad*. As for the relationship between the two young men, the interpretation she provides is not actually to be found in the poem. However, she believes otherwise and maintains that "there is a lot of support for their relationship in the text of the *Iliad*," but then she also adds, "though Homer never makes it explicit" (2014). The additional sources Miller blends in her novel can be found in Plato's *Symposium*, as she herself acknowledges: "I stole it from Plato!" (2014), and in a lost play by Aeschylus, the *Myrmidons*. Both authors – Plato and Aeschylus – assume that the two characters were lovers, a view Miller subscribes to because, she argues, *how* Achilles grieves Patroclus' death, his "sense of physical devastation spoke deeply to [her] of a true and total intimacy between the two men" (2014). Furthermore, in the *Iliad* there is no mention of Achilles staying with Chiron or of his cross-dressing and love affair with Deidameia, described at length by Statius in his *Achilleid*. In *The Song of Achilles*, instead, a considerable section, from chapter eight to chapter fourteen, is devoted to these two episodes.

3. In the Shadow of the Hero

Miller's novel foregrounds the individual differences between Achilles and Patroclus from the beginning. A similar distinction can be observed in their fathers too, whose attitude towards their sons affects the boys' psychological and emotional growth and contributes to throw light on their personalities. Menoitius, Patroclus' father, lacks any feelings of fondness for his son and is interested only in "scrabbing to keep his kingdom" (2012, 17). When Patroclus accidentally kills a boy, Menoitius does not hesitate to exile him to Phthia, leaving his dejected son to reflect: "This was how I came to be ten, and an orphan" (17). Unlike him, King Peleus, Achilles' father, adores his son and has "a reputation for charity towards exiles" (21); so he welcomes Patroclus at court as a foster child, one of the many cast-off sons he gives refuge to.

Miller introduces both Achilles and Patroclus as *others*, though their otherness has very different roots. Achilles' is the singularity of a demi-god; he outshines the rest of the boys at court for his charisma, his striking beauty and, above all, his exceptional skills as a warrior. The narrator constantly reminds the reader of his unquestioned supremacy, a quality Achilles is fully aware of and that is also responsible for his boundless *hubris* and thirst for renown that become his predominant features. Unlike Achilles, Patroclus is "negligible" (20), unappealing, bullied by the other boys and unloved by his father who always scowls at him and, from a very early age, makes him doubt: "Was I a changeling, inhuman?" (2). Patroclus

underscores his alterity using mostly negatives to introduce himself: "I was not fast. I was not strong. I could not sing" (1), all attributes that, instead, belong to Achilles and are acknowledged by both friends and enemies. In time, Patroclus is so affected by his father's disregard and scorn that he persuades himself that he is "unsightly, unpromising, uninterested" (6).

On his arrival at Peleus' court, he meets Achilles for the first time, and is at a loss for words, struck by "the cold shock of his beauty" (20). Patroclus is still prey to the double trauma of his unintentional killing of the boy and his father's rejection of him. His traumatic memories never leave him and take the shape of haunting nightmarish visions of the dead boy. Tormented by a sense of guilt, Patroclus retreats into silence as a self-defensive reaction, his "throat closing at the horror of what [he] had done" (16). He begins to look for isolated corners to sit alone by himself, seized by a growing sense of solitude, dreading that his "narrow world narrowed further" (29).

Then, unexpectedly, to the astonishment of everyone, Achilles befriends Patroclus and chooses him as his closest companion, his "*Therapon* […]. A brother-in-arms sworn to a prince by blood oaths and love" (35), thus reintegrating him fully into the community. With Achilles, Patroclus can gradually relax and open himself up to their friendship, a gift that transforms him and his life, after some time even freeing him from his nightmares. Having been separated at infancy from his mother and having no fatherly figure to identify with and build a sense of self, Patroclus is driven by an inner 'lack' to identify with an ideal Other to complete his sense of self and thus enter the adult Symbolic Order. Achilles fills the emptiness tearing him inside, and gives him a sense of closeness that makes him feel whole again, a complement and support that bestows meaning on his life. Patroclus is captivated by Achilles' charm and personality and, though at first afraid to acknowledge it, he falls in love with him. Being only thirteen, he is puzzled, as yet unable to identify and name the feelings that stir him at night, at the same time fearing and desiring to cross the boundaries of the self, to stretch and meet the other.

The carefree atmosphere in which the two boys live, a bubble unaffected by what happens around them, is unexpectedly interrupted by Thetis, Achilles' mother. She sends her son on Mount Pelion, to stay with the centaur Chiron, both to complete his training as a warrior and to separate the two boys, after having seen Patroclus clumsily kiss Achilles' lips. Patroclus, however, is neither discouraged nor stopped by Thetis' open hostility and sets off on a solitary journey, determined to find and join Achilles. When he arrives on Mount Pelion, both his friend and Chiron welcome him. Here, in the centaur's cave, a sort of no man's land, the two boys live for three years, spending all their time together under the fatherly tutorage of Chiron who watches over their growth.

Unlike the *Iliad, The Song of Achilles* devotes an ample section (chapters eight to ten) to this phase of Achilles' preparation for manhood, because it is crucial for the evolution of Patroclus and Achilles' relationship. In fact, during this period

they grow intimate and, shortly after Achilles' sixteenth birthday, the "last year of childhood" (88), they make love for the first time, thus moving into adulthood. So, it is within this privileged neutral space that they grow up together, fall in love and become a couple.

Being in love, Patroclus lives under the aegis of an ideal signifier he wishes to identify with and his self is "drawn toward the ideal Other. [It] is a love that magnifies the individual as a reflection of the unapproachable Other whom [he] loves and who causes [him] to be" (Kristeva 1987, 59). This psychic process of idealization and identification with the Other quenches Patroclus' thirst for love for the first time in his life and heals him. So he moves from the axis of rejection – by his father and the other boys – to the axis of absorption – in Achilles, thus achieving a sense of oneness with him.

Their love-making marks the crossing of a threshold, a passage not only from adolescence into manhood, but also a step towards self-awareness and recognition of their most authentic gender identity. It is a change that entails the acknowledgement and full acceptance of a newly-discovered sexuality, a realization that at first upsets Patroclus as it appears to be *other* than what patriarchal power expects of men at court: to choose as a sexual partner one of the many slave girls, as prescribed by the assumptions of normative heterosexuality whose rules, according to Butler, force subjects to conform to hegemonic, heterosexual standards for identity. They decide to follow their inner drive, and the desire for each other absorbs and exhilarates both.

This phase comes to an abrupt end when Peleus sends for his son. However, Achilles' return to normal life is only temporary and he will not have a safe homecoming, a proper *nóstos*. In fact, his father summons him to Phthia to demand him to depart again and join a war expedition to Troy, commanded by King Agamemnon, to reclaim Helen who had been abducted by Paris. Thetis tries to rescue Achilles from this moral obligation, because she knows the deadly fate in store for him at Troy, and hides him on Scyros disguised as one of king Lycomedes' daughters. It is Achilles' cross-dressing episode, a "complete type […] of gender performance that 'hypermale' mythological heroes engage in" (Warwick 10). He is allowed to experiment with his own femininity because, on the one hand, his gender identity is never questioned by anyone and, on the other, on a number of occasions he also articulates an alternative conception of masculinity and "publicly engages in feminine-coded behaviours and practices" (Warwick 8), as happens when, like a mother, he cradles Patroclus' body in his arms at the funeral and laments his loss openly. Achilles' is an emerging new paradigm of masculinity that disrupts and transforms traditional normative forms of masculinity and gender configurations. Yet, despite Thetis' intervention, nothing can stop what the gods have decreed for the Greek hero and he cannot escape his meeting with death on the Trojan battlefield.

4. The Making of a Legend

The return to the royal palace and the war of Troy abruptly sever Achilles from the *other* world of Mount Pelion, a sort of private space, interrupting his "childish idyll" in Chiron's "rose cave" (107), and bring him back to the reality of the moral duties and obligations attached to his public role as a prince and warrior. This fracture signals the crossing of a further threshold, from the private to the public sphere of responsibilities. It marks the necessary next step that Achilles must take in order to constitute himself as a fully realized subject within patriarchal discourse, and to achieve honor and eternal fame.

Yet, the glory Achilles quests after has to be paid for with death, as his mother reveals to him: "If you go to Troy, you will never return. You will die a young man there" (157). On the other hand, if he does not take part in the war, he will miss his "chance at immortality. [He] will stay behind, unknown [and] grow old, and older in obscurity" (155), as Odysseus slyly adds to secure the hero's partic-ipation in the expedition. Achilles, then, will not have a smooth transition into normal adulthood. By accepting to leave for Troy and embrace his inevitable fate, he knowingly submits to descend and disappear into the cold night-womb of the grave before he has lived half of his life cycle. Achilles' announcement that he will lead the expedition to Troy, entails accepting the hard demands of the reality principle for the two friends. Patroclus understands that this is only the beginning of a phase that will transform their life forever and that Achilles has already begun to change. He is being transformed into "'*Aristos Achaion.*' *Best of the Greeks*" (166; original emphasis).

Moving in Achilles' shadow, loath to push himself forward, yet unwilling to escape, Patroclus understands that Achilles "*no longer belongs to [him] alone*" (175; original emphasis). So, while Achilles is engaged in preparation for depar-ture, Patroclus tends to slip away and isolate himself more and more as he used to do in the past before meeting his companion. His mind obsessively lingers on the prophecy concerning Achilles' death at Troy, dreading that moment and trying to imagine "how it would end – spear-tip or sword point, or smashed by a chariot" (176). Totally absorbed by his intense feelings of love for Achilles, Patroclus cannot even contemplate life without him. He does not know that he will be the first to die, and even be the indirect cause of his friend's death.

Patroclus craves for dissolution without him: "I did not plan to live after he was gone" (177). These words might hint at either his desire to look for death in battle after losing Achilles or at his intention to commit suicide. It is a wish for death that recalls one of the figures of Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1978), "*s'abîmer* / to be engulfed" (10), which he defines as "the crisis of engulfment" provoked either by a wound or "a fusion: we die together […] an open death by dilution into the ether, a closed death of the shared grave" (11). It is a death that liberates the lover from living a life-in-death without the beloved,

in the void left by his absence. Once they reach the battlefield of Troy, Patroclus sees that the brutality of war, as well as the weight of responsibilities Achilles has to bear, gradually transform his companion in such a way that, despite his love for him, he struggles to understand and accept some of his actions or decisions. On some occasions, he has to silence his own conscience not to voice his open disapproval. Sometimes, the vision of Achilles coming back from battle drenched with the blood of his victims, and the thought of all the people grieving because of his deeds, overwhelm him. At such moments, Patroclus can only associate Achilles with a flood, "gush[ing] down from the mountain tops, gathering strength to sweep away what stood in its path: animals and houses and men" (240).

In her dialogue with the hypotext, Miller frequently underscores Patroclus' ethically complex and tormented awareness of the problematic aspects of heroic self-assertion, and his perception of the harsh reality of war stripped of the heroic stereotypes that underlie it. Patroclus' view problematizes war and the warrior values that motivate men to fight, and voices Miller's anti-war reading of the *Iliad.* When Patroclus himself must join the battle, the individual differences with Achilles surface even more. He shows none of the attributes of the traditional warrior, like the other Myrmidons, all glory-hungry, and does not refrain from pitiless self-criticism: "Fear was twisting inside me, a wobbling cup of panic that threatened each moment to spill" (225). When they clash against the opposing army, he feels no excitement but only terror. His vision registers "a burst of spraying splinters of bronze and blood. A writhing mass of men and screams, […] the crash of shields, […] a jumble of bodies" (225), actually "just body parts" (229). He is seized by nausea, almost vomits, and does not even attempt to kill anyone. This might appear as a paradoxical behavior for a young man brought up at court, in a patriarchal culture that cultivates and encourages warlike ideals and trains men to fight; yet, it can be decoded as a consequence of the adolescent trauma of having unintentionally killed the boy who was bullying him. The incident provoked very similar reactions in him: at the sight of the boy's blood he escaped in horror and was found soaked in his own vomit.

In both circumstances, the psychological mechanism that appears to be unconsciously activated is that of the Kristevan *abject,* a "being opposed to *I*" (1982, 1), someone that disturbs his identity, his sense of a system and order, and generates "a terror that dissembles" (1982, 4). Patroclus' physical and psychological reactions signifies his profound rejection of the image of a violent and cruel *other* – be it the adolescent bully who persecuted him, or the warriors ruthlessly killing their enemies – someone who, being so unlike himself, is alien to him. In such figures he sees mirrored the potential violent man he himself might become, a presence that swallows him, thus threatening the integrity of his self. He rejects this *other* with disgust, thus opting out of the Symbolic modality and the patriarchal Law of the Father with its rigid, oppressive gender roles and rules. The figure of the *abject* is signalled both by the images he summons up and the linguistic choices: after

wounding the boy mortally, he escapes close to "the gnarled ankles of an olive tree […] surrounded by [his] own vomit" (17). On the battlefield, "fear was twisting inside [him], a wobbling cup of panic that threatened each moment to spill" (225); he can only see "a jumble of bodies" (225) and, at the sight of a dying Spartan, he "almost vomited" among a "nauseating chaos" (226). In recording these moments, the text mirrors the protagonist's psychological condition: sentences are shorter, occasionally only phrases or even single words, with repetitions and the frequent use of -ing forms, formal features that accelerate the narrative rhythm and evoke the sense of a dislocated, fragmented psyche.

Once more, through Patroclus' moral vision Miller articulates her own position on war, its brutalities, its traumatic effects, and the human toll it demands. She engages critically with her source, returning the readers a 'modern' Homer who can still speak forcefully to our "fractured and shifting historical moment" (2014). In dealing with this issue, she is certainly thinking of the enormous psychological impact on the human psyche of the wars of the last century, among them, closer to us in time, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, or the Bosnian War in Europe. The shocking images of soldiers coming back home from the battlefields and their testimonies are widely documented in books, research, and psychiatric history, studies that have addressed the effects of war on mental health, with soldiers suffering from depression, anxiety, nightmares, some of the symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Instead, war is Achilles' natural psychological territory; when fighting, aware of his own strength and of Patroclus' weakness, Achilles keeps a constant protective eye on him, seeing that, in his clumsiness, Patroclus is an easy target for the enemy. Yet, despite all the horror, at the end of a day of battle, Patroclus no longer sees "the ugliness of the deaths" but remembers only what "a marvel" Achilles is on the battlefield, moving with "his beauty, his singing limbs, the quick flickering of his feet" (227). Achilles' stature as a hero "lies in his capacity for action in the full knowledge of its fatal consequences to himself, his questioning of the system of values or reward informing his martial culture, his understanding of the personal price of fame, his devotion to a friend or partner, his discovery of empathy" (Hedreen 39). These are the qualities that explain his enduring fascination for generations of readers, aspects that Patroclus constantly underscores with admiration. He contrasts them with other warriors whose dubious moral stature and arrogance are openly exposed, a position that invites the reader's active critical engagement with – and assessment of – the text and the hierarchies of power described in it.

