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EDITORIAL

Producing this, the second volume of *Exclamat!on: An Interdisciplinary Journal* on the theme of 'Identities', could be compared to "difficult second album" syndrome. Inherent in this volume's production was the challenge of following the new, innovative first volume, demonstrating the extent to which the journal has grown and developed, whilst simultaneously retaining the "sound" that people associate with the first "album".

The first volume of *Exclamat!on* was a gamble: as editors, we had little, if any, experience, and there were plenty of lessons learned. Moving forward with this second volume we endeavoured not to be complacent. We sought to facilitate the journal's expansion and development, and to ensure that it will continue once our individual tenures as editors comes to an end. As such, the first development was to thematise this second volume. The idea of 'identities' is a fundamental one within our society, as well as a topical theme within academia, and one which we felt spoke to all aspects of English, Creative Writing and Film. Identities are negotiable, fluid and contingent on context, and it is the ways in which 'identities' can be read and interrogated that forms the basis of the articles, short stories and poems in this collection.

In order to orchestrate the growth of the journal, this year we opened our call for submissions to research and taught postgraduates from across the UK. Despite being a fledgling publication, we were thrilled to receive such an excellent array of submissions, and are delighted to be able to include pieces by people from several universities. As *Exclamat!on* grows in reputation, we hope that the number of submissions will continue to increase, whilst maintaining the already established high quality and ethos of the journal. Finally, next year will see a change of personnel, as Sarah-Jayne completes her PhD, and Teresa will be joined by a new co-editor, thereby ensuring both continuity and development.

This volume is being launched at the inaugural *Exclamat!on* conference, the theme of which - 'Networks and Connections' – also constitutes the theme of the third volume, to be published in the

summer of 2019. In initiating this theme a whole year in advance, and having a conference on the subject, we have sought to invite potential contributors to present their work, begin conversations, as well as to create their own 'networks and connections'. Postgraduate students are the academics of the future; their peers are the colleagues who will undertake the journey with them. We are therefore proud to be playing our part in encouraging discussion, collaboration and intellectual development.

We could not have produced this volume without support. We would therefore like to thank our editorial team for all of their hard work, from overseeing the peer review process, to copyediting, to promoting *Exclamation* via our new social media platforms. We are indebted to colleagues – both internally and externally – for peer reviewing at a busy and challenging time within Higher Education. We are also grateful to the University of Exeter's College of Humanities Postgraduate Activities Award and Doctoral College's Researcher-Led Initiative Award for funding the journal. Finally, We would like to thank Cathryn Baker, PGR Support Officer within the University of Exeter's HASS team, for her unwavering enthusiasm and support.

We think this "second album" is, in some ways, better than the first. The development of the thematic material, the variety and blend of the voices, as well as the greater confidence and experience of the editorial team have combined to produce a volume which, we believe, strikes the right chord and will be hailed as a classic.

Teresa Sanders & Sarah-Jayne Ainsworth

Towards a Post-Identity Future: Gloria Anzaldúa on Disability and Minority Identity Politics

Elaine Ruth Boe

Nothing is fixed. The pulse of existence, the heart of the universe, is fluid. Identity, like a river, is always changing, always in transition, always in nepantla.¹

Gloria Anzaldúa's writing has entered scholarly discourses through feminism, Chicana studies, political activism, race theory, and queer criticism. Much scholarship has explored the importance of the body in Anzaldúa's texts, and scholars have now begun to consider how disability studies might offer new perspectives. Anzaldúa strove to 'write from the body', because she supposes 'that's why we're in a body'.² The increasing popularity of disability studies and the publication of an email correspondence between Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* have lent momentum to a disability studies approach to Anzaldúa's writing. Anzaldúa felt her hormonal imbalance, hysterectomy, and diabetes were pivotal for her authorship, telling Keating, '[m]y resistance to gender and race injustice stemmed from my physical differences'.³ Yet Anzaldúa's relationship to disability as an identity label is not without complications. Her ideas about selfhood, which Keating describes as a

¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'now let us shift... conocimiento... inner work, public acts', in *Light in the Dark/ Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), pp. 117-159 (p. 135).

² Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Turning Points: An Interview with Linda Smuckler (1982)', in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 17-70 (p. 63).

³ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Last Words? Spirit Journeys: An Interview with AnaLouise Keating (1998-1999)', in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 281-291 (p. 288).

'global citizenship of sorts', conflict with certain disability theorists.⁴ Since Anzaldúa thought of herself as a model for others to 'take these ideas, think about and expand on them', this essay explores Anzaldúa's relationship to disability and the body in light of debates on minority identity politics.⁵ For Anzaldúa, identification through externals such as disability, race, or sexuality will not bring about the revolution in society's hierarchies she desires. She looks beyond the scope of many disability theorists; she looks forward to changing the world.

I base Anzaldúa's theory of disability identity on her 2003 email exchange with Keating. In the email, Anzaldúa does not identify as disabled or diabetic.⁶ Yet, she does not 'deny or reject the fact that [she is] disabled', adding that she does not 'feel distanced from [her] "disability"'.⁷ This essay does not aim to label Anzaldúa as disabled.⁸ Rather, it hopes to better understand why Anzaldúa rejects a disability

⁴ AnaLouise Keating, 'Introduction: Reading Gloria Anzaldúa, Reading Ourselves... Complex Intimacies, Intricate Connections', in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 1-15 (p. 11).

⁵ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Making Alliances, Queerness, and Bridging Conocimientos: An Interview with Jamie Lee Evans (1993)', in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 195-209 (p. 200). Anzaldúa scholars point out the importance of recognizing one's subject position as a writer in relation to race, ethnicity, and social class. Anzaldúa herself talked about acknowledging one's position of privilege when doing alliance work (p. 201). Therefore, I take this opportunity to say that I am a white female who does not identify as disabled, but who finds the work of disability theorists a compelling area of scholarship and activism.

⁶ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 298-302 (p. 299). Anzaldúa was in the process of editing the exchange for essay publication, so I believe there is much we can learn from her thoughts on disability as expressed in the emails. This is not a typical format for authoritative theory. Much of Anzaldúa's theoretical writing challenges preconceptions about what constitutes academic theory, so using her emails as worthy of theoretical consideration reflects Anzaldúa's inclusive and embracing attitude to scholarship.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁸ I recognize the debate in the disability community on the utility and implications of the terms 'disabled' versus 'people with disabilities'. For the sake of word variation, this essay uses the terms interchangeably.

identity given the importance of the body and the body's pain in her writings. Her email can inform a disability studies reading without contradicting Anzaldúa's personal wishes because Anzaldúa believes others have the 'right to identify [her] however [they] want'.⁹ I compare Anzaldúa's theory with feminist disability theory, race disability theory, and queer disability theory. With Anzaldúa's position within disability discourse established, the essay examines the problem of identity politics for minorities as reflected in Anzaldúa's work and that of other theorists. I conclude with a reflection on how self-identified nepantleras —¹⁰ those who exist within more than one culture and therefore can 'see through the fiction of the monoculture' — might reconcile Anzaldúa's ideas with those of disability scholars for the disability community's benefit.¹¹

Anzaldúa's theory of disability concentrates on how political activism reinscribes oppression when disability becomes a solidified minority identity. Anzaldúa believes disability elides other identity factors like class, ethnicity, gender, and race, which further marginalizes these already suppressed groups.¹² Unification through disability would 'homogenize' individuals under a label of Otherness that ignores the diversity of each individual with a disability.¹³ The problem of othering is not just with disability identity. Rather than liberate people from the dominant society's repression, the reclamation of minority identities only 'enforce[s] our subordination'.¹⁴ Anzaldúa's concern with disability identity focuses on how such identification affects activism. By distinguishing oneself against the normate — Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's term for society's 'constructed identity' of a 'normal' body against the stigmatized body —¹⁵ a minority group

⁹ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 300.

¹⁰ I follow Keating's practice of not italicizing Anzaldúa's non-English words because Anzaldúa thought italics 'denormaliz[ed]' the terms as deviants from English or white standards (Keating, pp. 10-11).