During the long hours of Achilles' absence, Patroclus befriends Briseis, a war prisoner, and finds some comfort in her company. Above all, he decides to offer his help to Machaon, who is in charge of the physicians' tent, and to use there the medical skills he learned from Chiron to heal men wounded in battle. It is a task that makes him feel helpful to alleviate, at least in part, the suffering of so many soldiers, and that earns him a reputation and everybody's appreciation.

As already mentioned in the previous section, Miller's novel clearly delineates the role and personality differences between Patroclus and Achilles from the beginning, a diversity that is noticeable especially at climactic moments. It is a distinction that is not extraneous to the *Iliad*, and that has been variously interpreted. Some scholars maintain that "Achilles and Patroclus constitute a sort of social microstructure of two alter-egos, or better, 'second-selves' of each other" (Fantuzzi 251), and that Patroclus is an expression of the human nature of the godlike hero, the human side Achilles has lost touch with. It will resurface both when he saves some girls held captive in the camp and, even more, towards the end during his last touching meeting with Priam, when he shows a surprisingly empathetic compassion, pity, shared suffering, and the search for mutual connection. It is a turning point as his true atonement is complete and he returns to the world of normal human feelings.

Robert Finlay objects to seeing Patroclus as a reflection of Achilles; he argues that Patroclus' significance in the emotional pattern of the epic poem is as a representative of the communal values of fellowship and responsibility upheld by Peleus. I personally believe that these critical views specifically referred to Homer's presentation of the two protagonists are not mutually exclusive, and indeed complement each other, as regards their characterization in the novel.

In Miller's text, Achilles disregards these communal values in two crucial circumstances. The first time, when he does nothing to help Briseis, claimed by Agamemnon who has to return his own concubine, Chryseis. Achilles feels offended by the arrogant, predator behavior of a warrior that he considers morally inferior to him. The hero's silence and lack of action on this occasion hurt Patroclus profoundly because they disclose a side of Achilles that is stranger to him: "I do not know this man, I think. He is no one I have ever seen before." Hardly repressing his anger, Patroclus dares voice his innermost wish only to himself: "I want to see his face broken with grief and regret. I want to shatter the cold mask of stone that has slipped down over the boy I knew" (274). It is a climactic episode that upsets and lays bare a precariously balanced relation between warrior comrades and their competing demands for 'possession' of a woman. It is a struggle that creates tension at the heart of the epic social structure and alerts the reader to the close intersection between the institution of war and gender: "disputes among men [...] entail disputed traffic in women" (Felson and Slatkin 95), a cynical principle that offends Patroclus' moral values. However, there is an important qualitative difference here: Agamemnon lays his claim to yet another prize appealing to the overriding principle of his privileged power position. Achilles places himself on a higher ground and argues for the legitimacy of his claim to Briseis appealing to his personal heroic worth and value system, implicitly voicing a critique of "the broader exchange-logic animating war and a meditation on its apparent cause – traffic in women as a medium of contended honour among men" (Felson and Slatkin 96).

The second time, when Achilles shows no compassion for the suffering of the Achaeans and refuses to aid them by resuming fighting, thus subordinating the

needs of the social group to his personal grief and offended pride. Driven by the selfsame communal values of fellowship and responsibility towards the army that Achilles temporarily neglects, Patroclus begs his friend to let him don his famous divinely crafted armor and take his place on the battlefield, a fatal error that leads to his death at the hands of Hector. Patroclus' death is "both a sacrifice that brings Achilles back into the war after his withdrawal […] and a ritual substitution that previews Achilles' own coming death" (Nagy 1), an act of altruism that is unique in the typically high competitive world of the *Iliad*, but that sets the Greek hero on the path to his untimely death. In fact, even knowing that he himself will die after killing Hector to avenge Patroclus' death, Achilles returns to the battlefield to meet his fate. In this case, it is Achilles who has to bear the definitive loss of the companion he loves most. The hero's intense grief and anger over his dead friend drives him to thoughts of self-destruction, similar to those Patroclus cherishes when he imagines that Achilles will die before him. When he sees Patroclus' blood-smeared, limping body being carried by Menelaus, "he snatches for his sword to slash his throat" (321), stopped by Antilochus who seizes his wrists, unable however to prevent him from yanking his hair and screaming out Patroclus' name over and over again, as if by doing so he might summon him back to life. Patroclus' narration of his own final moments is profoundly touching as it voices his thoughts while the last drops of life seep away from his body in Achilles' arms: "He holds me so tightly I can feel the faint beat of his chest, like the wings of a moth. An echo, the last bit of spirit still tethered to my body. A torment" (321). No longer a living being, he can neither wipe away the tears Achilles sheds nor console him.

The description of Achilles' death, at the hands of Paris with Apollo's help, is one of the many differences between the poem and the novel. In the *Iliad* his death, though implicit in virtually every scene depicting the hero, is the poem's absent centre, as it does not take place within the confines of the poem itself, but is evoked laterally and enacted in the sacrificial death of Patroclus, which comes about as a result of his resemblance to Achilles. In the novel, Achilles' death is movingly narrated by dead Patroclus. Paris' arrow, driven by Apollos' decisive intervention, "flies, straight and silent […] towards Achilles' back," worms its way towards his ribs and pierces "at last, […] his heart;" then, "Achilles smiles as his face strikes the earth" (336–337). It is a moment that he knows is inevitable after Hector's death; so, the invocation he addresses to his dead friend shortly after he kills the Trojan hero is: "Patroclus! Wait! I am here!" (329). Achilles' wish to join his dead friend underlines the concept of passionate friendship, "a union of two persons in life and death" (Krass 157), which is reciprocal in *The Song of Achilles*. It is a union and fusion that not even death can sever. In fact, after Patroclus' cremation and before re-entering the battlefield for the last time, Achilles asks his men: "When I am dead, I charge you to mingle our ashes and bury us together" (334), thus fulfilling the wish that Patroclus' ghost had expressed to be with him forever. Their souls as one, still united in a companionship that began in childhood and survives death.

5. Other Voices, Other Presences

The patriarchal male world of the *Iliad* resonates with female voices which, however, most of the time can utter only laments, both individually and in chorus, either to voice their own plight as war prisoners, enslaved and sexually violated, and in such instances the lament is also an outlet for emotions that are otherwise barred; or to wail for the loss of their warrior men, i.e. husbands, fathers, sons, friends, who fall in battle. Then women are permitted to cry, indeed expected to do so, and what they articulate is a powerful, first-person form of speech in which they can also narrate episodes of their own past life.

When women appear on the scene, they are not allowed authentic autonomous choice or action; their personalities are little articulated in narrative-psychological terms, mostly through the referential possibilities conjured up by distinctive epithets and phrases used to refer to them that have the potential to evoke either the past they come from or some traits of their character. They are a presence overshadowed by males, turned into an object through force, thus "denied agency, and the freedom to express [their] will, thoughts, and emotions" (Dué 2007, 246).

In *The Song of Achilles*, two female characters are delineated with greater attention: Briseis, whose condition in many ways epitomizes that of all captive women, and the goddess Thetis. However, their portrait in the novel differs quite substantially from the epic poem. In the *Iliad*, Briseis is a woman of royal birth, widowed and captured by Achilles; she becomes his war prisoner and concubine, a slave subjected to the force and will of her Greek captor. In the epic poem she does not even have a name, being simply the "daughter of Brises," despite her important role in the *Iliad*'s plot. She appears few times and speaks only when lamenting Patroclus' death. However, in her lament's compressed narrative of the crucial episodes of her life prior to her capture, she "both alludes to other parts of the *Iliad* and refers to events that take place outside the confines of the poem" (Dué 2002, Introduction). Her powerfully evocative micronarrative summons up a whole range of events and experiences of great emotional impact, and her grief resonates with paradigmatic significance as it both echoes and foreshadows the grief of every Trojan wife.

Having chosen to make the love story between Achilles and Patroclus the central nucleus of her novel, Miller constructs a whole new story line for her. She reinvents Briseis' position and role, and makes her fully visible by adopting the sympathetic and close power of observation of Patroclus. He also proves to be a precious ally for a vulnerable woman who has no protection, and is lonely, as he himself had been before meeting Achilles. She is not Achilles' concubine and never does she sleep or have sex with him who is completely indifferent to her, a clear departure from the Homeric text. Indeed, it is Patroclus' attention that she attracts first, when he sees her after a raid, among other war spoils. He is moved by the girl's beauty and delicacy, as well as by the evident traces of violence on her face and the wounded expression in her eyes. Sensing that Agamemnon, who is known

"for his appetites" (214) in bed, is observing the girl with interest, Patroclus asks Achilles to claim her as his prize, before Agamemnon does, in order to save the girl from becoming one of the many "bed slaves" (214) on the camp. Though his request puzzles Achilles, he grants his wish, a decision that, unbeknownst to them, will have momentous consequences for their future.

At first, Briseis is quite suspicious and fearful but, once she realizes that Patroclus is not going to hurt her and she is not meant to be Achilles' concubine, she calms down and gradually begins to trust him. When Patroclus gets to know her and the war trauma she has had to bear, he becomes even more sensitively aware also of the conditions of the many other girls around the camp, whose faces are blotched with "large smears of grief that kept their eyes […] wobbling and sloppy […]. And bruises too, from fists or elbows, and sometimes perfect circles- spear-butts, to the forehead or temple" (219). Whenever he can, he exerts his influence on Achilles pressing him to use his power to protect someone in difficulty, as he does both with Briseis and some other captive girls.

It is a clear and important rethinking of, and departure from, the source text as it shows Patroclus distancing himself from a masculine realm predicated on the exchange or trafficking of women, their bodies used as sexual objects. In the epic poem's moral world there is "the confluence of desire, strife and gender signalled [by] the competition between men conducted through women" (Felson and Slatkin 95). It is a competition that continues to be repeatedly enacted over women's body even in our 'civilized' society by morally squalid Lilliputian beings. By granting Patroclus' wish, Achilles proves once more his difference from – and moral superiority to – Agamemnon. True honour for Achilles is predicated on different ethical paradigms, where fame and glory are not disjunct from pity, justice and compassion. Briseis' kindness and intelligence earn her more and more space in Achilles' and Patroclus' tent, gradually making of her "a member of [their] circle, for life" (238). She entertains them with strange and dreamlike tales, in an atmosphere of domestic tranquillity that balances and contrasts the brutal world of war inside the camp. Miller creates for the two heroes a kind of "near-normative existence as a monogamous couple" (Cox-Wilmott), whose natural intimacy is certainly one of the aspects that has undergone a major rethinking in the sphere of masculinity and sexuality, and signals a clear revision of the hypotext.

Briseis enjoys spending quite a lot of time with Patroclus in the woods during the hours of Achilles' absence and, on one of these walks, she kisses his lips shyly, something that surprises him and leaves him speechless. She perceives his embarrassment: "I know that you love him" (253); then she adds, "But I thought that – some men have wives and lovers both" (253), and hints at her wish to have a child with him. As delicately as possible, avoiding to hurt her, he rules out any such possibility. Things are a bit strange between them for some time after this episode, but then they resume their walks and conversations, as they both cherish the preciousness of each other's company.

The depth of their reciprocal affection surfaces in the novel at two key moments. The first is when Agamemnon demands to have Briseis, the episode that originates Achilles' wrath and his decision to withdraw from battle until she is restored back to him. Patroclus knows that Achilles is unwilling to do anything to prevent Agamemnon's men from seizing the girl away because the hero considers the king's claim a threat to the ethos of structural equality. So he walks to Agamemnon's tent and, cutting his wrist as a blood oath, he warns him that Achilles has given him "a sword to fall upon" (277) and is waiting for him to rape the girl. In that case both the men and the gods would turn against the Greek king and Achilles would be justified in revenging himself on him. Patroclus leaves knowing that Agamemnon will not dare touch Briseis now and the girl is safe, though he also has to face the disappointment and anger of Achilles who considers his action a form of betrayal. They have a bitter exchange, yet soon after Patroclus is ready to forgive his friend, convinced that Achilles has only temporarily forgotten his best true self which, however, is still there at heart. The second moment is when Patroclus is killed in battle and Briseis' strong feelings of affection for him are fully revealed. On this occasion, her powerful voice turns angrily against Achilles, telling him that he did not deserve Patroclus' devotion and holding him accountable for having "sent him to his death" to save himself and his "darling reputation" (323–324).

Briseis' personality shows interesting psychological traits that call for a close critical analysis. She is a young woman, a traumatized prisoner who moves within the limited, rigid confines of the male dominated patriarchal world of the enemy camp, at the beginning with no knowledge of the language spoken by the conqueror and no social role in that world except the degraded one allotted to her of being a war concubine. In the course of the novel, she gradually evolves: from being a sweet shy girl at first, she grows into a strong, courageous woman. She learns the conquerors' language from Patroclus and uses it to speak out the unpleasant truth even in the face of Achilles, ready to bear the possible consequences of his fury. She deconstructs and exposes the Greek hero's hierarchy of values and flouts them from within, exposing his self-centeredness, blind even to the altruistic offer of Patroclus to take his place in battle, a gesture of pure self-sacrifice dictated by love.

Briseis' new strength will prove decisive for her at the end when Phyrrus threatens to rape her: she tries to kill him but, failing this as she only wounds him, she escapes by diving into the sea. Refusing to become an object in the hands of the grinding mechanisms of the Symbolic order, she chooses to be swallowed whole by "the gulp of black water" (344), embracing the amniotic-like liquid darkness of the sea, a return to the semiotic fluidity of the maternal womb where "she will find rest" (344). Her final gesture is the only alternative she is left with to take the narrative of her life in her own hands and assert her personal freedom. With her final refusal to see her body appropriated and brutalized, helpless to defend herself, she subverts the rape script waiting for her – for any woman – taken prisoner. In her portrait, Miller has created the image of a woman that acts and speaks for the

many women who continue to fall prey to male violence and brutality, and die at the hands of men even in our contemporary society, a theme that strongly appeals to the modern sensibility of all those who, regardless of their gender, speak out against rape culture.

The other female character who is a commanding presence in the novel, because of her powerful and strong personality, is the sea nymph Thetis, Achilles' mother. In the *Iliad* she is very fond of, and caring for, her semi-divine son, having to come to terms with the knowledge that her son must die young, certain that it will happen soon and that she can do nothing to save him. As with Briseis, Miller attributes her a different personality and behavior. As in the *Iliad*, she is truly concerned about her son's early death but, unlike the epic poem, she is a frightening figure, a controlling mother who tries to direct her son's life and hates Patroclus for being such an important part of it. On meeting her, Patroclus sees distaste for him on her face and he cannot bring himself to look at her cold eyes. When Achilles and Patroclus kiss for the first time, she sees to it that they are immediately separated. She will do the same when she hides Achilles at Lycomedes' court among his daughters and tricks Achilles into marrying Deidameia in secret and getting her pregnant, promising her son that she will disclose his whereabouts to Patroclus, a promise she does not intend to keep.