¹¹ Anzaldúa, 'now let us shift...' p. 127.

¹² Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 302.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 301-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

¹⁵ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 'Disability, Identity, and Representation: An Introduction', in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American*

fighters the oppressor with the oppressor's shackles.¹⁶ Anzaldúa acknowledges that the practice of identity politics is useful short term, but she asks if such binary thinking will 'attain long-term visions of social justice'.¹⁷ She dreams for a 'sense of self' that 'does not rest on external forms of identification (of family, race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality), or attachments to power, privilege, and control, or romanticised self-images'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, she concludes her email by conceding the difficulty of her utopian vision because people desire security and community through shared experience.¹⁹

I will compare and contrast Anzaldúa's theory that disability identity hampers political resistance with other disability scholarship. In her essay on disability language, Simi Linton recognizes the power dynamics inherent in reclaiming subjugated identities for social change. Whereas Anzaldúa thinks disability identification reinforces a domineering system, Linton understands the identification with the label 'disabled' as political empowerment.²⁰ She thinks a disability identity category facilitates change.²¹ Both scholars think pain and society's negative attitude to pain can facilitate connections with others who share experiences of pain or illness. Anzaldúa's pain fosters empathy for others.²² Linton goes a step further to portray disability identity as a bond that unites people for political purposes. Anzaldúa grounds her argument on shared experience, while Linton fashions that experience as political fodder for a minority's advancement.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and Susan Wendell develop feminist disability theories that align with the spirit of Anzaldúa's ideas about *la facultad*. Anzaldúa describes *la facultad* as another realm to which

Culture and Literature, ed. by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 5-18 (p. 8).

¹⁶ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 302.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Simi Linton, 'Reassigning Meaning', in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. by Lennard J. Davis, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 161-172 (p. 161).

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²² See 'now let us shift': '[W]hy not use pain as a conduit to recognizing another's suffering, even that of the one who inflicted the pain' (Anzaldúa, p. 153).

minority groups have access because they must inhabit two different worlds, the normate and the 'Other', defined in opposition to, or as what is not, the normate.²³ In interviews and in her works about her hormonal imbalance, Anzaldúa acknowledges that social expectations of 'normal' bodies made her ashamed of her body as child. Therefore, she would likely support the goal of Garland-Thomson's feminist disability theory: to destabilize society's standards of the normate, unified body in order to celebrate the contradictions of the disabled body.²⁴ Garland-Thomson and Wendell both write about a special knowledge that disabled people acquire while navigating the world. Garland-Thomson wonders, 'what kinds of knowledge might be produced through having a body radically marked by its own particularity'.²⁵ Wendell worries assimilation into the normate might diffuse the 'accumulated knowledge' people with disabilities develop as a result of exclusion from 'cultural mythologies about the body'.²⁶ This special knowledge shares similarities with Anzaldúa's *la facultad* theory, in which the disempowered cultivate an 'intuitive form of knowledge that includes but goes beyond logical thought' because they live on the borders of society.²⁷ This knowledge makes marginalized people more 'sensitized' and 'excruciatingly alive to the world'.²⁸ Anzaldúa admits that disabled people are likely to develop *la facultad*.²⁹ Thus we see across the three feminist theorists a recognition of the

²³ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Within the Crossroads: Lesbian/Feminist/Spiritual Development: An Interview with Christine Weiland (1983)', in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 71-127 (pp. 122-23).

²⁴ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 'Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory', in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. by Lennard J. Davis, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 257-274 (pp. 258, 271).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

²⁶ Susan Wendell, 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability', in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. by Lennard J. Davis, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 243-256 (p. 253).

²⁷ Keating, 'Introduction', p. 321.

²⁸ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), p. 38.

²⁹ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 300.

strengths attached to disability, even if Anzaldúa does not consider disability identity productive for activism.

Although these disability theorists have some shared concepts with Anzaldúa, disability race theorists Chris Bell and Subini Ancy Annamma argue for a reckoning in disability studies with race relations. Bell's 'Introducing White Disability Studies' reproaches the disability studies community for its assumption of whiteness. Despite the discipline's desire for unity, Bell calls attention to its 'tenuous relationship with race and ethnicity' and, even more damning, its replication of normate power hierarchies where white disabled people claim 'hegemony and cultural capital'.³⁰ Bell's censure voices Anzaldúa's fear that disability identity disregards the importance of race and ethnicity for individuals. Her proclamation that unity 'always privileges one voice, one group' is realized in the white hegemony of some disability scholarship.³¹ Annamma's recognition of numerous intersections of oppression aligns more with Anzaldúa's idea of the liminal position of *nepantleras*, who are capable of mediation because they live in multiple worlds. 'Dis/ability Critical Race Studies' acknowledges the reality that Chicanas with disabilities 'live between and within layers of subordination' and outside categories of the normal body.³² Anzaldúa's avowal in her email and in 'La Prieta' not to participate in 'genetic/cultural slices-of-pie terms' speaks to the dilemma Annamma recognizes for people of colour who are forced to choose among their identities.³³ Yet even 'multidimensional identities' like the ones Annamma encourages fall short for Anzaldúa, who cautions minorities against activism under identities the dominant

³⁰ Chris Bell, 'Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal', in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. by Lennard J. Davis, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 275-282 (p. 278).

³¹ Gloria Anzaldúa 'Making Choices: Writing, Spirituality, Sexuality, and the Political: An Interview with AnaLouise Keating (1991)', in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 151-176 (p. 157).

³² Subini Ancy Annamma, David Connor, and Beth Ferri, 'Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the Intersections of Race and Dis/ability', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16.1 (2013), pp. 1-31 (p. 5).

³³ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 300; also in 'La Prieta': 'Sharing the pie is not going to work. I had a bite of it once and it almost poisoned me' (Anzaldúa, p. 48).

society first established.³⁴ White disability studies and 'Dis/ability Critical Race Studies' must decamp from their identity-focused bases.

Building on the special knowledge described in feminist disability theory and the diversity demanded by disability race theory, disability queer theory contributes to an inclusive disability studies by acknowledging Anzaldúa's concern about political activism outside social repression. Robert McRuer outlines two approaches to minority identity through the lenses of disability and queer studies. The first calls for a 'minority consciousness' that tries to change the structures and circumstances that relegate certain identities to minority status in the first place.³⁵ The second method celebrates difference without deconstructing the directives that stigmatised these attributes.³⁶ While the latter enacts exactly what Anzaldúa fears, the former activist methodology could help rectify Anzaldúa's criticism that identity politics only function within existing power structures of subordination. In *Borderlands/La frontera*, Anzaldúa describes a new mestiza identity that can contain the contradictions of 'Euro-American and indigenous traditions' as well as the myriad worlds of sexuality, gender, race, and bodies.³⁷ McRuer recognizes *Borderlands/La frontera's* mestiza identity as working towards the restructuring of power by traversing the normate's borders.³⁸ When Anzaldúa imagines nepantleras in her email exchange she further establishes a political self-consciousness that exceeds traditional modes of repressive identification.³⁹ Linton's community through pain, Garland-Thomson and Wendell's special knowledge, and Bell and Annamma's inclusivity must succeed outside social parameters.

The evaluation of Anzaldúa's disability theory alongside feminist, race, and queer disability theory teases out a shared concern for

³⁴ Annamma, p. 11.

³⁵ Robert McRuer, 'As Good As It Gets: Queer Theory and Critical Disability', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 9.1-2 (2003), pp. 79-105 (p. 97).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Keating, 'Appendix 1. Glossary', p. 322.

³⁸ Robert McRuer, 'Unlimited Access? Queer Theory in the Borderlands', in *The Queer Renaissance: Contemporary American Literature and the Reinvention of Lesbian and Gay Identities*, ed. by Robert McRuer (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 116-154 (p. 130).

³⁹ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 302.

connectedness and inclusivity. Whether identity politics aids or inhibits political activism and personal growth, however, finds very different answers among theorists. Anzaldúa's reservations about disability identity directly relate to activists' dependence on identity categories, which keeps minorities 'stuck in the limits of their identity groupings'.⁴⁰ Disability scholar Tobin Siebers's evaluation of disability as a minority identity of political worth and social cohesion recalls Anzaldúa's ideas about pain and *la facultad*. Siebers defines disability identity as a 'social construction' that unites people through the shared pain of 'discrimination and medicalization'.⁴¹ The power of pain and minority identity to unite people in a 'special knowledge' is reminiscent of Anzaldúa's *la facultad* and the feminist disability scholars' special knowledge.⁴² Although Anzaldúa recognizes pain's ability to build community, her 2003 email considers political activism based on an identity experience as cementing subjugation. Identity politics for the sake of group unity does not justify the support of oppressive systems of identity. For Anzaldúa, pain universalises the experiences of the body; identity formation requires segregation and delineation.

Paula M.L. Moya also imagines special knowledge to be directly related to identity factors like race, ethnicity, and sexuality.⁴³ It is important for Moya to ground Chicana identity in its historical and cultural context for the identity to impact politics and not merely represent fracture and ambiguity.⁴⁴ For Anzaldúa, the construction of self from multiple slices of identity 'pie' results in fragmentation. Grounding that identity in history and culture does not escape the normate ideas of those contexts. Whereas Anzaldúa suspects that identity supports suppression, Moya sees the 'critical perspective' of certain minority identities as key to the deconstruction of normate

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Tobin Siebers, 'Disability, Pain, and the Politics of Minority Identity', in *Culture – Theory – Disability: Encounters Between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Anne Waldschmidt, Hanjo Berressem, and Moritz Ingwersen (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017), pp. 111-121 (pp. 114, 119).

⁴² Ibid., p. 120.

⁴³ Paula M.L. Moya, *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 37.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 99.

views.⁴⁵ Here again Anzaldúa's idea of *la facultad* aids the theorist's argument for the unique experiences of minority identities. But Anzaldúa wants to rise above the human desire to find belonging in communal identity. She wants deeper connections, based on more than 'external forms of identification'.⁴⁶

If these theorists strive for political progress for minorities just like Anzaldúa, how does one account for their different attitudes to identity politics? One key difference is their differing temporal outlooks. Garland-Thomson voices the short-term vision of identity politics. She argues that disability politics cannot yet afford to give up identity categories; too many inequalities remain for activists to relinquish their unified political voice.⁴⁷ Linton also acknowledges the necessity of identity politics 'as long as naming the category' highlights discrimination.⁴⁸ Anzaldúa and theorist Lennard J. Davis consider the repercussions of identity politics on a more long-term scale. Davis looks back at the first and second waves of disability studies and forward to the third wave in his article 'The End of Identity Politics and the Beginning of Dismodernism'.⁴⁹ Disability studies remained intent on identity politics in the movement's early stages when activists needed to combat the normate's labels.⁵⁰ For example, in 1989 Susan Wendell thought people with disabilities should emphasize their differences from the able-bodied to claim respect, challenge assumptions about 'normal' bodies, and unite their community.⁵¹ Writing thirteen years later in 2002, Davis questions whether this stronghold on identity will assist disability studies in the movement's third wave, for 'attempts to remake the identity will inevitably end up relying on the categories first

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁶ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 302.

⁴⁷ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 'Theorizing Disability', in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*, pp. 19-51 (p. 23). <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.02826.0001.001>> [accessed 20 December 2017].

⁴⁸ Linton, p. 163.

⁴⁹ Lennard J. Davis, 'The End of Identity Politics and the Beginning of Dismodernism: On Disability as an Unstable Category', in *The Disability Studies Reader*, pp. 231-242.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 231.

⁵¹ Wendell, p. 252.

used to create the oppression', a concern Anzaldúa shares.⁵² Perhaps, Davis argues, memorializing past wrongs need not take the form of perpetuating identity categories.⁵³ Maybe commemoration can find an outlet in texts that speak of, but do not define themselves through, pain and marginality, like in Anzaldúa's works.

Anzaldúa's notion of fluid boundaries shares Davis's future-forward outlook on political activism. In the final essay she published before her death, Anzaldúa declares, '[b]y choosing a different future we bring it into being'.⁵⁴ Identity politics might serve the collective in the short term, but Anzaldúa recognizes that such an approach restricts individuals and 'long term visions of social justice'.⁵⁵ To realize her new self, Anzaldúa dreams outside the confines of society's definitions of selfhood. Suzanne Bost reads Anzaldúa's refusal of disability identity as part of Anzaldúa's commitment to the fluidity of bodies.⁵⁶ Bodily fluidity is matched by the flowing of time in Anzaldúa's works. Jane Caputi describes Anzaldúa as a shapeshifter who initiates new knowledge by realizing '*the future in the present*'.⁵⁷ Indeed, Anzaldúa writes in 'Dream of the Double-Faced Woman': '[f]or if she changed her relationship to her body and that in turn changed her relationship to another's body then she would change her relationship to the world.

⁵² Davis, p. 234.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁵⁴ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Let us be the healing of the wound: The Coyolxauhqui imperative—la sombra y el sueño', in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 303-317 (p. 313).

⁵⁵ Anzaldúa, 'Disability & Identity', p. 302.

⁵⁶ Suzanne Bost, 'Introduction', in *Encarnacion: Illness and Body Politics in Chicana Feminist Literature*, ed. by Suzanne Bost (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 1-33, (p. 15)

<10.5422/fordham/9780823230846.003.0001> [accessed 20 December 2017].

⁵⁷ Jane Caputi, 'Shifting the Shapes of Things to Come: The Presence of the Future in the Philosophy of Gloria Anzaldúa', in *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 185-193 (p. 190). Emphasis in original.

And when *that* happened she would *change* the world'.⁵⁸ This statement demonstrates the twofold function of Anzaldúa's bodies as 'collective history' and 'individual autobiography'.⁵⁹ Strength comes from connecting with bodies on more than superficial levels of identity. A revolution in the body radiates out across identities and through time. A more fluid acceptance of bodily differences encourages less restrictive definitions of able-bodied and disabled or minority and oppressor. These changes will flow swiftly along into a future of Anzaldúa's imagining, from the scale of individuals into the universal.

Where does this future utopia without identity leave those who identify as disabled, minority, or nepantlera? The scholars who argue for identity politics in activism still share Anzaldúa's commitment to community through the lived experiences of the body. Carrie McMaster describes disability as 'living between the realities of what our body and/or mind experiences as normal (for us) and what society prescribes as normal (for a human being)'.⁶⁰ To embrace an ambiguous reality could facilitate understanding among different groups and work towards Anzaldúa's new fluid ideas of self. But those who read Anzaldúa for insight into new embodiment and knowledge should be wary of falling into the trope of disability as narrative prosthesis, as David T. Mitchell outlines. Mitchell fears 'metaphors of disability serve to extrapolate the meaning of a bodily flaw into cosmological significance'.⁶¹ Readers should remain grounded in Anzaldúa's bodily representations of pain, for the body is not merely a metaphor for

⁵⁸ Gloria Anzaldúa, 'Dream of the Double-Faced Woman', in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 70-71 (p.71). Emphasis in original.

⁵⁹ Cassie Premo Steele, "'Una Herida Abierta": The Border as Wound in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*', in *We Heal from Memory: Sexton, Lorde, Anzaldúa, and the Poetry of Witness*, ed. by Cassie Premo Steele (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 41-55 (p. 47).

⁶⁰ Carrie McMaster, 'Negotiating Paradoxical Spaces: Women, Disabilities, and the Experience of Nepantla', in *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 101-106 (p. 104).

⁶¹ David T. Mitchell, 'Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor', in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. by Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), pp. 15-30 (p. 25).

Anzaldúa. She sees her illness 'very concretely and also very metaphorically'.⁶² Through her body, Anzaldúa could 'access concerns on a metaphysical scale', but she also 'narrated in terms of [the body's] own significance'.⁶³ Her body traverses the boundaries Mitchell sets up between metaphor and reality. Her works present bodily difference as rooted in its own reality, while simultaneously evocative of the universal.