The most dramatic clash between Thetis and her son comes when, after having killed Hector to avenge Patroclus' death and dragged his body around the walls of Troy for days, she demands him to return Hector's body to the family because Apollo is angry with him. He refuses to obey her, reminding her of how she hated Patroclus and blaming her for his death. She leaves him saying: "I am done. There is no more I can do to save you" (331), ignoring that it is the last time she sees him and those are her last words addressed to him alive. The next time she is anywhere close to her son is after his death, near the pyre on which Achilles has been cremated, no evident emotion or feeling emanating from her.

When assessing her portrait in the novel, quite different from the image of the tender, loving mother in the *Iliad*, it should be considered that the filter through which readers view her is Patroclus, who considers her as his powerful rival for Achilles' affection. In fact, most of the time she appears to have been "recast as the nightmare mother-in-law of all time" (Mendelsohn), suspicious of anyone who might distract her son from pursuing eternal glory or compete with her affection for him. However, her motherly feelings of affection for her son are still there, redeemed and surfacing once more through Patroclus' silent conversation with her from the otherworld at the end of the novel. Seeing her coming day after day to her son's tomb, "an eternity of stone" (351) that she cannot penetrate, he conjures up for her the boy he knew: "I want to speak of something not dead or divine. I want him to live" (350). He shares with Thetis his past tender memories and images, not of the semi-god warrior who killed so many men and women, destroyed so many families, but of the beautiful young man he loved, the one who could play the lyre

and sing beautifully, who returned Hector's body to Priam because the old king reminded him of his own father suffering for the loss of his only child. This is the Achilles they both loved and cherished, and Patroclus wants this image to continue to live in people's memories of him. The last section of the text is painfully lyrical and intensely poetical and moving: it is the moment when humans and mortals stop perceiving the *otherness* of the other and acknowledge what each of them has done for the person they most loved in life. It is out of an act that is both of love and (self)forgiveness that, at last, Thetis marks Patroclus' name on the tomb near Achilles,' thus allowing them to be finally reunited in the underworld. The last gesture of love of a mother for her beloved son.

6. Conclusion

> "What were the Greek ships on fire
> Compared to this loss?"
> (Louise Glück *The Triumph of Achilles*)

In *The Song of Achilles* Madeline Miller enters the subtext of Homer's *Iliad* from the margins of the poem, via the introduction of the specific perspective, and bias, of Patroclus' first-person narrative. In an interview, Miller motivates the reason why she chose Patroclus as narrator: "In my mind, Patroclus was always someone who sought smaller, daily beauties over destiny, and who valued personal connection over fame and power. He was essentially lyric" (George). She liberates his lyrical voice and thus achieves different objectives: first, Patroclus approaches Achilles from a position of relative parity, emotionally if not socially his equal, and explores him "less as a hero and more as an isolated misfit" (Cox-Wilmott), just like he himself is. It is a shift of perspective that revises and reconfigures Achilles' portrayal by making him more human, so as to make him speak more forcefully to the sensibility of a more readership. Thus Patroclus discloses to the reader also the hero's existential anguish: the critical awareness of his role and the enormous personal costs he has to pay for *kleos*, his search for meaning beyond the heroic code he has been taught to follow, as well as his capacity to see to what extent war was "a masculinist tragedy inflicted on both sexes" (Felson and Slatkin 96). Even though Patroclus does not downplay the hero's excessive pride, which he openly censures at times, he foregrounds Achilles' moral integrity as a warrior, always driven by a sense of honor and justice. The hero's personal qualities are thrown into relief when juxtaposed with the greediness and materialism of king Agamemnon, or the extreme, senseless cruelty and violence of Pyrrhus, or the sly doubleness of Odysseus. Through Patroclus' honest and profoundly humane gaze, the novel problematizes the moral values and hierarchies of a fractured and violent male community, at whose heart women appear as powerless victims, objects of

exchange in men's pursuit of glory and honor, often sources of conflict for men who want to see their maleness triumphantly (re)affirmed and validated.

Second, Miller portrays gendered subjects who break with the assumptions embedded in the grammar of heterosexuality and follow their desire. The novel's focus on the intimacy, respect and deep spiritual bond between the two heroes, on the tender eroticism of their relationship should provide valuable insights into contemporary debates and perceptions of same-sex relationships. Too frequently, these relationships are "conceived within the homophobic signifying economy as *both* uncivilized and unnatural" (Butler 168), thus objects of discrimination and moral censorship in some sections of our society. Indeed, the novel speaks against any form of homophobia and points to a form of love that "transcends gender and time" and should "model the kind of relationship we all aspire to" (Miller 2014).

Third, by weaving "new material upon the surface and foundation of the literary past" (Sanders 8), Miller offers readers *other* interpretive lens to approach the text, encouraging them "to look for complexity in epic gender representation and to investigate the ideological functions of this representation" (Lesser 1), deflating the simple celebration of heroism and the trope of the hero's 'beautiful death.' At the same time, she acknowledges and reasserts the persistent power of Homer's epic poem, and its continuing relevance for our own times too, in the spheres of sexuality and power relations, and reminds us of the toll war takes on the social order, its institutions and values. In the interview published on her website, the writer argues: "Every day on the front page of the newspaper is an *Iliad* of woes – […] from the senseless loss of life in war to the brutal treatment of the conquered. It is all there, in Homer too: our past, present and future, inspiration and condemnation both" (2014).

Lastly, in her re-vision of Patroclus, Miller portrays a young warrior who tries "to be an ethical man in a violent world" (2014), to preserve his moral integrity and pity for those who suffer even among the massacres and destruction perpetrated on the Trojan battlefield. Being enmeshed in the power dynamics of the world he is observing from inside with untainted eyes, Miller empowers him to really see it as if from the outside, thus enjoying a double view. He dares to take a critical stance also against the person he loves most, Achilles, and makes up for the latter's failure to achieve humanity by offering to enter the battle in his place to save the hero's reputation, ready to pay with his own life. In his portrait, Miller enucleates the inner conflicts of any young man, whose fresh, undefiled personal world has to hold on to his self-respect in the worst possible conditions. It is Patroclus, with his respect and care for all *others*, his unconditional dedication to the person he loves, who appeals more to a modern readership, with his extraordinary ordinariness and modesty, his ability to speak the truth convincingly in a low voice against the "sound and fury" of mediocrity, predatory violence and the arrogance of power.

The "song" Patroclus sings is at heart an antiepic that unfolds a counter-narrative of misogyny, war horrors, loss of family ties and, consequently, of the breakdown of a sense of belonging and identity, as well as fragmentation of the

self. Miller's novel inevitably reminds readers of similar crisis much closer to us in time – similar scenes of wars, massacres, and dehumanization – that belong not to a distant heroic past but to our problematic present.

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Living through Precarity:
A Butlerian Study of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

Abstract: This article aims to explore Judith Butler's concept of precarity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. The questions this study seeks to find answers to are: What are the various manifestations of Butler's notion of precarity in *The Lowland*? And to what extent does the Butlerian sense of agency allow the main characters of *The Lowland* the possibility of overcoming precarity? This research shows how enforced dispossession, which is a product of globally-imposed precarity, incites violence and leads to the involuntary migration of the subjects. In addition, it is revealed that precarity plays a segregative role in escalating religious and tribal conflicts in the post-Partition India. More importantly, in the final analysis, this study suggests that Butler's reiterative sense of agency fails to account for the normative dynamics of precarity which is at work in the diasporic context of *The Lowland*.

Keywords: precarity, dispossession, reiterative agency, Judith Butler, Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Lowland*

1. Introduction

Whether understood as a political situation in which the state deliberately withholds the necessary support from its people to burden them with financial insecurity and unemployment, or seen as an unethical discursive threat that aims to separate certain individuals from their communally shared intersubjectivity, precarity is a relatable concept for those who aspire to more than their own well-being for the sake of populations whose lives are differentially exposed to risk and violence. Among

many groups and communities whose means of livelihood can be collectively put in jeopardy within a precarious context, immigrant populations are probably one of the most defenceless ones. Precarity can even be twice as detrimental to the immigrants who leave their homelands, particularly because they are scattered from their place of origin and might be left unprotected by the previous government at home and the host country alike.

This study aims to shed light on the significant role of precarity in Lahiri's *The Lowland.* As Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Martin Jørgensen contend, connecting discourses of precarity and migration studies may offer "a fecund point of departure for exploring the intersection of cumulative social dispossession and new subalterns struggles" (1). On that account, the objective of this research is not only to piece together the discourses of precarity, dispossession, violence and immigration, but also to bring into discussion the ways in which precarity affects subjects' modes of agency. The questions this article tries to answer are: What are the various manifestations of precarity in *The Lowland*? And how do the precarious subjects depicted in *The Lowland* manage to deal with or overcome precarity? In order to answer the first question, this research carries out a narratological reading of *The Lowland* and explores the novel through the lens of Butler's concept of precarity. For the most part, this study engages in a critical analysis of the various forms of precarity-induced dispossession and violence that caused the outbreak of communal riots and the Naxalbari uprising in the post-Partition India. The second question will be answered through a more detailed analysis of the main characters' modes of resistance and individual conduct. By focusing on Subhash and Udayan's performative resistance, this study calls Butler's reiterative sense of agency into question and evaluates the success rate of each character's performative response to precarity.

This article consists of six sections. In the following pages, first, a review of literature is presented, and then, Butler's take on precarity is briefly introduced. The second section, "Dispossession," discusses Butler's concept of dispossession by highlighting its relevance to the emergence of a new generation of immigrants as an aftermath of precarity. The third part, "Rethinking Religious Conflicts," examines the segregative role of precarity in escalation of communal riots between the Hindu and Muslim majorities. Next, "The Naxalbari Uprising" investigates the roles of precarity-induced dispossession and violence in the outbreak of the Naxalbari uprising in India. By discussing the nature of Naxalites' violent response to precarity, this section also comments on the selective narrative focus of *The Lowland* and the way it affects the manner in which the movement is represented. In the section entitled "Precarity as an Impetus for Nonviolent Resistance," Butler's concepts of reiterative agency and performativity are drawn upon to analyse the manner in which Subhash, the protagonist of the novel, attempts to deal with precarity. This part analyses the possibility of overcoming precarity in a diasporic context by calling Butler's theory of agency into question. The last section provides a brief recap of the findings and implications of this research.

Unlike most of Lahiri's fictions that have enjoyed world-wide critical receptions, the corpus of criticism about *The Lowland* has remained relatively undeveloped. Most of the studies that have so far been carried out on *The Lowland* mainly revolve around issues related to the Naxalbari uprising and Asian American identity. For instance, in "Fabrication of a Desired Truth: The Oblivion of a Naxalite Woman in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*," Moussa Pourya Asl argues that the historiographies of Naxalbari movement yield more evidence of women's participation than of the passivity that *The Lowland* represents (13). By focusing on a gendered history of Naxalbari movement, Asl suggests that *The Lowland* confines particular experiences of the Naxalbari uprising to the margins and renders them unworthy of epistemic respect (1).

As stated by Binod Paudyal in "Breaking the Boundary: Reading Lahiri's *The Lowland* as a Neo-cosmopolitan Fiction," "*The Lowland* cannot be confined to a single classification within literary studies due to its transnational and cosmopolitan nature that challenges the notion of literary canons and national identity" (17). He goes on to say that, by offering a critical recognition of the South Asian diaspora in the United States, *The Lowland* re-envisions "an American identity that is responsive to an age of migration, mobility, and transnational connections" (19). In a slightly different manner, Kalyan Nadiminti's "'A Betrayal of Everything': The Law of the Family in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*" explores the role of Asian immigrant subjects in reorienting family formations in the United States. By highlighting the failure of Mitra family in conforming to the production of American values, Nadiminti shows how *The Lowland* disrupts the dominant narrative of Asian American family immigration and upward mobility through the replacement of reproductive labor with intellectual labor (239). Due to the paucity of academic assessments on *The Lowland*, what marks the originality of this study is the very attempt of investigating Butler's concept of precarity in the novel, which is a fresh line of inquiry that has so far not been explored in Lahiri's works before.

Placing emphasis on the rising importance of precarity, Teresita Cruz-Del Rosario and Jonathan Rigg argue that precarity as a concept has taken such an exemplary status in the academic discourse that to say we now live in the age of precarity would not be an overstatement (1). For Butler, precarity denotes a socially unstable state of living which displays an underlying lack of governmental conviction and support. In Butler's own words, precarity "designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (2). As a result, those populations who become injuriously interpellated by differential allocations of recognisability do not get to occupy the status of an intelligible subject. To avert this, Butler puts forward the idea of linking performativity with precarity and argues for undoing precarity through her performative sense of agency (4). As Amy Allen contends, Butler's sense of agency is formulated on the Derridean notion of citationality or iterability, and "consists

in the ability to introduce a potentially subversive variation on the compulsory repetition of normatively prescribed acts" (460). Drawing on Nicholas Henry's argument, Butler's understanding of the production of precarity can be perceived as a performative process, in that it produces frames that obscure its own existence while inhibiting political recognition of vulnerable populations (166). It can then be argued that, to use Marissia Fragkou's words, precarity carries the promise to reshape identity politics and offers the opportunity for reinventing one's relational responsibility, solidarity and value through performative resignification (7). Therefore, performativity can be said to be in a sense embedded in precarity as both a means that preserves precarity's maintenance through a dangerous authorisation of its facelessness and a counteractive vehicle that can help to upset the conditional grounds it is based on. In this sense, Butler's previously formulated theory of gender performance is transposed into a more inclusive notion of performativity that encompasses a broader spectrum of cultural norms.

The notion of "dispossession" displays one of the ways that precarity can be structurally materialised. For Butler, while *being* dispossessed is a collective sense of being that is occupied by alterity, *becoming* dispossessed entails the process in which certain populations are dispossessed of their lands, rights and other means of livelihood (5). Perceived as such, precarity as a politically induced condition aims to upset the co-vulnerability that is existentially shared by all human beings and results in the erasure of certain populations from systematic networks of support. As will be shown, critical concepts such as precarity, dispossession and reiterative agency each serve an important function in putting the literary significance of Lahiri's *The Lowland* into perspective.