Perhaps Anzaldúa argues for race, ethnicity, sexuality, or even disability to inform one's *experiences* 'from a particular perspective and a specific time and place', but not to dictate one's *sense of self* or necessitate a certain identity.⁶⁴ Disability activists might not be able to achieve the post-identity self of Anzaldúa's imagining in the present climate of oppression. But people with disabilities should recognise that the raft of identity politics floats on a river 'always changing, always in transition'.⁶⁵ If activists cannot escape identity in the immediate future, the assimilation of ideas about community through pain and *la facultad* can still improve the disability politics of the present. Anzaldúa's promise of fluidity at 'the heart of the universe' should inspire theorists and *nepantleras* to open themselves up to a variation of individual experiences.⁶⁶

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⁶² Anzaldúa, 'Turning Points...', p. 66.

⁶³ Mitchell, p. 25.

⁶⁴ Anzaldúa, 'now let us shift...', p. 127.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 135.

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Black Nana

She arrived cloaked against the British summer
and filled the doorway of my third year.
She would not bend. Her face remained
the broad flat plane of the moon.

When she walked, she rocked like a tall black ship,
murmurs of sunshine chiming, lost in her sails.
Her cane was her point, her shout, her barricade.
When illness struck she cast her sing-song voice
over the stair rail, to a land that was hardly free of her.

The moment she died in Basseterre
with sweetness in her mouth, sugar in her blood,
her cries swept the oceans, tolled through the house
and dredged up the bodies she had left there.

Kim Squirrell

My Father Said

it moved under the earth
and I could not dig for it;
my fingers would wear down with trying.

And my mother said
it slipped through the air like light
and I could not catch it, could not breathe it in.
My eyes would grow dim before I saw it.

And my brother said it was in the sea
and raced down rivers,
dived from mountains.

And my sister said it was in the gap
between the wood and the flame,
that was hotter than the sun
and colder than the moon.

And my lover said.
And my lover said.
And my lover said.

Kim Squirrel

'Doa sjteet d'r Joep': Memory and Public Space in a Former Mining Town in the Netherlands

Celine Frohn

Introduction

On 16 June 1957, the bronze statue of a mine worker in the market square of the Kerkrade city centre was revealed by the governor of the province of Limburg, Mr. Houben, with the words: 'Doa sjteet d'r Joep, inge echte koaler', meaning 'there stands Joep, a real miner'.¹ Houben uses the dialect specific to this province of the Netherlands, possibly to appeal to the audience in presenting the statue of the mine worker as something essentially regional. D'r Joep is one of many memorialised references to a mining past that can be found in Kerkrade today. These material expressions of memory are part of a broader turn towards the mines that is prevalent in contemporary culture in Kerkrade. Through lectures, books, and movies, the past – in the shape of memories about the mines – is 'kept alive' in the hearts and minds of many locals. Kerkrade and its surrounding municipalities is unique in the Netherlands, as it is the only region in the country that saw extensive mining in the first half of the twentieth century. The contemporary turn towards the mines for the formation of a shared identity, including inscribing memories onto the landscape in the form of monuments, is surprising as it directly resists a national identity. As outlined below, it is a resistance against a proscribed forgetting enforced by the government in the seventies, a collective expression of remembrance for a 'missing' past. While post-industrial identity formation has been studied for major hubs of industry throughout England and Germany, Kerkrade is overlooked in the literature because of its relatively small size and its outsider status within the Netherlands. This essay aims to

¹ Joep is a colloquial form of Joseph (or Josef in Dutch). Information about D'r Joep can be found on the website of the Kerkrade municipality. Gemeente Kerkrade, *D'r Joep* <http://www.kerkrade.nl/beleef_kerkrade/cultuur/dr_joep/>.

describe this tension between region and nation and examine the current reclamation of public space for commemoration.

In order to make sense of what role memories about the mines play for contemporary residents of Kerkrade, it is useful to turn to the interdisciplinary field of memory studies. Since the 1980s memory studies have drawn the attention of many scholars from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and history. Building on the terminology related to individual memory, scholars working in the field of memory studies attempt to describe and explain how memories can be shared among a group of people and how they are used. One of the early scholars occupied with this subject was Maurice Halbwachs. He argues that any individual (with an individual memory) is also part of a group which shares collective memories, 'encompass[ing] the individual memories while remaining distinct from them'.² Collective memories can be expressed in many different ways. They can, for example, be passed on orally, written down in print, or represented in monuments or artworks. In a chapter on memory in *Varieties of Cultural History*, Peter Burke calls attention to the observation made by Halbwachs that memories can be transmitted through the medium of space.³

In Kerkrade, space is central to collective commemoration of the past. As I will demonstrate, the urban landscape there is dominated by objects that refer back to the mines. These references include official and sizable monuments such as D'r Joep, Schacht Nulland, and the Remembrance Chapel (Gedachteniskapel), but also street names, artworks that use the 'language' of the mines, and even the landscape itself. Before analysing the contemporary urban landscape of Kerkrade, I will briefly outline the scholarship on memory, with a focus on the connection between memory, monuments, and public space. Using the theories posited by scholars such as Jan Assmann, Peter Burke and Jacques le Goff, I will analyse these sites as places around which memory has congealed. In particular, I will pay attention to what exactly is remembered. Subsequently, I will explain why these memories are important to the identity of locals and connect this to an episode of imposed forgetting directly after the closing of the mines.

² Maurice Halbwachs, 'Historical Memory and Collective Memory', in *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 50-87 (p. 51).

³ Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory', in *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 43-59 (p. 48).

Finally, I argue that these memories cannot be accessed without resistance by individuals outside of the local collective, as I will demonstrate with reference to Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia. By reshaping the public space over the last few decades, residents of Kerkade are undoing the far-reaching erasure of the mining history by the national government.

Memory and public space

In *History and Memory*, historian Jacques le Goff argues for the relevance of studying collective memory. He writes:

Overflowing history as both a form of knowledge and a public rite, flowing uphill as the moving reservoir of history, full archives and documents/monuments, and downhill as the sonorous (and living) echo of historical work, collective memory is one of the great stakes of developed and developing societies, of dominated and dominating classes, all of them struggling for power or for life, for survival and for advancement.⁴

Collective memory is history as selected and interpreted by social groups.⁵ This insight not only problematizes history texts as reflection of 'what really happened', it also raises questions of who actually determines what is considered history. One of the reasons why collective memory is so central to society and the 'struggle for power, life, survival and advancement' as le Goff claims is that there is a strong connection between collective memory and group identity formation. Assmann outlines certain aspects of collective memory that can influence a cultural identity in the article 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity' (1995). In line with Halwach's argument, he argues that continuity between generations within a culture is achieved through socialisation and customs.⁶ Of interest to this paper is

⁴ Jacques le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 97-98.

⁵ Burke, p. 44.

⁶ Jan Assman and Jan Czaplica, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique* 65 (1995), pp. 125-133 (p. 125).

Assmann's concept of cultural memory, which he separates from 'communicative memory' (which seems to be equated with oral history). Cultural memory, he argues, is characterised by its transcendence from the everyday, and it is 'fixed' to certain events in the past. Memories of this past can be accessed through 'figures of memory', cultural formations such as texts, rites, and monuments, or through recitation, practice, and observance. He writes that '[in] cultural formation, a collective experience crystallizes, whose meaning, when touched upon, may suddenly become accessible again across millennia'.⁷ Cultural memory in these figures of memory 'preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity'.⁸ A monument, for Assmann, can therefore be a sort of repository for knowledge which is then accessed by a certain group to shape its identity.