2. Dispossession

When it comes to overcoming precarity, those who are dispossessed must be provided with an enabling source of agency in order to performatively emerge as recognised subjects. To put it differently, in order to avoid the risk of facing state violence by holding public demonstrations, subjects should be able to form nonviolent networks of solidarity by performatively shifting the discursive patterns of intelligibility. However, in both theoretical and practical domains, the chance of success or failure of such politics of self-governance is still open to question. In light of such inquiries, the following four subsections, "Dispossession," "Rethinking Religious Conflicts," "The Naxalbari Uprising," and "Precarity as an Impetus for Nonviolent Resistance" seek to trace the manifestations of precarity and the ways to overcome it in Lahiri's *The Lowland*.

In summary, *The Lowland* gives a touching account of the Mitra family's faithful familial attachments and traumatic losses by fixing the narration on the tale of two brothers. Born just fifteen months apart and raised in south Calcutta,

the Indian state of West Bengal, Udayan and Subhash have an ordinary childhood, most of which is spent around a lowland surrounded by two ponds. After their admission to college, their lives begin to take different turns as Udayan, the more daring younger brother, becomes involved in the Naxalbari uprising and Subhash, the more prudent and reserved of the two, decides to leave for the United States on a doctoral scholarship.

While studying abroad, Subhash stays in contact with Udayan by exchanging letters. One summer evening, Subhash receives a letter from his parents which lets him know that Udayan has been killed by the police. After years of living in the United States, in the final chapter, Subhash revisits Udayan's tragic death and wonders if Udayan's political efforts were met with any success. After a critical reflection on the violent murder of a police officer that Udayan participated in, Subhash feels pity for his lost brother and imagines what Udayan's fate would have been had he settled for a normal life.

The novel features two main historical periods during which dispossession leads to forced migration. The first stage takes place immediately after the story begins, only three pages into the novel, where in several instances, the sweet narrative flow of Udayan and Subhash's childhood memories is sluggishly interrupted by the undesirable presence of displaced populations who had relocated to Calcutta in the aftermath of the 1947 Partition. Taking place a decade after the Partition of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan, the story makes passing references to the "accommodated but ignored" waves of Hindus who had fled from Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong to take refuge in Calcutta (Lahiri 12). The sudden arrival of these dispersed populations is likened to a "rapid trickle, then a flood […] a grim procession, a human herd," with "infants strapped to parents' chests, a few bundles on their heads," making "shelters of canvas or thatch, walls of woven bamboo" (12). Certainly not the most thorough account of the large-scale population displacement during the great migration, the above description is nonetheless ghastly enough in tone and imagery to reflect the sufferings of the dispossessed immigrants. Once read through Butler's theory of dispossession, it can be understood that these territorially dispossessed populations manage to performatively resist against precarity by claiming the right to stay in one place and demanding their proprietary rights in land (Butler and Athanasiou 23). As Butler writes,

> Nonviolence is less a failure of action than a physical assertion of the claims of life, a living assertion, a claim that is made by speech, gesture, and action, through networks, encampments, and assemblies; all of these seek to recast the living as worthy of value, as potentially grievable, precisely under conditions in which they are either erased from view or cast into irreversible forms of precarity. When the precarious expose their living status to those powers that threaten their very lives, they engage a form of persistence that holds the potential to defeat one of the guiding aims of violent power. (25–26)

Taking the above passage into account, the precarity of these immigrants offers, as Donna McCormack and Suvi Salmenniemi phrase it, a "potentiality to form non-dominant modes of collective existence that pose a challenge to the constraining, destructible and unbearable effects of contemporaneous living" (2). Also, it can be inferred that such nonviolent resistance depends on populations' living assertion, a refusal to stay in their assigned "proper place," which, according to Butler and Athanasiou, is a place of displacement imposed by imperial sovereignty that requires the territorially dispossessed populations to stay in their specified region (23). However, to use Pravin Visaria's words, the bitter irony is that many of these populations were not even assigned a proper place, as certain parts of the extensive borders between India and Pakistan remained "undemarcated 20 years after the Partition" (323). As a result, the precarity of these immigrants can be broken down into two conditions: the first state of precarity being the politically induced condition of the imperial force over which the immigrants have almost no control, and the second, the lack of shelter and protection from the state, against which the immigrants struggle to performatively emerge as intelligible subjects. Later in this study it will be shown that, although precarity could be resisted through the collective exposure of lives to power, contesting precarity may run the risk of social death if done in a diasporic context.

The Lowland fixes its narrative focus on the precarity of India with a narrow scope and pays less attention to the external imperial force that fuels the precarity of India in the first place. Following the bloody division of the Indian subcontinent under the British rule, the novel showcases how the populations who are not assigned a proper place are forced to live "[i]n shanties next to garbage heaps, in any available space," without sanitation and electricity (12). Among them, those who work for the government "received homes in the exchange program," whereas others are differentially dispossessed of their means of livelihood (12). From a critical standpoint, while *The Lowland* does well in delivering a distressing image of the consequences of dispossession, there are no more than a few instances where it makes brief references to the forcible regimes that led India to such precarity and involuntary migration.

As argued above, the reflection of *The Lowland* on the global means of dispossession remains minimal. These observations are limited to the portrayal of the lasting socio-cultural effects of British imperialism in the post-Partition India. According to Bernard D'Mello, despite the official retreat of Britain from power in 1947, "the independent India has failed to make a break from its colonial past" (14). A very good example of Britain's influence is The Tollygunge Club, which "was proof that India was still a semicolonial country, behaving as if the British had never left" (Lahiri 31). Serving as a symbol of deeply-rooted colonial power, the club is even added "additional walls" to keep the above-mentioned immigrants and refugees out of its territory (12). Another instance would be the portrait of the new Queen of England, Elizabeth the Second, which "presided in the main drawing room" of the club, despite Jawaharlal Nehru being the prime minister of India at

that time (14). In this context, to use Jasmine Arpagian and Stuart Aitken's words, the global dispossession in India is to a great extent determined by the empire which forces immigrants "into a state of liminal dispossession," where precarity is later "established and enhanced through destabilizing and dehumanizing processes" on a larger scale (3). In the following paragraphs, it is further discussed how the political undertone that animates the foregoing events establishes an increasingly intensifying mood that gives way to more extreme forms of precarity.

3. Rethinking Religious Conflicts

There would probably be no better way for a precarious force to impose itself than to trick its subjects into thinking that it does not exist. In capturing the political turmoil of Calcutta in the earlier stages of the story, the narrative of the novel is often narrowed down to depictions of violence and conflicts between Hindu and Muslim majorities. Even though the religious violence between Hindus and Muslims arguably dates far back to the settlement of Muslims in medieval India, it still remains to be on the Indian state to not only take care of communal violence at any time, but to help build a common ground of interests that secures social integrity. The novel offers a highly limited account of this state of precarity and limits its narrative focus to how the followers of each group become hostile towards each other. One of the Hindu-Muslim riots in *The Lowland* is described as follows:

> One morning during the riots, from the same balcony Gauri and Udayan were standing on now, her parents had witnessed a scene: a mob surrounding the Muslim man who delivered their milk on his bicycle. They were seeking revenge; it was reported that a cousin of the milkman had been involved in an attack on Hindus in some other part of the city. They watched one of the Hindus plunge a knife into the ribs of the milkman. They saw the milk the family would have drunk that day spilling onto the street, turning pink with his blood. (58–59)

As can be seen, the fact that the narrative scope of the novel is limited to such highly personal accounts of grudge-bearing attacks blocks off the light to the inability of the Indian state in stemming the rising flow of religious violence. In fact, the Hindu-Muslim religious strife has been weighed down by the precarity of the state, for as D'Mello puts it, the independent Indian state failed "to abide by its duty to safeguard individuals and corporate 'freedom of religion'" (18). This article argues that the deliberate shift of the narrative focus of *The Lowland* from the precarity of the state to the Hindu-Muslim hostilities places emphasis on the segregative role of precarity in escalation of religious and tribal conflicts. According to the novel, the lurking fear of facing violence from their Muslim neighbours eventually became a reality for Udayan and Subhash's parents (174). The following decades were

witness to bloody riots that forced many families to leave their homes for safer areas. Among them was Gauri's middle-class family who moved to a village west of Calcutta after a Muslim man was stabbed by the revenge-seeking Hindus (59). Such instances demonstrate the concealed ways in which a politically induced condition that appears to be outside of populations' control intensifies communal discrimination. Not to mention that since precarity targets people's subjectivities, the above-mentioned communal strife is certainly not limited to religious violence, but embodies ethnic and gender violence as well.

From a slightly different perspective, there is a seemingly inevitable risk that *The Lowland* has to take in order to highlight the precarity of religious communities. It is no secret that the post-Partition Hindu-Muslim hostilities were escalated by Lyndon Baines Johnson's anti-Soviet adventurism in South Asia and Richard Nixon's military aid to Pakistan, especially during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war. Yet the novel purposefully ignores these chapters of the history of India and instead swiftly alludes to events such as The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, which "authorized America to use military force against North Vietnam" and the "military coup in Brazil" that was supported by the U.S government (Lahiri 23). Viewed as such, the novel runs the risk of downplaying the impact of the imperialistic forces on the depicted upsurging tensions by reducing them to a series of unaccountable conflicts and riots. For instance, the tone of the novel almost gets satirical when it refers to the killings of over one hundred people because of a stolen Islamic relic (23). In other words, by refraining from emphasising the more important causes of such conflicts and only focusing on certain Hindu-Muslim mob fights, the novel renders the narrative surrounding the far reaching political repercussions of the state and the imperialistic interventions rather insignificant.

4. The Naxalbari Uprising

The years of indecisive post-Partition riots depicted in *The Lowland* are only glimpses of the social tensions that precarity may potentially lead to. Meanwhile, the story features no strong expression of public disapproval of precarity until the emergence of the Naxalbari uprising. Having taken its name from the village of Naxalbari, which is situated in the northern part of West Bengal, the 1967 Naxalbari uprising was initially an armed peasant revolt against the wealthy landlords who denied Naxalbari farmers their rights of ownership. Albeit bloody in appearance, it did not take the form of a violent revolt until a peasant was beaten by his landowner for trying "to plough [the] land from which he'd been illegally evicted" (Lahiri 26). The novel summarises the main reasons behind the peasants' revolt as follows:

> Most of the villagers were tribal peasants who worked on tea plantations and large estates. For generations they'd lived under a feudal system that hadn't substantially

changed. They were manipulated by wealthy landowners. They were pushed off fields they'd cultivated, denied revenue from crops they'd grown. They were preyed upon by moneylenders. Deprived of subsistence wages, some died from lack of food. (26)

As illustrated, to use Colby Dickinson and Silas Morgan's words, Naxalbari peasants are among the dispossessed due to "the suffering caused by displacement, colonization […] and land theft" (141). According to the novel, before being completely eradicated by the state, the peasants' armed resistance turns into a political movement and begins to spread across the country. From a Butlerian standpoint, it is not violence, but the growing desire for democratising the patterns of recognisability that lights a fire under the Naxalbari uprising, causing it to go beyond the foothills of the Himalayas and stir the entire India.

As the story goes, under the leadership of two Bengali communists, Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal, a group of revolutionaries who call themselves Naxalites launch a political party. Officially called The CPI(ML) (short for The Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist), the chief task of this party is to organise the peasantry with guerrilla warfare tactics (Lahiri 38). In a closer look, Majumdar is among the first Naxalbari leaders to publicly denounce the globally imposed precarity by accusing India of turning to the United States to solve its problems and accusing the United States of turning India into its pawn (30). Not to mention that this accusatory critique is also aimed at the Soviet Union for supporting India's ruling class at that time (30). As will be shown, while such anti-imperialist discourses dominated the scene of struggle for recognition in the latter stages of the transition of India from a feudal system to a semi-capitalist society, the Naxalites later drifted away from their revolutionary path by getting involved in assassinations and other violent activities.

The precarity of the Indian state plays an important part in aggravating the condition of the Naxalbari uprising. Although the police begins to impose "undeclared curfews" and makes "arbitrary arrests," it is only when the uprising starts to spread across the country that the Indian state bothers to intervene (Lahiri 27). To use Chandra Bhambhri's words, the reason behind this deliberate indifference is that the post-Partition Indian state has been the tool for and served as the facilitator of the ongoing march of capitalism by creating institutions that not only dispossessed individuals of their rightful belongings, but also crushed rebellions through a coercive state apparatus (67). Consequently, the refusal of the state to take proper measures in dealing with precarity serves as an ethical call, inviting more people to voice the sufferings of peasants and rise against the state's oppressive force. While most of these public demonstrations are peaceful protests "calling for the state officials to resign," the insurgent Naxalites launch a series of attacks on the police force in violent retaliation (Lahiri 28). This violence, as Butler asserts, is not presumptively 'outside' individuals' ongoing struggles, but it serves as a constitutive possibility that forms their subjectivity at the very start (165). To

put it into context, the cause of such acts of aggression from the Naxalites stems from the same violence which is at work in the production of their subjectivities. According to Butler,

> When one is formed in violence […] and that formative action continues throughout one's life, an ethical quandary arises about how to live the violence of one's formative history, how to effect shifts and reversals in its iteration. Precisely because iterability evades every determinism, we are left with questions such as: How do I live the violence of my formation? How does it live on in me? (170)

The Naxalites' answer to these questions would probably be mixed. On the one hand, many Naxalites gamble away their chances of fighting for recognisability by violent exchange of power and on the other hand, some abuse the aims of the first group by engaging in criminal activities. In both cases, it is wrongly assumed that if iterability evades 'determinism,' then power must be iterable through 'voluntary' means. To use Kathy Magnus's words, the Naxalites in *The Lowland* overlook the fact that performative agency is "outside of the terms of 'choice,'" and that although there is a possibility for resistance, "the social transformation can occur only 'when the conditions that produce and limit us prove malleable'" (94–101). By fuelling the uprising to run riot, the Naxalites try to advance a revolutionary agenda, ignoring the social conditions that constituted their prejudiced moral codes in the first place.

Unquestionably, Udayan and the other Naxalites' violent resistance marks them out of Butler's theory of performative reiteration. Yet there are certain aspects of the story regarding the role of Naxalites that seem to have inadvertently caused their precarious struggles to pale into insignificance. For instance, *The Lowland* does not investigate the impact of the Naxalbari movement any deeper than to repeatedly mention some of its injurious effects. Even though the movement led to the formation of the Naxalites who did not take the path of nonviolent resistance and later became involved in violent activities, the outcome of it all finally turned to be somehow greater than the mistakes the Naxalites initially made.