Though Assmann's theory is a good starting point for thinking about the relationship between monuments, memory, and identity, his description raises many questions. Do all groups have access to the same knowledge when being faced with a monument? Is the interpretation of the memory accessed pre-determined by the monument, or is it shaped dialogically between the collective and the monument? Much of the literature about monuments focuses on war monuments. Historians Jay Winter and Reinhart Koselleck have written on the subject of war memorials. In a book on memory, mourning and the First World War, Winter analyses war memorials as 'foci of the rituals, rhetoric, and ceremonies of bereavement'.⁹ By conceptualising the memorial as a place for commemoration through rituals, Winter argues that the meaning of the monument can change over time. This complicates Assmann's description of a monument as something that inherently carries a meaning that can be accessed over time and space in a seemingly effortless manner. Winter writes that war memorials 'have a life history, and like other monuments have both shed meanings and taken on new significance in subsequent years'. Koselleck makes a similar case, arguing that the original meaning of war memorials gets

⁷ Assmann, p. 129.

⁸ Ibid., p. 130.

⁹ Jay Winter, 'War memorials and the Mourning Process', in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 78-116 (p. 78).

lost as time passes. War memorials often have a political significance at their erection, but they lose this significance when the last survivors of the event of commemoration pass away.¹⁰ Both authors argue that the meaning that adheres to a monument is subject to change – and for historians it is a worthwhile pursuit to trace how societies attribute different meanings to monuments through time.

The scholars discussed thus far have written about monuments from a historical perspective. Their views can be complemented by considering the form of the monument itself and its context in public space. Art historian Cher Krause Knight analyses monuments as a form of public art. In its most basic definition, public art contains works that ‘are designated for larger audiences, and placed to attract their attention; it intends to provide aesthetic experiences that edify, commemorate, or entertain; and its messages are comprehensible to generalized audiences’.¹¹ Public art does not need to appeal to one homogeneous audience – it can have different meanings for different audiences – but in order for art to be considered ‘public’ it needs a substantial societal platform. Following James Young’s argument on memorialisation, she argues that instead of a collective, monolithic response, a memorial has a ‘collected memory’. This collective memory ‘is comprised of diverse and competing responses, some planned and others accidental, which shift with time, circumstance, and ideology as they converge at each site’.¹² In this sense, the meaning of monuments only comes into being through interaction with an audience.

As we have moved from Assmann’s definition of monuments as ‘figures of memory’, the monument itself has become further problematised. In light of these theories, one might say that a monument is never truly ‘one’. A monument collects different histories and memories and creates fluctuating meanings throughout time. To conclude this section on theory before moving to the case of the monuments in Kerkrade, I would like to touch on ‘Of Other Spaces’ by

¹⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, ‘War Memorials: Identity Formations and the Survivors’ in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. by Jeffrey K. Olick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 365-370 (p. 369).

¹¹ Cher Krause Knight, *Public Art. Theory, practice and populism* (Malden: Wiley, 2008), p. 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Foucault. This text was based on his 1967 lecture, and it is mainly concerned with what he calls 'heterotopia'. Foucault writes:

We do not live in a kind of void, inside which we could place individuals and things [...] we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.¹³

These exceptional sites, the heterotopia, have the attribute of 'being in relation with all other sites'; they refer to them and interact with other spaces in meaningful ways. Foucault is quite vague about what he exactly envisions as heterotopia (his examples include a cemetery, a garden, a museum, and a festival) but he outlines several 'principles' that will be of interest when analysing monument spaces. Foucault's principles include the idea that heterotopias can function differently through time, and that they can juxtapose several spaces within themselves that are incompatible. Foucault's text echoes Le Goff's argument about the struggle for dominance, as he argues that 'heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable'.¹⁴ Though some heterotopias have the impression of accessibility, they also 'hide curious exclusions'. This principle can add another dimension to an analysis of monuments, considering not just what is included, but also what meanings and what audiences are excluded.

The mines in Limburg

Before examining three monuments in Kerkrade, I will briefly sketch the history of the mines in Kerkrade. Coal as a fuel has a long history in the Dutch province of Limburg. The first textual evidence of coal mining dates back to the twelfth century, and throughout the Middle Ages there were small-scale mines in the area in and around Kerkrade.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century the mines changed hands multiple times; first they came to be under influence of French conquest (giving the mines the

¹³ Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* 16 (1986), pp. 22-27 (p. 23).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁵ Leonie Joanne van Marle, 'Het Nederlands Mijnmuseum, de moeite waard! Het erfgoed van de Nederlandse steenkolenmijnbouw' (Utrecht, 2011), p. 18.

name 'Mines Domaniales' which would turn into 'Domaniale Mijn' in Dutch), then they fell under Dutch state authority, before they were privatized again in 1845. In the first half of the twentieth century the mines continued to grow, with a dip in production under German occupation during the Second World War. At the beginning of the fifties, coal mining seemed to have a bright future, as after 1945 the energy usage in the United States and Europe increased significantly.¹⁶ However, starting in 1955 the demand for coal dropped due to the emergence of natural gas as an alternative energy source. Within just twenty years, coal as a primary energy source dropped from 76% of the market in 1950 to a mere 5% by 1970.¹⁷

For the people working in the mines in Limburg, this shift meant that their source of relative prosperity dropped away. In 1965 the decision to close the mines in Limburg in several stages was made by the secretary of Economics, Joop den Uyl.¹⁸ In 1969 the Domaniale Mine was closed, and by the end of the seventies all mining in Limburg had ceased. The sanitation (sanitering) of the landscape in the region was organized locally by A. Hoefnagels, the director of 'Publieke Werken', a municipal service. Essential to his plan to turn the mining region 'from black to green', as the sanitation was described, was extensive financial state support. In an agreement between the contractor's business owned by Hoefnagels and the state, it was stipulated that the grounds surrounding the mines were to be given new allocations within ten years, the costs for the majority of which would be funded by the state.¹⁹ Within a decade, almost all aboveground structures of the mines were torn down and the black hills of mining waste were excavated or covered with soil and greenery. The goal of this extensive reshaping of the urban landscape of the mining region was to get rid of its 'black' reputation.²⁰

¹⁶ F.A.M. Messing, *De mijnsluiting in Limburg* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988), p. 1.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Van Marle, p. 6.

¹⁹ Kerkrade Gisteren en Vandaag, 'Mijnbouw, van zwart naar groen', <https://www.kgv.nl/Mijnbouw,_van_zwart_naar_groen> [accessed 21 December 2017].

²⁰ A reference to the black soot that covered everything, from clothing to structures, when the mines were in operation. See Van Marle, p. 29.

Commemoration of the mining past through monuments

All aboveground structures of the Domaniale Mine were razed in the seventies, with one significant exception: Schacht Nulland. This ventilation shaft was built in 1907, providing the mine with fresh air until the closing of the mine in 1969.²¹ It was one of the six shafts connected to the mine. For a relatively short period of time, between 1921 and 1927, the shaft also served as a production shaft, carrying material and personnel into and out of the mines. After the closing of the mines, the outbuildings connected to Schacht Nulland were removed and the stone structure itself became the mine monument. The façade of the building is regularly repainted, giving it a pleasant and eye-catching yellow colour. The visibility of the monument is guaranteed not merely by its size, but also because of its location: it stands directly alongside one of Kerkrade's main roads, and the landmark is impossible to miss for anyone passing through.

In the case of Schacht Nulland, it is of interest to consider how the building itself and what it represents have changed through time. When it was still part of the Domaniale Mine, Schacht Nulland was merely one of many shafts, and was hardly the most essential one. It stands to reason that the shafts that provided entry to the mines for the miners would be more in the public consciousness than an airshaft. Now that all other buildings are gone, however, Schacht Nulland has become the symbol for the entire Domaniale Mine and refers to the collection of memories of the mines. The Schacht is a central location for commemoration and celebration of the mines; ex-miners host frequent tours, local school children visit, and it is part of a larger network of local museums such as Continium Discovery Center in Kerkrade and the Nederlands Mijnmuseum in Heerlen. As an advertisement for the open day on Sunday, 3 April proclaims, Schacht Nulland is 'one of the few tangible memories of the rich mining past of Kerkrade'.²² The majority of the conservation and organisation of events surrounding the

²¹ Schacht Nulland, 'Historie' <<http://schachtnulland.weebly.com/historie.html>> [accessed 21 December 2017].