From start to finish, *The Lowland* does not make any references to the constructive changes that the Naxalbari uprising made to the Indian society. As Henrike Donner argues, despite the primary failure of the Naxalites which could be associated with their strategic flaws, what has later become "the praised participatory political culture of the ruling Left in Bengal" owes much of its success to Naxalites' "public negotiation of personal involvement in specific political practices, including forms of organisation, speech, authority and local involvement" (19). To put it differently, the reiterating outcome of Naxalbari had outlasted its primary impetus by continuing to induce reform. By calling attention to the possible perils of the rapidly overgrowing capitalism in India, D'Mello argues that had it not been for the "Naxalite/Maoist insurgency and the other progressive movements that were

kindled in the '68 period, capitalism in India would have by now turned barbaric" (22). As a result, while the Naxalites' armed resistance did not lead to an immediate inclusion of "more people within existing norms," it did succeed in "shift[ing] the very terms of recognisability" in the long run (Butler 6). The fact that Lahiri does not include any references to such reforms could partly be due to the limited writing space she might have had to maneuver in and around the complicated history of Naxalbari. But this issue is not limited to giving an insufficient account of the movement, as *The Lowland* ends in a way that overlooks the significance of the normalisation of violence as well.

This analysis regards Udayan as a symbol of Naxalbari and considers Calcutta, the centre of independent movements, as "the intellectual capital of India" which encapsulates the characteristics of the depicted era by serving as a microcosm of the country's leading political currents (Panigrahi 29). In the closing pages of the novel, Udayan's actions are magnified and examined with intense scrutiny. For all his efforts to fight against the Indian state, Udayan is not a completely innocent character. Actually, the novel reveals that Udayan and his wife Gauri are both accomplices to the murder of a policeman who was getting in the way of Naxalites. Despite that, it is only Udayan whose actions go through a moral evaluation. The following passage describes the scene where Udayan and Gauri meet for the last time before he gets killed by the police:

> He knew that he was no hero to her. He had lied to her and used her. And yet he had loved her. A bookish girl heedless of her beauty, unconscious of her effect. She'd been prepared to live her life alone, but from the moment he'd known her he'd needed her. And now he was about to abandon her. (310)

These lines are of particular significance, not only because of the way in which Udayan is represented – a man with not enough grace and respect who suddenly lacks Gauri's expected attributes – but also for the fact that Udayan remains completely passive toward such accusatory tone and perhaps knowingly accepts it. In these lines, instead of acknowledging the fact that Udayan is a victim of precarity-induced violence, the novel strictly focuses on his – and not Gauri's – participation in an act of murder and disfavours him for his lack of commitment to his wife. As the novel explains, Udayan becomes so guilt-ridden that he keeps anticipating his own death after the Naxalites spill the policeman's blood (311). Unaffected by any sense of guilt, Gauri looks at Udayan with a sign of "disillusion. A revision of everything they'd once shared" (310). This study argues that, since "political violence transforms the relationship between social forms and subjectivity and extends a crisis of representation into the intimate sphere," *The Lowland* ought to have fully reflected the significance of Naxalbari in detailed accounts of its characters' personal involvements (Donner 18–19). As shown above, the ending of the novel fails to fully embody the significance of the Naxalites' precarious

struggles, because it ends in a highly personalised account that attaches little impor-
tance to the "violence against those who are […] living in a state of suspension
between life and death" (Butler 36). When violence is normalised, even the most
extreme systematic act of violence such as that which is incited by the Indian state
in the novel "leaves a mark that is no mark" (Butler 36). Bringing this matter to
light is the least thing the novel should have done. Instead, by revisiting Udayan's
memories with such belittling sense of pity and disappointment, the novel not only
reduces the Naxalites' collective resistance and sacrifice to a state-generated dis-
course of terrorist operations against itself, but also shifts its attention away from
how precarity contributes to the normalisation of violence. This is not to say that
Lahiri should have given the Naxalites more credit for their struggles, but since it
is the precarity-induced violence of the Indian state that governs the subjectivity
of its people, the novel was better to finish with a more emblematic ending that is
unbound by the straitjacket of any impressionistic story.

5. Precarity as an Impetus for Nonviolent Resistance

Precarity reaches its peak when it begins to force the people of India into a state
of absolute uncertainty. As stated in the novel, some of the major problems that
render people's lives precarious are the continuing rise in food prices, the lack of
state protection, the uncontrolled population growth, the shortage of jobs and so
on (Lahiri 61). After graduation, Subhash and Udayan are "among so many others
in their generation" who are "overqualified and unemployed" (35). In a situation
plagued with precarity, the two brothers decide to go separate ways in making their
own future. Unlike Udayan who joins the Naxalites in the pursuit of his radical
revolutionary ambitions, Subhash is quick to realise the uncertainty that threatens
his career and considers leaving for the United States as a more sensible option. In
Subhash's favour, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 in the United
States makes "it easier for Indian students to enter" (35). It is important to note
that, despite having passed such a seemingly generous act which later led to the
emergence of a whole generation of the Indian immigrants, the United States at the
same time sent thousands of American troops to fight in the Vietnam War. "How
could it have come to this?" Udayan wonders in confusion over the oppressive
brutality of the state and soon starts attending CPI(ML) meetings as a member of
the Naxalites (28). When Subhash learns about the Naxalites' Marxist-Leninist
agenda – which, according to the novel, is heavily influenced by Mao Zedong's
ideologies, the Chinese communist revolutionary who established the People'
Republic of China – he disagrees with Udayan's political activities, for he is not
"convinced that an imported ideology could solve India's problems" (33). Because
of that, Udayan's efforts in persuading Subhash to stay alongside him and their
family are met with Subhash's indifferent refusal. Before his departure, Subhash

warns his younger brother against the danger he is putting his life in. "What if the police come to the house? What if you get arrested?" Subhash asks Udayan, questioning his vain hopes for a change he does not live long enough to fight for (36). Even though Subhash never talks directly about the political situation of India, these lines show Subhash's perceptive insight into the precarity that threatens their lives, as he reads the situation and predicts Udayan's future arrest.

Subhash is not the only one who challenges Udayan's political motives. Their father, who is a government employee, also "dismissed Naxalbari," saying that "young people were getting excited over nothing" (29). One could argue that Naxalites did not come up with the best ways to overcome precarity, that had they taken the path of nonviolent resistance and sought peaceful discursive reformations, the widespread constitutional reforms could take place sooner and perhaps with fewer casualties. But to shut their eyes to the struggles of the most precarious populations of their country, Subhash and his father seem to share an innocent insensitivity, if not ignorance. However, this article contends that Subhash's non-involvement is different from his father's, in that it is in fact a form of nonviolent resistance against precarity. As Butler writes,

> Under such circumstances, when acting reproduces the subject at the expense of another, not to act is, after all, a way of comporting oneself so as to break with the closed circle of reflexivity, a way of ceding to the ties that bind and unbind, a way of registering and demanding equality affectively. It is even a mode of resistance. (184)

The above passage explains the possibility of living through precarity and even resisting against it precisely by refusing to be a part of its performative reproduction. Not to mention that since power functions as an effect, precarity's exerted influence renders Subhash's subjectivity more precarious. Therefore, Subhash as a subject is in a position where he has to deviate from the reiterative performance in its conventional Butlerian sense and instead adopts a personal set of principles and morals in order avoid the risk of social death.

Subhash's migration to the United States exemplifies how precarity gives birth to a new generation of immigrants. Yet even after settling in the United States, precarity continues to pose threat to Subhash's life in equally precarious but less visible forms. For example, Subhash refuses to comment on the Vietnam War when talking to his roommate because he knows that "he could get arrested in America for denouncing the government, perhaps even for holding up a sign" (Lahiri 42). On another account, when Subhash is asked to join a group of friends in a peaceful protest, he passively rejects the offer by saying it is not his place to object (46). This article argues that the form of precarity in the United States that is depicted in *The Lowland* has masked itself by betraying the intrinsic precariousness and relationality which is shared by all human beings. To use Maurits van Bever Donker et al.'s words, to be an immigrant in the United States for Subhash means to not

"be 'interrupted' by otherness, by relationality" (93). From a Butlerian standpoint, in order to occupy the discourses of intelligibility within which he can be recognised as human, Subhash says nothing to upset "the vocabulary of kinship that is a precondition of the human" (Butler 82). Understood as such, Subhash's precarious experience of exile can be translated into an ethical resistance, which as will be discussed, mirrors a problematic paradox in Butler's notion of reiterative agency.

Subhash's ethical resistance does not seem to be as effectively subversive or enabling as Butler's theory of reiterative agency suggests. As illustrated, Subhash's agency is restricted to the precarity that constitutes its iterative freedom. To use Stephen White's words, Subhash's ethical resistance is not as much a sign of his ethical concerns as it is an indicator of an unnameable desire for maintaining a "linguistic survival" (163). While his performative resistance does earn him the intelligibility he is after (from being dehumanised and abject in Calcutta to being recognised as human in Rhode Island), it ultimately cannot, when done in a non-collective manner, contest the precarity that puts his and everyone else's lives in danger. Upon his arrival, he finds Rhode Island a "majestic corner of the world" where he can finally breathe, disregarding the fact that what had consumed India, what had altered the course of their lives and shattered it, was not reported there (Lahiri 67). For Butler, nonviolent resistance is manifested in the "struggle of a single subject" who is "in the process of avowing" his/her social ontology (166). On that account, the very basic terms of Subhash's subjectivity "involve an originary vulnerability and, indeed, 'unfreedom'" in which he is never able to speak in his own voice, but only in the terms by which he has been conferred subjectively (Lloyd 157). Subhash's performativity betrays this unfreedom to retain a precarious subjectivity from which he cannot break loose in a diasporic context. As a result, his passivity towards precarity does not mirror his submission to power, but a desire to 'be' in the linguistic realm of intelligibility.

While Butler's performative resistance might sound fairly convincing from an ethical perspective, it fails to account for the normative dynamics through which subjects come to existence. In accordance with this point, Lloyd takes issue with Butler's idea of the normative and addresses the problem as follows:

> Butler leaves herself with an overly narrow concept of normativity, because she circumscribes normativity within a dyadic field of 'recognition.' It is as if Butler comes to see normativity as itself a 'structure,' and while she grasps the structure of normativity as incapable of accounting for everything – because, as she so often shows, every structure always and necessarily fails in its efforts at structuration – Butler misses out on the failure of any structure to account for its own historicity. (214)

Subhash's inability to performatively trouble the precarity he is normatively inflicted with mirrors this inherent paradox which is at the heart of Butler's theory of subject formation. Addressing the paradoxical nature of this theory from a different

perspective, Edwina Barvosa-Carter writes that Butler's sense of autonomy has left many unconvinced as to how the iterative agency of subjects is enabled or constituted in the first place (126). As exemplified, Butler's notion of reiterative agency does not account for those dynamics of power that can supposedly help the subject to reiterate the precarity s/he emerges from. Likewise, the agentic gap in Subhash's mode of performativity makes it different from Butler's idea of gender performativity. While gender performativity, as Butler understands it, allows bodies to undo the conditions of their subjection, Subhash's performativity is inevitably changed, if not reduced to an ethical resistance that runs the risk of reproducing precarity at the expense of avoiding social death.

6. Conclusion

This article examines Lahiri's *The Lowland* in terms of Butler's concepts of precarity, dispossession, performativity and reiterative agency. It was shown that the major historical events of *The Lowland* such as the great migration, the communal riots, the Naxalbari uprising and the post-1965 migration of Indians to the United States all take place against the backdrop of certain precarious conditions that appear to be outside of populations' control. In highlighting the consequences of global dispossession, it was illustrated that the state of India in *The Lowland* fails to provide the displaced refugees during the post-Independence mass migration with the required humanitarian protection such as accommodation and basic means of livelihood. In addition, it was noted that through an unequal share of narrative focus, *The Lowland* pays less attention than it should to how imperialistic interventions sowed the seeds of the precarity of India in the first place. As demonstrated, another important occurrence in *The Lowland* that displays an underlying lack of governmental conviction and support is the unrestrained perpetration of communal violence by the Hindu-Muslim majorities. While such mob fights and riots may appear to be kindled by religious hatred to a casual observer, it became evident that they are in fact heavily pressurised by the precarity of the state, as well as the adventurism and military interventions of imperialistic regimes. Moreover, due to the absence of any clear reference to what causes such violence, it was noted that *The Lowland* runs the risk of downplaying the segregative role of precarious forces in escalation of Hindi-Muslim religious strife.

     As shown in *The Lowland*, the political actions and inactions that govern the scene of recognition during the Naxalbari uprising are distinctly in character with the states of dispossession and precarity. The unlawful eviction of peasants from their lands, the failure of the state in maintaining a social equilibrium, and the arbitrary arrests and suppression of protesters all were shown to be the results of the emergence of postcolonial capitalism in India. Furthermore, it was argued that the Naxalites' armed retaliation, albeit hostile in nature, is not as analogous to

the coercive apparatus of the state as the novel portrays it to be, precisely because of the fact that the Naxalites' acts of aggression are developed out of the same violence which is at work in the production of their precarious subjectivities. As concluded, through a complete shift of narrative focus from the normalisation of violence to Udayan's murder story and accusation, the ending of *The Lowland* not only misconstrues and misrepresents the movement by reducing the Naxalites' collective resistance and sacrifice to the state-generated discourse of terrorist operations against itself, but also clouds the rest of its narrative brilliance by failing to do justice to the reformative outcome of the movement.

Regarding Butler's sense of reiterative agency, this article showed that, having been impelled by the need to have a livable life, the disposable populations of the post-Independence great migration in *The Lowland* attempt to collectively emerge as intelligible subjects by claiming the right to stay in one place and demanding their proprietary rights in land. Considering the fact that such plural forms of performative persistence and resistance may offer a possibility of overcoming precarity, this finding implies that the togetherness and thereness of precarious 'bodies' as living assertions can give them the advantage of forming nonviolent assemblies, by the help of which they are enabled to speak their subjectivities into existence and redefine the conditions of recognisability.

Furthermore, the analysis of Subhash's nonviolent resistance in the United States in terms of Butler's sense of reiterative agency gave insights to certain theoretical inadequacies. As exemplified, Subhash's performativity is inevitably reduced to an ethical form of self-governance that runs the risk of reproducing precarity at the expense of maintaining a linguistic survival and avoiding social death. This marked an agentic gap, and therefore a significant difference between Butler's previously known concept of gender performativity and a form of precarious performativity that fails to offer enabling possibilities for political contestations. On that account, it was concluded that Subhash's inability to reiterate the precarity he emerges from is symptomatic of the fact that Butler's notion of agency is incapacitated by a naive removal of normative complexities.

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Sex, Dr(a)gs and Rock'n'Roll: Diverse Masculinities of Glam Metal, Sleaze Metal and Hair Metal

Abstract: The following essay retraces the genre development and correlations of three 1980s hard rock subgenres: glam metal, sleaze metal and hair metal. This issue is considered, primarily, with reference to the theory of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities developed by Raewyn Connell and reviewed against the theory of genre development by Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson. Both theories are employed in order to underline the subtle differences between the subgenres, arguably linked to the masculinities performed by the artists' assumed stage personas. Aside from the scholarly references, the research includes various interviews with the artists and music journalists, an analysis of over a hundred song lyrics and the vast repertoire of visual arts accompanying the music.