²² Schacht Nulland. Taken from front page, retrieved 1 April 2016. Translated from Dutch: 'Dit rijksmonument is een van de weinige tastbare herinneringen aan het rijke mijnverleden van Kerkrade'.

monument is taken care of by 'Stichting Koempels van de Domaniale', a foundation consisting mainly of former mine workers. They are also responsible for the small museum-like exposition in the interior of the shaft and during tours they 'passionately tell their personal stories of the work belowground'.²³ The tour of Schacht Nulland is given an aura of authenticity by constant referral to objects that were 'really used' back then and the oral testimonies of people who were 'really there', even though many items are taken out of context and Schacht Nulland was a production shaft only very briefly. During these tours the monument becomes a stand-in for the mines as a whole.

Despite its different history, D'r Joep is closely connected to Schacht Nulland. The connection between the two is invoked both by their common theme (memories of the mines), and their spatiality (both being in highly visible places). D'r Joep, originally called 'De Mijnwerker' (the mine worker), was created while the mines were still at high capacity in 1957, unlike Schacht Nulland which only became a monument after the mines closed. The statue is the result of a design contest held in 1954, originated by a letter submitted in a local newspaper.²⁴ The assignment was to 'manufacture a model for the miner, a figure on a pedestal, in which the nobility of his labour, his stalwart strength and majesty as human are portrayed'.²⁵ Apart from expressing the dignity of the mining profession, the monument would also commemorate those who lost their lives underground. Both of these elements were incorporated in the winning design by Wim van Hoorn. The figure of the miner, standing straight and with his chin held high, is placed on a high pedestal, which requires the viewer standing close to the statue to look up to the miner. The miner is spatially raised above the ground, embodying a symbolic position over society. The front of the pedestal shows a stylised carving in the stone, displaying a recumbent man who

²³ Ibid. Translated from Dutch: 'Vol passie vertellen zij hier hun persoonlijke verhaal over het werk ondergronds'.

²⁴ Kerkrade Gister en Vandaag, 'D'r Joep' <https://www.kgv.nl/D%27r_Joep> [accessed 21 December 2017].

²⁵ René en Peter van der Krogt, 'D'r Joep of De Mijnwerker' <<http://www.vanderkrogt.net/standbeelden/object.php?record=L113aa>> [accessed 21 December 2017]. Translated from Dutch: 'Vervaardig een model voor de mijnwerker, in een figuur op voetstuk, waarin de adeldom van zijn arbeid, zijn stoere kracht en grootheid als mens worden uitgebeeld'.

raises his hand to ward off a wolf figure. The wolf represents the dangers miners face while underground. Though there are no sources that explain the artist's choice for the wolf as an embodiment of peril, in the context of the overwhelmingly Catholic region, it might be a reference to the biblical trope of a wolf endangering the flock.

The third official mine-related monument in Kerkrade differs from Schacht Nulland and D'r Joep in many ways. The Remembrance Chapel (Gedachteniskapel) is located away from the public eye, in a small inroad on the boundary zone between municipalities Kerkrade and Landgraaf. It consists of a small house that serves as a chapel, decorated with stained glass windows depicting mine-related symbols such as gas lamps and tools, as well as two large plaques outside listing the names of all 1169 miners who lost their lives belowground. Inside the chapel, there are smaller plaques displaying the names of 286 miners who died aboveground.²⁶ The names are displayed chronologically by year of death and are sorted by mining corporation. Both commercial and state mines are represented, and there is no visible discernment between the two. During the first half of the twentieth century, the building the chapel is housed in was used as mortuary, where men who died in mining-related accidents in the Wilhelmina Mine were temporarily laid out. After the closing of the mines, it came under ownership of a Limburgs energy company, who kept the building itself in good condition. In 2001 the renovation of the morgue commenced, under the direction of the mayor of Landgraaf, and it was turned into a monument in 2002.

The Remembrance Chapel differs from the other two monuments firstly because it was only turned very recently into a monument. Where D'r Joep and Schacht Nulland were monumentalised either during the high days of mining or directly afterwards, the Remembrance Chapel is a twenty-first century memorial. Secondly, its main function is commemoration and the facilitation of mourning. Schacht Nulland is explicitly celebratory, and D'r Joep, though containing a reference to the dangers of mining, mainly expresses a sense of pride. All three of these monuments are the place around which rituals and memories of the mining past have congealed, in Assmann's words. These monuments can be seen as 'figures of memory', places referring to the

²⁶ Mijnwerkerskapel, 'De Kapel' <<http://www.mijnwerkerskapel.nl/>> [accessed 21 December 2017].

past in such a way that they provide a foundation for the identity of a societal group. However, the development of these monuments shows a different pattern than the one described by Koselleck concerning war monuments. He argues that war memorials lose their political meaning as time passes, the original generation passes away, and the monuments themselves go into decline. In Kerkrade the opposite seems to be the case: as time passes, commemoration seems to be on the rise, as evidenced by the commemoration chapel which was created over thirty years after the closing of the mines. To explain this phenomenon, and to understand what role these monuments play in identity formation in Kerkrade, we must return to the seventies.

Forgetting the mines and resistance

As stated above, after the closing of the mines there was an impulse on a municipal level, with state support, to turn the region 'from black to green'. From a memory studies perspective, this rather far-reaching reshaping of the public space in the mining region can be seen as a form of rewriting the past and, more specifically, as a form of forgetting. In his article 'Seven types of forgetting', Paul Connerton outlines several ways in which forgetting can take place in a society. One of the types he describes is 'prescriptive forgetting': a form of forgetting that is 'precipitated by an act of state [...] it is believed to be in the interests of all parties [...] [and] it can therefore be acknowledged publicly'.²⁷ The sanitation of the urban landscape and the removal of most material remnants of the presence of the mines in the region can be seen as a form of prescriptive forgetting. Both on the level of the state and the municipality, there was a sense that removing the mines from the public eye would be 'for the best'. Limburg should move on from the monoculture of the mines and their physical remains, and this past would have to be let go of for a better, brighter future.²⁸ Although there might have been a consensus on an administrative level concerning the sanitation decision, there was a shared feeling of discontent among locals. In 1969 fifty percent of the labour force of Kerkrade lost their

²⁷ Paul Connerton, 'Seven Types of Forgetting', *Memory Studies* 1.1 (2008), pp. 60-72 (p. 61).

²⁸ Van Marle, p. 29.

jobs.²⁹ It has been calculated that in total around fifty thousand mine workers ended up without employment after the mines closed.³⁰ The alternative employment that was promised could not accommodate this many ex-miners, and poverty and unemployment reigned in the region. As Leonie van Marle writes in her thesis on mining heritage in Limburg, the region 'did not only go through a depression economically, but its inhabitants felt alone and abandoned'.³¹

For people living in the mining region, the prescribed forgetting was thus accompanied by a sense of loss. As Wiel Kusters, literary scholar and the son of a miner, writes in a book on the lives of miners in Limburg:

The restructuring of the mining area, which was to open the region to a new economic future was in the experience of many far too rigorous and ruthless. Little, very little industrial heritage was preserved. Many former miners and their families felt that their 'black' existence along with the buildings and slag heaps between which their lives had taken place, had to be erased as soon as possible.³²

The forgetting thus prescribed did not cause the miners and their families to forget. The traces of the mines remained in the collective consciousness of a society that was weighed down by economic

²⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁰ See A.E.J. Van Ooijen, 'Limburg na de mijnen. Een visie op de Limburgse werkgelegenheidsproblematiek anno 1982', (Sittard, 1983) pp. 28-30, and the criticism by Van Marle, p. 34.

³¹ Van Marle, p. 33. Translated from Dutch: 'Zuid Limburg ging dus niet alleen economisch door een depressie, haar inwoners voelden zich alleen en in de steek gelaten'.

³² Wiel Kusters, *In en onder het dorp. Mijnwerkersleven in Limburg* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2012), p. 196. Translated from Dutch: 'Herstructurering van de mijnstreek, die perspectieven moest openen op een nieuwe economische toekomst, is in de ervaring van velen veel te rigouros, en nietsontziend, ter hand genomen. Er bleef maar weinig, zeer weinig, industrieel erfgoed bewaard. Veel oud-mijnwerkers en hun families hadden het gevoel dat hun 'zwarte' bestaan, samen met de gebouwen en steenberggen waarin, waartussen en waaronder hun leven zich had afgespeeld, zo snel mogelijk moest worden uitgewist'.

hardship, was ridden with individuals with occupational diseases slowly killing them, and was lacking material points of reference to explain or legitimise their experiences. The reclamation of the public space and the memorialisation of the mining past has been a slow localised development, which can be interpreted as a reaction to the prescriptive forgetting previously imposed on the community.

The resistance to this forgetting might be closely connected to the solidarity between miners, which not only provided a strong sense of identity, but also provided a platform to retain and pass on the collective memory through time. Despite the downsides of employment in a mine, including the terrible working conditions, accidents that often resulted in death, and the occupational disease of silicosis (called *stoflongen* or ‘dust lungs’ colloquially), it also instilled a sense of solidarity among miners and their families.³³ The miners worked in cramped spaces and were dependent on their ‘*koempels*’ working around them.³⁴ The camaraderie was further strengthened by the leisure activities that were largely derived from the mines. For example, soccer teams were formed, and many marching bands were connected to specific mines. After the closing of the mines, these clubs continued meeting, carrying this solidarity into the twenty-first century. A contemporary example exists in the largest soccer team in Kerkrade, Roda JC, whose fans still call themselves *koempels*, invoking the shared past of hard labour and a sense of brotherhood.³⁵

Examples of the reclamation of Kerkrade’s public space are myriad. It is not limited to the three monuments discussed here, though these can be considered hubs of ritualistic actions of memory (in the shape of tours, lectures, and memorial services). An important symbolic act of commemoration exists in the references to the mines found in street names. The names are chosen by a committee of locals, under supervision of the municipal councillors. Many street names are based on ‘acceptable’ sources such as flowers, plants, or saints, but others are

³³ Historisch Nieuwsblad, ‘Het “zwarte verleden” van Limburg’ <<http://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/artikel/6227/het-zwarte-verleden-van-limburg.html>> [accessed 21 December 2017].

³⁴ ‘*Koempel*’ or ‘*kompel*’ is a word in the Limburg dialect that means ‘buddy’ or ‘pal’. Miners were popularly known as *koempels*.

³⁵ As evident from the Roda JC fan website, called *Koempels Pleasure Dome* <<http://www.koempel.nl/>> [accessed 21 December 2017].

chosen for their meaning to the local community.³⁶ Some streets referencing the mines date back to the early twentieth century, such as the 'Hammijnstraat' (1919). In the seventies and eighties, there was a significant increase in street names connected to the mines. In 1980, the streets 'Athwerk', 'Capley', 'Finefrau', 'Grauweck', 'Hemeling', 'Sandberg', and 'Senteweck' were added, all named after coal deposits in the Domaniale and located on the former site of the mine. Several streets have a more general name such as the self-explanatory 'Domaniale Mijnstraat' (1977), or the 'Hermanstraat' (1989), named after a lignite mine which used to be nearby. Though the mines themselves might no longer be visible, the street names act as anchors for remembrance, fixing the memory of these mines into space. Additional anchors are small signposts in the landscape that signify where mine shafts used to be. Other streets bear the name of individuals related to the mines, such as the 'Büttgenbachstraat' (1985), named after Franz S.M. Büttchenbach who constructed blast furnaces in the region; and the 'Wackersstraat' (1983), named after Antoon Wackers who gained ownership of the exploitation rights to the Laura Mine in 1876. These street names are not just related to the mines, they are highly specific to the region itself, taking as their source material notables born in Kerkrade itself.

Apart from these textual references to the past, in Kerkrade there are countless artefacts merged into the cityscape that invoke the mines. One recurrent symbol is the elevator wheel. Usually placed on high buildings, the archaic elevator wheel recalls the lifts descending into the mines. A significant example of an elevator wheel can be found on the top of Kerkrade's current town hall. This modern building, one of the highest in the city centre, is part of the skyline and can be seen from afar. On the side of the building, integrated into the design of the building itself, an elevator wheel is placed (see Figure 1 in the appendix). A more elaborate example can be found near the central station, next to a busy road. On top of a tower, several metres high, two elevator wheels are placed surrounded by a metal frame. Two metal cables hang suspended from the wheels, stopping above the sidewalk (Figure 2). These constructions are part of a visual language that can be

³⁶ L. Augustus, *De straatnamen in Kerkrade. Tekst en uitleg*, (Kerkrade: Gemeente Kerkrade, 1998), p. 8. All further information on street names are taken from this book.

seen in artworks as well. Next to the Rodahal, a concert venue, an interesting artwork is placed. It consists of two triangular stone basins, filled with chunks of rock, flanked by a stone pillar (Figure 3). In the context of Kerkrade's collective memory of the mines, these rock-filled basins immediately call to mind mining carts.

Returning to Young's argument that the meaning of monuments is formed by an interaction between the monument and its audience, it becomes clear that the monumentalised public space in Kerkrade is subject to constant interplay between audience and collective memory. In a sense, these monuments are the result of the collective memory of the mines, which is fed by ex-miners who collaborate in committees and clubs to share and promote this memory. The visual language of the mines is subsequently a source for locals – even those who have no direct familial connection to the mines – to draw an origin story from. That narrative then influences how the monuments are perceived, resulting in a constant interpretation and reinterpretation of the collective's own identity and its environment. The 'grand narrative' in Kerkrade is one in which the mines are a source of pride, shaping an identity that is strongly connected to the region. Evidence that the collective memory has changed and become more aestheticised over time can be found, for example, in the fact that Schacht Nulland has a clean and freshly painted façade, rather than the soot-covered grey colour it used to have, and it has recently become a wedding location (something unthinkable thirty years ago). The memory of the mines has become 'cleaner', and the fact that monuments to the mines have become clean, neat, and aestheticised can be seen both as the source and result of this process. In this sense, the visual language connected to the mine monuments does lose some of its original significance in a similar manner to the war memorials described by Koselleck. Where war memorials slowly lose their specific political meaning and instead become more general sites for mourning, the mine monuments lose their more problematic and negative connotations as time passes. The Remembrance Chapel, however, is an interesting exception in this development.

The prescribed forgetting and sanitisation in Kerkrade was therefore unsuccessful in actually causing locals to forget or let go of their emotional connection to the mines. Instead, through local initiatives and decisions made on a municipal level, visual reminders of the mines have been increasingly added to the public space of Kerkrade since the

seventies. However, all monuments that have since been added have been stripped of their 'blackness' and dirt to some extent and, in this sense, one can argue that the sanitisation has been successful. The dangerous mines that spread coal dust over the region, with its ugly machinery and barren terrains, have made way for a green region, but one with aestheticised sites of memory.

Regional identity and exclusion

As has been identified several times through this analysis, there is a strong regional component to these 'figures of memory' in Kerkrade's public space. Not only are they based on a decidedly regional history, the monuments themselves are created by and for a local public. The majority of this paper has attempted to describe how these monuments figure in the dominant collective memory in Kerkrade. To conclude, I would like to reflect on this regional characteristic in the light of Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

Many of the prominent monuments such as Schacht Nulland and D'r Joep are in highly visible public places, giving the impression that they are accessible. However, if the monuments are seen as heterotopias, 'a kind of effectively enacted utopia' which at once refer and contest other sites within the urban landscape, they also include a 'system of opening and closing'.³⁷ The monumentalised landscape in Kerkrade subtly excludes non-locals from easily reading its meaning, foreclosing interpretations that do not fit the master narrative. The memories embedded in the monuments cannot be read by outsiders without 'translation' from locals. Schacht Nulland, for example, is only open for visitors accompanied by a tour guide. D'r Joep, though it can be 'seen' by everyone, is closed off in meaning by its lack of inscription. The statue itself bears no plaque or explanation. Again, the memory of the mines and the role of the statue can only be accessed through mediation of those 'in the know', the locals. The Remembrance Chapel is an exception to this and, rather than using the local visual language, this memorial uses the commemorative language of war memorials. Its wall, with a list of names that represent lives that have been lost, will seem familiar to everyone who has some familiarity with war memorials. Additionally, it is the only monument that has signs

³⁷ Foucault., pp. 24, 26.

providing information, not only in Dutch but also in German and English. One can question who exactly the Remembrance Chapel is for – is it part of the reclamation of the public space and the expression of identity through memory, or is it somehow different? It seems as if the intended audience of the Remembrance Chapel is not that of Schacht Nulland, D'r Joep, the street names or the elevator wheels. Unlike the Chapel, none of these needed authorial text to be 'legible'. The Chapel, on the other hand, seems to be created for an outside public, connected to the larger genre of remembrance monuments.