Keywords: heavy metal, non-hegemonic masculinity, glam metal, sleaze metal, hair metal, music history, genre theory

1. Introduction

Sex sells, glamour sells, and so does controversy. The artists composing glam metal, sleaze metal and hair metal knew it; thus, these three subgenres have been some of the most prominent ones within the hard rock scene for nearly half a century. Hard rock? Yes, indeed! In terms of the musical technicality, neither glam, nor sleaze, nor hair metal fully belongs to the genre of heavy metal. Each of these three subgenres, however, draws from heavy metal so much that it has the term "metal" in its name. What about the other three notions: glam, sleaze and hair? They have proved confusing since the 1980s. The aim of the present research, then, is to delineate the characteristics distinguishing each of the three subgenres by analyzing the unique, non-hegemonic masculinities performed by the personas

assumed by glam, sleaze and hair metal artists. In addition, the results are to be reviewed against the theory of genre development proposed by Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson. Thus the emphasis will be put not only on the actual music: vocals, instruments, arrangements; but also on its visual, ideological and commercial aspects.

There have appeared various articles and even several dissertations on the topic. However, the genres of glam, sleaze and hair metal often were subjected to unfair and biased readings. The authors of such readings would not hide their often emotional connection to the bands which resulted in their haphazard choice of studied examples and methodology. It is surprising but not inexplicable that very often the young, aspiring scholars researching upon their idols eventually come down to a conclusion that their favorite genre is a hotbed for intolerance, racism and women's objectification. Frequently, these musicians (often mistakenly regarded as one with their assumed stage personas) are accused of their "misogynist" inclinations despite their emphasis on the equal status of all genders (Kurrenaya 8; Simon 60; Floréal 5). Besides, the lyrical content of glam, sleaze and hair masculinities is often mistakenly presented as wholly and exclusively heteronormative, masculine and white-dominated (Johnson 29–30).[1] The aforementioned problems only stress some critics' inability to compromise their love for the bands with the results of their research, including the (often haphazardly selected) methodology. That being said, there is one thing that glam, sleaze and hair metal musicians have in common: they always prescribe and reflect, construe and are formed by some kind of *masculinity*. The three subgenres have been viewed through various prisms: Freudianism updated with the reading of Lacan and Kristeva, Foucault's study of sexuality and the feminist studies intertwined with the studies of gender. Each of these methods can obviously prove useful, but all of them combined may still be insufficient to highlight the subtle differences between the three subgenres. While still possibly including some of the aforementioned approaches, the framework of *men's studies* seems nonetheless more applicable. For instance, Niall Scott proposes to refer to the idea of multiple masculinities when examining the genre of heavy metal in general, and notices that the subculture around the genre had indeed suffered from biased stereotyping (121–128).

2. The Commonly Mis-categorized Subgenres of Glam, Sleaze and Hair Metal

As said at the beginning, the idea for the article originates primarily in the problematic nomenclature: the labeling of glam, sleaze and hair metal. Indeed, both the fans and the critics use the terms "glam metal" and "hair metal" interchangeably.[2] In addition, many struggle to even recognize the subgenre of "sleaze metal." Other names such as "poodle metal" and "cock rock" appear occasionally, and one may

end up confused about how to describe their musical preferences or how to locate an album on a mislabeled shelf. Not all music stores have their stock listed alphabetically: flea markets and online stores group their stock (often including rare gems unavailable elsewhere) into genres. Fans themselves have a problem with defining what they experience when listening to, watching or reading about glam, sleaze and hair metal.

Often, even otherwise valuable research suffers from mis-categorization and such is the case with Anna Kurennaya's determining glam metal as emerging in the mid-1980's (while such glam bands as Hanoi Rocks or Mötley Crüe existed already in 1979 and 1981, respectively) and being prominent on the music market thanks to MTV (while it was predominantly hair metal that enjoyed such popularity) (2–3). Brett Stevens excludes more than a whole decade of music history, when he claims already at the beginning of his article that the "new music" (the genres of glam, sleaze and hair) emerged "in the early 1990s" (n.p.). Stevens then enlists the bands he claims as an example, including even those that had experienced their prime time *by* the end the 1990 (e.g. Winger) (n.p.). Lilyana Sharlandzhieva terms all tree genres as "glam rock," which, in turn, denotes a wholly different genre (think Bowie, Bolan and T-Rex) (n.p.). Talking of glam rock, Floréal mistakenly labels such bands as the Pretty Boy Floyd (glam metal) or Tigertailz (bubble-gum metal)[3] as glam rock, placing them on the same shelf as the New York Dolls (18). Johnson assigns the category of "glam metal" to notable sleaze bands such as W.A.S.P. (whose style also included shock rock and classic heavy metal) and L.A. Guns (who are known for their Gothic rock influences) (31). Brigitte Simon sees the hair-glam disparity to be only a matter of national difference (Simon claims "hair" to be a European name for what the Americans view as "glam") (61). Deena Weinstein hints at subtle differences between various hard rock bands of the 1980s (many of which are also analysed in the present study), yet she also uses the "hair" and "glam" as mere aspects of the same subgenre (13–14). However, the multinational fan-base of glam, sleaze and hair interacting online does not employ these terms interchangeably, and it is the online discourse which substantially contributes to the delineation and separation of the subgenres into glam, sleaze and hair metal. To give a few examples, Alice Patillo enumerates the subgenres of "hair," "glam" and "sleaze" as independent of each other (n.p.). The Italian-language version of Wikipedia also recognizes the distinctness of sleaze metal,[4] and so does the *Urban Dictionary*.[5]

This bottom-up process of separating some of the 1980's hard rock into the subgenres of glam, hair and sleaze shows that this distinction is a serious issue and that fans and music journalists themselves experience the delineation of each genre as necessary, even if some scholars find it too challenging to include it in their studies and the artists themselves consider the labeling stereotyping or even offensive (Bach). Indeed, some bands whose music can easily fit into one of the three subgenres, find such categorization uncomfortable, mainly due to negative

connotations attached to it. Glam, sleaze and hair metal are often viewed as a kitschy relict of the past that should be buried under a thick layer of disposed animal print-clothes and fake-hair extensions soaking in hairspray. It is not surprising that the scholarly interest in this type of music is a relatively recent phenomenon, considering the patronizing attitude of the general public alone toward these controversial genres (Slavković 2018a, 2018b).

Glam, sleaze and hair metal musicians are controversial due to their multi-fold non-conformism; be it their obscene lyrics, their substance-dependence or their gender ambiguity, all of which are still merely some aspects of their complex expressions of masculinity. It must be noted, therefore, that the term *hegemonic masculinity* embraces the ideal (or, often, numerous ideals) of masculinity which merely contextualizes rather than directly involves the masculinities performed by the glam, sleaze or hair metal musicians. The usage of the term *hegemonic masculinity* is not in the focus (nor an object of dispute) of this article. Rather, the aim of the following research is to challenge the thus-far prevalent, biased and unjust criticism of the masculinities of glam, sleaze and hair metal musicians. Indeed, the way these musicians construe, maintain and define their masculinities breaks the limits of the hegemonic masculinities prevalent from the late 1970s to the early 1990s in the Western hemisphere.

Meanwhile, it is important to remember that, in case of the majority of the artists, the ideals of masculinities presented in their music and image are merely their assumed personas. Notable for a visible disparity between the stage persona and the private lifestyle were, for example, the members of the recently retired Twisted Sister (a glam metal pastiche), who, according to their guitarist, were a very *straight edge* band, who would fire any members abusing alcohol, doing drugs or otherwise living a self-sabotaging lifestyle ("Jay Jay French…" n.p.).

As Raewyn Connell asserts, the masculinities (both the hegemonic one and its subordinates) vary in accordance with the place and epoch (503). In addition, a shift in perceiving and self-perceiving of males also occurs in the course of a person's life. Connell claims that "both chronological age and life-stage require different enactments of gender" (503). At the same time, there are constant changes not only within the genre of hard rock but also within glam, sleaze and hair metal themselves that require analysis. It all leads to the conclusion that the rockers' performed masculinities definitely affect their musical artisanship and, thus, explain various transformations leading to the emergence of each of the three subgenres.

The three subgenres are related to one another in that glam metal fathered sleaze metal (which, in turn, also drew inspiration from country, Goth rock and shock rock) and both glam and sleaze gave way to their more polished and commercialized descendant, hair metal. All these transformations occurred in the 1980s. Glam metal inherited its name from glam rock (prominent in the 1970s), and, after a brief existence (technically) as glam punk around 1979–1981, it fully flourished by the mid 1980s. The scope of the present research does not allow for a detailed

analysis of each of the three subgenres of glam, sleaze and hair metal. Thus, in order to delineate the characteristic differences of each of these subgenres, the emphasis should be put solely on the expressions of masculinity reflected in the musical and visual style as well as the general ideology of glam, sleaze and hair metal.

3. The Counter-cultural Flamboyance of the Glam Metal Masculinity

The roots of glam metal, whose popularity peaked in the mid-1980s, come from several sources. The raw, proto-punk sound and theatrically effeminate style of the famous glam rock band called New York Dolls was one of them (Genzlinger n.p.). Then, bands such as the Sex Pistols or Blondie contributed to the emergence of a new genre of glam punk (Genzlinger n.p.). Japan, a notable glam punk band formed in the late 1970s had its two band mates, David Sylvian and Steve Jansen, named so after the members of the New York Dolls.[6] Sylvian's characteristic image is a vital link to another group of European descent – Hanoi Rocks. Dubbed as Sylvian's lookalike, the band's leader Michael Monroe had everything he needed to export it overseas: youthful rebellion matched with eclecticism and musical craftsmanship in the footsteps of artists such as Little Richard or Black Sabbath (Power ch. 2; Fortnam n.p.). Indeed, Hanoi Rocks influenced such notable bands as Guns'n'Roses, Mötley Crüe, Poison and Skid Row (Huey n.p.).

Another way glam rock influenced its 1980s offspring was also through a now-forgotten band called Circus Circus. One of their members, Blackie Lawless, who later became one of best-know sleaze/shock rockers, had previously played with the New York Dolls (Kern n.p.). Another, Nikki Sixx, later established the legendary Mötley Crüe. Meanwhile, other artists who collaborated with Lawless and Sixx at the time later formed their own bands, all of which were just as influential during the 1980s. Among these artists were Tracii Guns and Steve Riley, later the founding members of a typically sleaze metal band, L.A. Guns. While Lawless hired Riley as the W.A.S.P.'s drummer, Sixx collaborated with Guns on his side project ("Steve Riley…" n.p.). Likewise, the majority of glam, sleaze and hair metal bands are interrelated.

Moreover, as far as Circus Circus is concerned, its eponymous theme inspired not only the band's name, but also the glam metal aesthetics in general. Such circus-based aesthetic was reflected in the band's arena-like staging, heavy makeup and glittering, slim-fitting outfits. Another band often characterized at some point of their career as glam metal, KISS is also a good example of this phenomenon: their use of pyrotechnics during various shows over the years was often an act of rebellion (Wilkening). Furthermore, when self-referencing in one of their songs, Mötley Crüe described their adventurous lifestyle as "White Trash Circus" (Mötley Crüe n.p.). Indeed, the typical appearance of glam metal musicians is glittering, shiny and commands attention. And yet something about this spectacular *glamour*

feels *out of place*. Indeed, this circus-themed rebellion reveals one crucial aspect of glam metal: a grotesque mix of feminine features with masculinity. Tight-fitting, spandex attire and huge platforms worn by male musicians of bands such as Wrathchild, Mötley or KISS are, on the one hand, likening these artists with the female models with whom they would often pose. On the other hand, this image sets a contrast to these female models, who are portrayed as more delicate, vulnerable and underlining the rockers' masculinity. The rockers, in turn, often mingling glam metal with shock rock[7] aim at appearing scary, shocking and boasting. Yet, essentially, it is always a staged, self-consciously pretentious show. In short, the circuit theme points to the musicians' awareness of their grotesque aesthetics: their image is pleasing and attractive yet somewhat uncanny and even repellent.

The example of the glam attire alone proves the musicians' rebellious nature. Yet their songs' lyrics and interviews also reveal their hedonistic and anarchic tendencies. Glam metal tends to violate various social conventions, from hegemonic masculinity to conservative politics, censorship and armed conflicts. While the political engagement is more prominent in sleaze metal, the glam subculture still offered a brilliant outlet for a rebellion against socially construed, then-hegemonic masculinities. Robert Walser asserts that their "rebellion [is] against what men are supposed to be like" (qtd. in Simon 68). The contemporary socio-political situation of the western hemisphere significantly influenced the content of glam metal. Doug Rossinow notices a clear link between the social implications of the political strategies of Reagan Era and the response toward it in the form of a "less restrained, sometimes crass, culture of the 1980s, featuring casual vulgarity and aggressive displays of sexuality" (3). The glam metal artists shared the social anxiety and their lyrics or assumed personas often served as a commentary to the injustices brought along with the political change. The prime culprit for them was the government, which, at the time, shifted its focus toward the military dominance and enabled the financial success of the elites, even to the point of abuse and misconduct (Rossinow 3, 6).

The glam metal masculinity also opposed the hegemonic one insofar as it opposed the general social restraint in the form of, for example, the often racially-biased police force and rapidly increasing rate of imprisoned minorities (Rossinow 5–7). What is more, glam metal lyricists often show their objection to certain values that specifically accompanied the hegemonic masculinity of the 1980s, such as the idea of long-term relationships, fatherhood and the responsibility entailed with them: breadwinning, corporate work environment, a strict dress code and gentlemanly practices. In the year when glam was already flourishing, 1984, Hanoi Rocks voiced their discontent with the social pressure exerted on men and the incongruity of the social expectations which, on the one hand, draw a picture of a man as a docile and passive (a father, a husband, a careful driver, etc.) and, on the other hand, expect of him to live a glamorous, dominating and successful life of a stud.[8] Also dissatisfied with the socially construed views on masculinity,

Bret Michaels of Poison expresses his attitude clearly, when he sings: "Some days I just wanna be [a] menace to society [and the c]onformity they try to sell" (n.p.). In their song "City Boy Blues," Mötley Crüe objected to the Western, metropolitan life rooted apparently in the post-puritan values: the songs' speaker endorses the sentiment about the American frontier and paints the image of freedom with the emblems of the Wild West: whiskey, snakeskin boots and saddle.[9]

Apart from the lyrics, the visual content of their artistry also shows the musicians' rebellion against the imposed ideals of hegemonic masculinity. For example, on the cover of their *Stakkattakktwo* album, Wrathchild used a letter "W" stylized so as to resemble the common image of "A" in a circle – a symbol of anarchy. Likewise, the members of another glam band, Lethal Lipstick look like glamorous punks or even criminals, as they are pictured on their *Bad Boys* album. Wrapped in a yellow band with printed "caution" signs (similar to those used on crime scenes), the musicians surround a car that is seemingly too good for them to afford. Besides, aside from taking their band's name from a gangster famous for his anti-bourgeois inclinations, Arthur Charles, the founders of the band called Pretty Boy Floyd employed the Gotham-like aesthetic of the city: dark, gloomy and filled with crime, as can be seen on the covers of their *Public Enemies* or *Leather Boyz with Electric Toyz* albums. Also named in a dubious manner, Mötley Crüe pose as ultimate rock'n'roll outlaws on many of their album covers, from the 1987 *Girls, Girls, Girls,* where they rather resemble a motorcycle gang than musicians, to *Too Fast For Love*, where the pictured bodily part (lower torso, groin and thighs) is clothed in leather trousers, studded belts and handcuffs, to *Generation Swine*, where (supposedly) the band members are pictured as pig-headed, suit-and-tie males against the Stars and Stripes, thus mocking the US Government.

Pig-headed or not, the glam metal musicians always were visually very self-conscious and telegenic (Simon 69). This often leads to idealized images of the glam metal masculinity. For instance, when reminiscing the life of Hanoi Rocks before becoming famous, filming their "Don't Ever Leave Me," the band's leader, Michael Monroe, posing as homeless and "curl[ed] up in the corner and cr[ying]," still has impeccable makeup, stylish hairstyle and well-matched accessories (n.p.). In their video to "Smokin' in the Boys Room," heavily made-up and glamorous, the members of Mötley Crüe were additionally provided a visual contrast by the purposefully uglified school staff. In their video to their single "Looks That Kill," Mötley Crüe also self-idealize: despite appearing as a bunch of loud and ravenous cavemen, they still mesmerize the approaching females, who, despite also being made-up, remain incomparably less attractive than the male musicians. A similar subversion of the societal expectations that commonly portray the *fair* sex coupled with *rugged* masculinity can be seen among many other glam metal artists. For example, like models in hair shampoo commercials, the members of Faster Pussycat have their hair artificially blown by the wind in their music video for the song "Poison Ivy," where it is the female object of attraction that is lyrically praised.

Ironically, no woman appears throughout the video and the focus is solely on the male musicians whose fashions, fitness and general appeal are thus emphasized. Generally, the issue of excessive makeup is an aspect of glam metal about which the musicians are very self-conscious. Interestingly, the artists either adopt a serious approach to it or mock it: Dee Snider, the face and voice of Twisted Sister, makes the prettified masculinity of glam metal assume the form of grotesque monstrosity.

The touch of feminine glamour is a mere aspect of the non-hegemonic masculinity rather than a reason to idolize or objectify the female. Bret Michaels of Poison states that "[t]here's an art to this kind of makeup" and considers glam metal musicians to be "real men" (Hunt n.p.). He notes that "makeup doesn't mean we're like women or we want to be like women" (Hunt n.p.). Eventually he asks provocatively: "Do I look like a woman to you?" at which the interviewer admits the doubtlessly *male* gender of the artist (Hunt n.p.). Thus, to say that the glam artists were effeminate is a misguided statement. Firstly, these musicians were not crossdressing. Though glamorous and heavily accessorized, their clothes were from the men's department. Secondly, the heavy make-up, sexually provocative attire and behavior that certainly characterized them are not the *essence* of hegemonic femininity but a variation thereof. In fact, the glam metal image brings to mind the stereotyped appearance of a female sex-worker (De Gallier n.p.). Indeed, such connection seems to best reflect the actual nature of the glamorous and non-hegemonically masculine image of glam metal artists: controversial, liberated and rebellious, yet dolled-up and aesthetically attractive.

The prostitute-like style of dress was adopted, among others, by the members of Poison and Hanoi Rocks.[10] The elements of their attire such as boas, scarves or even fans all point to a courtesan-like image (Sooney). Another common accessory of the glam artists (including the members of Mötley Crüe, Kiss and Wrathchild)[11] were the knee-long high-heeled platforms or musketeer boots commonly worn by streetworkers (Boyett n.p.). Besides, the eroticized intimate apparel such as fishnets was also popular with various glam artists. The members of Poison, Hanoi Rocks and Pretty Boy Floyd often wore tights, see-through tank tops and thin leggings. Glam artists were also known for their love of jewelry; they even cooperated with its designers.[12] On top of that, they also wore hair extensions and dyed their hair raven black or platinum blond so as to emphasize their heavy makeup. A red or pink lipstick, mandatory guyliner and even eye shadows prove their image to be like that of only a specific kind of femininity: the one that self-objectifies in order to *self-sell*.

The target customer of glam metal is the heterosexual female, which further underlines the musicians' male gender. This seems confusing, because glam strives to be both "sexy" and "sexist" at the same time – an idea famously ridiculed in the 1984 glam metal mockumentary *Spinal Tap*. However, the film explains that glam metal musicians are sex objects and yet they are confident in it, because they want to be objectified. They know their self-worth and they want to have it recognized even by the means of sexual objectification. The way they present their

prostitute-like approach to sex is still dominant, ravishing and self-governing. They are empowered. Glam metal artists prove to be able to reconcile this paradox: a self-governing man and a prostitute.

This dimension of a self-conscious, dominant yet self-prostituting masculinity is what distinguishes glam metal from sleaze metal. The approach of sleaze to sexuality, excluding the self-prostituting aspect, involves, instead, the element of sadomasochism. Importantly, in sleaze, this element has a political and existential aspect to it. However, the BDSM-themed aesthetic is not the only aspect of the genre that underlines the distinctive, non-hegemonic and unique masculinity performed by the sleaze metal musicians.

4. The Charming Outlaws of Hollywood – the Sleaze Metal Masculinity

The origins of sleaze metal go back to the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, when the wave of post-punk refreshed the music market. Around that time, bands such as Bauhaus, Joy Division or Siouxsie and the Banshees helped to form a new genre: Gothic rock (Petridis n.p.). While it featured many elements of the then well-established genres such as funk, reggae, glam rock and punk rock, it brought about a novel element: the Gothic, understood as the content of horror narratives popular from the 18th century onward (Petridis n.p.). Sleaze metal was particularly inspired by the so called Southern Gothic, which emphasizes the gloomy atmosphere of mysterious, abandoned places; peculiar individuals (such as Faulkner's eponymous Emily) distorted by mental illnesses; and, generally, the imagery implying decay and abuse (such as that characterizing the art of Sally Mann). Or, as Eric Savoy describes it, the aesthetic which "gives voice to the dark nightmare that is the underside of the American dream […] where the past constantly inhabits the present, where progress generates an almost unbearable anxiety about its costs, and where an insatiable appetite for spectacles of grotesque violence" exists (167). This shift occurred, because various hard rock bands recognized the success of their glam metal predecessors, yet decided to compose music and create an image which would exclude the deliberate tackiness and flashy colors as well as the overly joyful and lively music characterizing glam metal (Simon 68). Besides, many ex-glam metal musicians became disillusioned with the music scene: financial greed of the record companies, forced singles and exhausting tours (Slavković 2018a). Thus, many of the then-glam bands were soon to abandon their style and join the new trend within hard rock: sleaze metal.

In practice, the inclusion of Gothic aesthetic into sleaze metal meant the increased popularity of themes relating to occult, death and destruction. Sleaze re-introduced the theme of spirit possession, particularly focusing on the female victim suffering from excessive depression (L.A. Guns' "Lucy") or from schizophrenic tendencies (Skid Row's "Eileen"). Cheap and Nasty's "Silent Scream"

(the title itself being an oxymoron) points to neurosis as a haunting kind of mental illness. The primary reality distorted by the sleaze worldview is the Judeo-Christian one; thus, the lyrics which challenge it usually include satanic references (as in L.A. Gun's "Black Sabbath") or self-identification as demons (as in W.A.S.P.'s "Damnation Angels"). Various apocalyptic or hellish visions are also popular: W.A.S.P.'s "Babylon's Burning" references the *Book of Revelation*, while the band's "Lake of Fools" is a musical reimagining of hell. As far as the theme of afterlife is concerned, L.A. Guns' "Requiem" is sang from the point of view of a self-conscious and deceased speaker, reminding his visiting friends about the fragility of life.

Indeed, the artists (or their stage personas) promoted a lifestyle worthy of a *too-fast-to-live* outcast: a rugged, rebellious, Marlboro-smoking and Harley-Davidson-riding stud. For example, sleaze often praised the rebellion against formal education (consider W.A.S.P.'s "School Daze," Skid Row's "Riot Act" or the Roxx Gang's thinking of themselves as literally "Too Cool For School"). The sleaze artists often referred to gun- and, generally, weapon-related imagery as in Roxx Gang's "Fastest Gun in Town" or W.A.S.P.'s "Shoot from the Hip," or even in the band name: L.A. Guns. Besides, the cultural archetypes typical of sleaze include those of a cowboy and a gypsy man. While W.A.S.P.'s "Cocaine Cowboys" uses the cowboy archetype as a metaphor for the freedom achieved through substance intoxication, Roxx Gang's "Daddy's Farm" relates the cowboy lifestyle to youth and carelessness. The gypsy archetype in L.A. Guns' "Electric Gypsy" and W.A.S.P.'s "Restless Gypsy," in turn, emphasizes the emancipating aspect of travelling by a motorcycle. In fact, a Harley-Davidson seems indispensable for a true sleaze man, as shown in W.A.S.P.'s video to "Wild Child" or implied in L.A. Guns' "Crazy Motorcycle" and "Venus Bomb." The imagery related to substance abuse completes the impression of a carefree outlaw. While "Cold Gin" by L.A. Guns celebrates the titular beverage, the band's lyrics to "Over the Edge" reveal the self-damaging nature of substance dependence. W.A.S.P.s "Can't Die Tonight" explores the themes of alcoholism, lost hope and resignation. Criminal activities are also often presented as inherent to the sleaze metal lifestyle. Skid Row's "18 and Life" links pathological childhood experiences with possible criminal inclinations, yet the band's "Youth Gone Wild" serves as an anthem celebrating such a lifestyle. Often, sleaze metal band names also indicate the outlaw status of the artists' assumed personas: 'Cheap and Nasty' and 'Skid Row' are but two examples. The above themes have their reflection in the appearance of sleaze metal artists: hair naturally – or dark-colored yet *rebelliously* long, classic cowboy boots and hats, rugged denims, belts with heavy buckles or bandanas such as those pointing to gang affiliation. Generally, sleaze musicians favored accessories underlining their outcast status.

The above themes paint a picture of a sleaze metal masculinity as an updated, modern-time variation of the Byronic hero. For example, the speaker of Skid Row's "Subhuman Race" describes himself as wretched and abused, while in the band's

"Firesign," he admits to have been "beaten, burned, [ready to] take the fall / And get up in [the obstacle's] face" (n.p.). Embracing his condemned status, the speaker of L.A Guns' "Big House," describes himself as "psychotic," "neurotic," and "rejected" (L.A. Guns n.p.). Unlike the sex-loving glam metal personas, the ones assumed by sleaze metal musicians at times admit their inability to perform as a part of their nature. W.A.S.P.'s "I can't" and L.A. Guns' "Frequency" present the problem of emotional indifference, also in terms of sexual affection. Often, sleaze lyrics discuss mental disability as a result of parental rejection as in W.A.S.P's "Titanic Overture" and "The Idol" or in Roxx Gang's "I Walk Alone." Rejected, resigned and emotionally exhausted, the personas assumed by a sleaze metal musician often exceed the threshold of death, thus the vampire archetype is also popular (consider L.A. Guns' *Hollywood Vampires* album, and the songs entitled "Why Ain't I Bleeding" and "Vampire").

Self-described as rejected by the society, the typical sleaze metal masculinity is still politically engaged. Multinational in terms of the members' ancestry, Cheap and Nasty tackle the issues of immigration and national identity in their "Electric Flag" and "Break for the Border," Skid Row often gives voice to the oppressed lower classes as in their "Mudkicker" criticizing the ego-driven tycoons, in the songs "The Threat" and "Slave to the Grind" both discussing the contemporary economic slavery of the working class, or in their "Living on a Chain" tackling the issue of general social injustice. W.A.S.P.'s "Charisma" highlights the demoralizing nature of political propaganda, "Goodbye America" explores the ever-lasting corruption of the government that lead to slavery and killing of the Native Americans, and the band's "Long, Long Way to Go" and "Unholy Terror" criticize the damaging influence of the political polarization. L.A. Guns' "Death in America" points to the disparity between facts and the official media narrative, and the band's "OK, Let's Roll" commemorates the tragedy of 9/11. The cover of L.A. Guns' *American Hardcore* album criticizes the strong communistic inclinations of the government.

Primarily, it was the BDSM-themed aesthetic which served the sleaze imagery as a metaphor for the complex political and societal power relations. The theme of domination and submission expressed with imagery pointing to all kinds of physical constraint and pain infliction is indeed popular with many sleaze lyricists. To give an example, the speaker of Skid Row's "Psycholove" presents the male as "chain[ing the female] down" (1991 n.p.). L.A. Guns' lyrics to "Face Down," in turn, presents a dominant female who "scrath[es the male's] wounds" as "[s]he likes'em young and bloody" (1994 n.p.). In Roxx Gang's "Time Bomb," the speaker admits to have "[driven the] girl to tears," having previously imprisoned, frightened, abused and treated her as a "tart" (n.p.). Admittedly most influenced by the BDSM subculture among all sleaze bands, W.A.S.P. used such imagery in their lyrics to many songs, including "On Your Knees" (where the "misused and confused, bound and tied" lover likes intercourse involving pain), "Tormentor" (where the speaker admits to being "a sadist that whips the flesh"), "Mean Man"

and "Hate to Love Me" (where the speakers self-reference as Marquis de Sade), and "Don't Cry" (with a description of forced oral penetration) (1984 n.p.). Though often merely metaphorical, the BDSM-themed content matches the visual décor of sleaze album artwork, staging and attire. The members of Roxx Gang favored tight, latex, corset-laced overalls; the members of L.A. Guns decided to include an image of girl dressed in such a costume on the cover of their *Man in the Moon* album. The L.A. Guns' vocalist Phil Lewis has been sporting choker-like scarves, black leather outfits such as overcoats, trousers held on suspenders and gloves, which all emphasize his dominant stage persona. Finally, W.A.S.P., aside from wearing costumes pointing to sadomasochism, included proper stage decorations: a rack with a nun or a nude female model inside – both of whom the band's leader, Blackie Lawless pretended to somehow injure or disfigure ("Antics…" n.p.). In short, the more serious Southern Gothic aesthetic, just like the BDSM-themed imagery was to emphasize the sleaze metal musicians' increased engagement with various phenomena such national identity, distorted mass-media, corrupted politicians, dysfunctional families, substance dependence and other issues causing the general societal anxiety of the 1980s. Such themes, very prominent in the lyrical and visual content of sleaze metal required suitable musical arrangements.

Departing from the softer version of hard rock present in glam metal, the sleaze musicians strived for a less melodic and more aggressive sound which would liken them to the classic heavy metal bands (Simon 67). To give an example of a 'softer,' glam vocal line one may listen to Hanoi Rock's soft chorus of "Don't You Ever Leave Me," Poison's sentimental "Something to Believe In" or Mötley Crüe's smooth-sounding "Home Sweet Home" – all three songs being typical glam metal ballads. In contrast, sleaze vocalists, striving at conveying anger and domination, could reach lower notes more comfortably. For instance, even in ballads such as "The Idol" by W.A.S.P., "The Ballad" by L.A. Guns or "Wasted Time" by Skid Row, one can observe a phenomenon less prominent in glam: growling. Accordingly, the instruments were also adjusted. While glam metal consists of a significantly larger number of pop rock or soft rock songs (for instance, "I Wanna Be with You" by Pretty Boy Floyd or "Glitter" by Mötley Crüe), sleaze metal has a lot more of 'metal' in itself. Songs such as "Slave to the Grind" by Skid Row, "The Horror" by W.A.S.P. or "Time Bomb" by Roxx Gang are in no way softer than many other heavy metal classics of the time. What is more, the instrumental parts in sleaze metal such as solos or codas tend to be longer in relation to the sung parts than in glam metal, which seems to draw more influence from fast-paced and shorter, punk rock-like pieces. The type of instruments is also different in both glam and sleaze. Acoustic guitar, though not absent, is less popular with sleaze musicians. Likewise are the keyboards, harmonica and saxophone and many other instruments typical of softer genres such as blues or country. Instead, sleaze metal usually focuses on heavier instruments such as additional electric guitars, percussion and special sound effects (e.g. W.A.S.P. includes chainsaws both in

their sound and their image). Apart from that, while glam metal artists regard their music as subordinate to their unique image, in sleaze, it is the craftsmanship of the sound that dominates the image. As a result, many bands such as Mötley Crüe or W.A.S.P., when switching to sleaze, abandoned the flashy, glamorous image in favor of sober attire.

5. Looks That Kill, Now Priced to Sell: The Hair Metal Masculinity

By the mid-1980s, the general public had not only accepted but begun to admire the image of long-haired rockers with makeup. Record companies noticed that the big hair brings big money and, thus, the subgenre of hair metal emerged. In order to sell, it had to attract enough publicity and, in order to do so in the first place, it had to be politically correct, customer-friendly and, at most, merely PG-rated. Thus, the inclusion of lyrical or visual engagement with politics, gender-based controversy or explicit sexual imagery was out of question. As a result, the new subgenre of hard rock had to find other ways to become and remain prominent in the music industry.

To begin with, the hair metal artists limited the amount of explicitly sex-related content. Instead, because of the very pop-oriented nature of the subgenre, the majority of lyrics were about some variation of *love*: romanticized and emotional or sensuous but with vague, non-graphic metaphors. Just as in typical pop lyrics, those of hair metal included many "oh yes's," "oh baby's" and variations of that type of *fillers* (particularly prominent in the lyrics of Def Leppard, followed by those of Warrant, Mr. Big and Bon Jovi). The speakers of the majority of love-related lyrics present the companion of a female as the ultimate goal of their life, not a means (one among many) to a happy life in general. Thus, many hair metal songs are about breakups and general love disappointment: Bon Jovi's "Love is War," "Love Hurts," "Only Lonely"; Warrant's "Ultraphobic," "Sum of One," "The Bitter Pill"; White Lion's "No Second Time"; Mr. Big's "Temperamental," "Mr. Gone," and "Addicted to that Rush" are just a *small* sample of all the hair songs revealing unfortunate infatuation. Often, however, it is not the fate but the female's character that stands in the way. The female ideal of hair metal is that of *femme fatale* (and she is literally named so in, e.g., Mr. Big's "Voodoo Kiss"). This type of woman leaves her victims literally crying (consider White Lion's "It's Over" and Bon Jovi's "Shot Through the Heart") often forced to "hide these tears [they're] crying" (from Warrant's "Let it Rain"), affected to the point that even their "piano wants to cry" and, eventually, even willing to commit a suicide (as in Bon Jovi's "Love Lies") (Warrant 1992 n.p.; Bon Jovi 1984 n.p.). It can be clearly seen that in hair metal, the sleaze self-image involving the Byronic hero has been replaced with a Werther-like one. The women are highly emancipated, manipulative and even toxic, but the male victims often assume a very passive

approach to the problem. They are not the scarily undead vampires of sleaze metal for whom a woman is just as addition. The hair metal personas are often clingy and needy toward their psychopathic partner: they are *emotional* vampires with a severe dependant personality disorder.

The relationships based on carnal attraction are presented by hair metal in a very non-explicit way. The obscenity of glam and sleaze metal directly leading to the founding of Parents Music Resource Centre in 1985 was largely erased from hair metal (Grow n.p.). What is more, the vague metaphors of hair metal lyrics often bear the marks of moralizing. In their song "Women," Def Leppard imposes their heteronormative approach on its listeners by presenting both sexes as *created* for each other and, in the band's "Make Love Like a Man," the speaker explains that *true* masculinity lies in a man's ability to perform sexually. Besides, typical hair metal personas such as those of Bon Jovi's "Wild in the Streets" and "Get Ready" appear moralizing toward women. The female as viewed by Def Leppard is literally referred to as a "Personal Property." In sum, the speakers present themselves as women's saviors from sexual oppression, which, in fact, to them means female promiscuity and unwillingness to settle. Unlike the ones of glam and sleaze, the values characterizing hair metal masculinity are immensely patriarchic.

Hair metal personas are just as *mentally* chaste about themselves. Their rebellion lasts as long as their weekend and only within the city limits. Graveyards, Wild West or parties with the overabundance of drugs and alcohol characterizing the glam and sleaze lifestyles, in hair metal, are replaced with weekend gatherings of the "good" white, middle-class boys driving their fathers' cars. Even though self-proclaimed as ultimate rock'n'roll rebels, hair metal personas are uninterested in vandalism, drug abuse, fights or encouraging insurgency. Songs such as White Lion's "Out with the Boys" and Bon Jovi's "Always Run to You" could serve as prime examples. Still, the masculinity of hair metal assigns to itself the image of a *tough guy*. However, the numerous dangers awaiting them are usually unspecified (consider Mr. Big's "Long Way Down" or Def Leppard's "Gods of War" and "Run Riot"). The hair metal personas are not like glam prostitutes and junkies, nor are they like the sleaze vampires, bikers and cowboys. Hair metal masculinity is only as rebellious as are the charming footballers from teen-oriented movies. As a result, their self-proclaimed rock'n'roll nature needs to be constantly highlighted. Still, Bon Jovi's "Blame it on the Life of Rock and Roll" considers the rocker lifestyle as characterized by skipping school in order to play the guitar. Warrant criticizes the artificiality of human relationships and the abusive influence of a musician's lifestyle in their "All My Bridges Are Burning." If so different, why is, then, hair metal so often confused with glam and sleaze?

The core aspect linking hair metal with the two associated subgenres is the well-marketed *image*. Primarily, the popularity with the young, often teenage and, largely, female audience is guaranteed by retaining some degree of feminine attire and accessories. For example, the test shots for Bon Jovi's *Slippery When Wet*

album cover presented a distorted cowboy image: though situated in a setting that brings to mind the Wild West, the band's leader wore flashy clothes with studs and animal print.[13] The cover of Mr. Big's single *To Be with You* presents their only blond member wearing snake-print leggings, beads and fingerless gloves similar to those worn then by Madonna or Michael Jackson. Enuff Z'nuff's cover of the *Animals with Human Intelligence* presents three band members wearing makeup and army-like dog tags complementing their shiny, gaping shirts. Warrant's artwork for the single *Heaven* shows the band wearing costumes resembling a mix of those worn by Presley and Abba. The back of Warrant's *Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich* presents the members wearing pin-up versions of typical glam and sleaze outfits. The circus and cowboy image is distorted by the band members' bare chests and polished, glamorous, pop-like appearance. White Lion's cover for their single *Goin' Home Tonight* has the members still wearing biker shoes and long hair; however, aside from that, their clothes are rather ordinary. The band's *Essentials* album cover shows the members wearing flashy colors and shiny accessories. The band's cover of the single *Cry for Freedom* shows the band members wearing colorful, gaped shirts. In short, the hair metal artists aimed at a typical, slightly New Romantic-like boy band look, such as that of Wham! or Duran Duran. Often, the musicians themselves admit that the aim of such image was merely to improve the record sales (Padro n.p.).

The scope of this article does not allow for a detailed analysis, yet my aim is not to criticize the subgenre of hair metal as inferior. On the contrary, the marketing abilities of the hair metal artists, combined with their technical skills, allowed for their greater influence on the music industry in general. To give an example, both Bon Jovi and Def Leppard have been inducted into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*.[14] Besides, though in a less rebellious tone, some of hair metal bands still engaged in social and political issues. For instance, White Lion balanced its commercialized image with profound and socially engaged themes in many of their songs: "I Will" and "Broken Home" refer to domestic violence and stress the importance of a healthy parent-child relationship; the band's "Cheerokee" and "Battle a Little Big Horn" discuss the tragic fate of the Native Americans; "Lady of the Valley" and "All the Fallen Men" reflect on the suffering of war victims.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the three subgenres of the 1980s hard rock shows that genre is an evolving phenomenon. Arguably, the evolution of glam metal into sleaze metal followed by the popularity of their offspring, hair metal, accords with the theory of genre development proposed by Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson (697–714). Many of the glam, sleaze and hair metal bands have experienced various shifts in terms of the performed genre (and often, also in terms of the performed

masculinity) due to their increasing technical experience, their willingness to exper-
iment, the change of members and the demands of the music industry. Even though
some musicians consider it somewhat insulting, many of these artists regard neu-
trally or even embrace the genre-based labels used to describe their music (Bach
n.p.). Indeed, in terms of their genre development, a clear disparity is observable.
Following the nomenclature and categories of genre assessment employed by Lena
and Peterson, one can easily notice that the earliest of the three genres – glam
metal – bears the marks of an avant-garde genre: it is local and highly experimental
(consider the proto-glam metal projects such as Circus Circus and Phil Lewis's and
Phil Collen's band Girl) and eccentric: unlike the long-established glam rock, the
personas assumed by glam metal artists proved even more controversial as they
mingled their feminine-like flamboyance with explicit heterosexuality (Lena and
Peterson 702). Sleaze metal, in turn, embraced the "scene-based" phase of the hard
rock genre. Sleaze bands such as W.A.S.P. and Skid Row enjoyed more recognition
than many of the short-lived glam bands (consider Hanoi Rocks and Wrathchild,
in particular). Their image and stage décor attract more publicity, including its
negative kind: W.A.S.P.'s lyrics were among other "Filthy Fifteen" that led to the
emergence of the PMRC (Grow n.p.). Not as avant-garde as their glam predecessor,
sleaze metal already allowed for a clearer label: a mix of blues, Goth rock and heavy
metal. The influence of the other bands was more easily traceable, thus, helpful
in contextualizing the novel subgenre. Finally, hair metal included bands often
regarded as arena rock and attracting the attention of worldwide audience.[15] Their
emergence and continued success were linked with thoroughly-planned marketing:
the bands both sold their own merchandise and were "used to sell products" (Lena
and Peterson 702). The music was far from experimental; rather, it was character-
ized by standardized sound and, often, composed with the demands of the record
company in mind (consider Warrant's 'forced' single *Cherry Pie*) (Slavković 2018a
n.p.).

    Although rapidly evolving, the three subgenres of glam, sleaze and hair metal
experienced their demise along with the increasing popularity of the 1990s grunge,
Britpop and Nu-Metal, none of which desired to continue the aestheticized image
of the 1980s hard rock. Eventually, the 2000s witnessed the renewed interest in
music more glamorous than that of the 1990s. Bands such as the Swedish Crashdïet,
the French Blackrain, the American Black Veil Brides (all influenced by glam and
sleaze) and, also American, Steel Panther (a marvelous pastiche of these subge-
nres) have emerged. Nowadays, although not prominent in contemporary music
and sometimes regarded with contempt and surrounded by stereotypes, the 1980s
hard rock bands performing glam, sleaze and hair metal all alike have assumed
the legendary status. Even though sometimes unlikely to be played live anymore,
the three subgenres remain influential, also in terms of their very specific, still
somewhat controversial and often unique expressions of masculinity.

Notes

1   Contrarily, there are many notable female musicians within the genre, such as Lita Ford or the all-girl lineup of Vixxen; transsexual musicians like Marcie Free as well as openly bi- or homosexual artists such as Ace Frehley, Phil Varone or Dug Punnick. Notably, Dug Punnick is African-American, which makes him – along with, for instance, Jake E. Lee, Slash, Steven Tyler, Oz Fox and Blackie Lawless – one of many glam/sleaze/hair metal musicians who are of multiracial ancestry.

2   Sebastian Bach notices that there is a disparity when discussing his own music (n.p.)

3   The subgenre characterizes a more pop-oriented pastiche of glam metal.

4   The Italian-language Wikipedia entry can be found at: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleaze_metal

5   The Urban Dictionary entry: https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=sleaze%20metal

6   Simon Napier-Bell described them as a "charming […] rip-off of the New York Dolls" (Napier-Ball; qtd. in Power ch. 2). Japan produced their first two albums *Adolescent Sex* and *Obscure Alternatives* in 1978.

7   Consider Alice Cooper's *Poison* period or W.A.S.P.'s video to *Wild Child.*

8   The song in discussion is Hanoi Rock's "I Don't Get It" from their 1984 *Two Steps from the Move* album

9   From now on, every single song lyrics – unless directly quoted in the article – shall be mentioned unreferenced, because both the album booklets and the online sources providing song lyrics are easily accessible. Impossible in the scope of this article, their referencing would require more space than their actual analysis. However, the websites which contain the majority (if not all) lyrics of the mentioned songs include AZLyrics.com and genius.com.

10   Consider the Hanoi Rocks' album covers: *Dim Sum*, *Million Miles Away* or Poison's promo pictures.

11   Consider Wrathchild's 1983 single *Do Ya Want My Love* or KISS's albums: *Love Gun* and *Destroyer*

12   Michael Monroe of Hanoi collaborated on the Kalevala Koru "A Star All Heart" piece available at the store's website: https://www.keskisenkello.fi/kalevala-koru-star-all-heart-riipus-68881-p-9014.html

13   The controversy surrounding the cover is described at: https://www.songfacts.com/blog/writing/cover-story-slippery-when-wet-by-bon-jovi

14   A full list of all inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame can be found at: https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/a-z

15   The term *arena rock* is described at: https://www.thoughtco.com/top-arena-rock-artists-of-the-80s-10697

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