Quoted in the beginning of this paper, Le Goff presents collective memory as a struggle between dominated and dominating factions, based on the underlying assumption that those who are in power have control over what is remembered collectively. Other authors, such as Michael Rothberg, have challenged this all-or-nothing approach to memory. Rothberg argues for a conceptualisation of memory as 'multidirectional': 'as subject to on-going negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative'.³⁸ The strength of Rothberg's argument lies in the fact that it reminds us that collective memories are not formed in a cultural void. Oppositional memories within a society are influenced by each other and exactly how 'fluid' these memories are is still open for debate. In the case of Kerkrade, the public space is dominated by a local collective memory that provides a grounding, a 'fixed point' for identity, pride, and solidarity for its society. Its sites of memory are opaque and closed off for outsiders, unless mediated by locals, which puts the locals in the powerful position of controlling knowledge. Taking Rothberg into account, Kerkrade's dominant collective memory is also subject to negotiations and changes: the prescribed forgetting, which can be seen as an antithetical memory, was a large factor in the formation of the dominant narrative.

³⁸ Michael Rothberg, 'Introduction: Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transnational Age', in *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-29 (p. 3).

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Appendix: Figures (All photos are taken by Celine Frohn)



Fig. 1. The elevator wheel atop the town hall in Kerkade.



Fig. 2. The elevator wheel along the Stationsstraat.



Fig. 3. The artwork next to the Rodahal.

The City and The Self: Intertextuality, Masculine Identity and Images of Postmodernity in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and Michael Mann's *Heat* (1995)

Gemma Ballard

The cinematic city is often depicted as a space of both freedom and oppression. It has sustained its own purgatorial nature and identity, moving and transforming alongside an ever changing spectatorship. In classical Hollywood, particularly as a trope of the popular musical, the family drama or, in some cases, the western, the city acts as the thematic antithesis of the grand, traditional and nostalgic American landscape. Throughout this golden era of Hollywood film production, the urban cinematic vista was designed to encapsulate all that was modern, new and enticingly different – a functional space and/or concept that aimed to sustain and stimulate a progressive society. As Michael Webb observes, the city in classical Hollywood is presented as a ‘fusion of artifice and naturalism [...] a wondering look at a clean and unthreatening [space]’, which demonstrates how the cityscape was slowly manifested as an idealistic construct, partially influenced and guided by the commercial aesthetic of the studio system.¹ The extent to which this setting was ‘real’ therefore, or a true and authentic reflection of the American urban environment, remains somewhat ambiguous. The ‘reel’ city was enticing, intriguing and cinematically spectacular, but above all else, it was a construction.

This is not to say, however, that the city was to be favoured over ‘small town’ America, on and off the cinema screen. Edward Recchia argues that classical Hollywood works to establish the American Midwest as a quintessentially sentimental and wistful space that is

¹ Michael Webb, ‘The City in Film’, *Design Quarterly*, 137 (1987), pp. 1-33 (p. 4).

representative of traditional values.² Emphatic messages about the importance of home, family and sanctuary became integral to character trajectory and the overall narrative arc of such films, particularly throughout the war period. So while the city remains a place to be briefly visited, experienced and enjoyed, one must inevitably realise that, as part of the classical Hollywood paradigm, there really is no place like 'home'. As Richard Maltby summarises, Hollywood 'remains a social institution', and must therefore endeavour to make some point of contact with any ideological views, attitudes or movements of a seemingly dominant social consciousness.³ By the 1960s and 1970s, there was a notable shift in how the urban landscape was represented, read and received, most likely facilitated by a changing social climate. Arguably, the presentation of the city as a complex and heteroglossic space was only fully recognised and narratively implemented in more contemporary Hollywood fare, when the studio system eventually collapsed and with it, the fondness and desire for an American past both inside and outside the film industry. As a result, the cinematic city functioned in an entirely different way – it no longer *looked* the same, *sounded* the same, or *felt* the same (though it still existed as a construction and/or concept). Alongside this change was the introduction of an ostensibly new and refreshed style of film making, which mainly involved directors that aimed to defamiliarise, destabilise and challenge the long established conventions inaugurated by classical Hollywood film making, both as a practice and as a culturally governing institution. As a result, popular film no longer followed a strictly hegemonic discourse – it varied from director to director. There was no longer the responsibility and obligation to fulfil the stylistic and financial requirements of the studios, which essentially allowed for more creative freedom and expression. As Geoff King summarises, the films of New Hollywood and many subsequent to this period 'go beyond the confines of conventional studio fare in terms of their content

² Edward Recchia, 'There's no Place like Home: The Midwest in American Film Musicals', *The Midwest Quarterly*, 2. 2 (1998), pp. 202-214 (pp.2 02-205).

³ Richard Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 268.

and style', and this largely includes a re-energised approach to the articulation of film space.⁴

The 'post' classical city: reconsidering the rules of cinematic urban space

Both Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and Michael Mann's *Heat* (1995) are texts that offer a significant interrogation of this 'new' city.⁵ Despite being vastly different in tone and style, both films endeavour to draw attention to the tenuous relationship between identity and the engagement with, or understanding of, urban space as purely celluloid. *Taxi Driver* is clearly indicative of a 'New Hollywood' agenda, as it is a radically postmodern text (in the sense that it seeks to both reference and subvert paradigmatic modes of storytelling), as well as a narrative that questions the fundamentals of postmodernity as a present condition (by representing the city as a repository of familiar texts, ideas and ideologies). From the opening sequence, the manner in which New York City is presented defies all representational norms and acts as a defamiliarising culmination of different genres, film styles and cinematic identities. This introduction works to not simply defy audience expectation, it seeks to eradicate it altogether. As Martin Weinreich observes, the city in *Taxi Driver* is 'not idyllic', it is a place 'dominated by unrest, dirt and suffering [...] [and] by a disintegrating culture'.⁶ One might therefore argue that there is a clear conflation of separate gazes occurring here, as the sinister, almost monstrous, presentation of the cityscape is synonymous with the cynical eye of Travis Bickle, a character with whom reality has separated. His relationship with the concept of 'lived', authentic and functional urban space is entirely non-existent, and is instead replaced by a counter-cultural, hyperbolic and intensely postmodern understanding of, and

⁴ Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 13.

⁵ *Taxi Driver*, dir. by Martin Scorsese (Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1976)[on DVD]; *Heat*, dir. by Michael Mann (Warner Brothers, 1995)[on DVD].

⁶ Martin Weinreich, 'The Urban Inferno: On the Aesthetics of Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*', *P.O.V. A Danish Journal In Film Studies*, 6 (1998), pp. 91-107 (pp. 91-95).

interaction with, the city environment. This also fosters an equally postmodern impression of the city within the spectator too.

The character's subjective vision is paralleled by the stylistic presentation of *Taxi Driver's* abstract cityscape. The streets appear ominous with smoke, highly saturated and perpetually spectacularised by a luminescence and vibrancy that in no way resembles a naturalistic landscape. This is a modern city that can perhaps be described as 'anti-Hollywood'; a dystopian space that may only be discovered by the independent ventures of a lone taxi driver. There is no sense of the 'collective' here, only an acutely idiosyncratic and isolated impression of the urban vista. Throughout this sequence, there are several extreme close ups of Bickle's eyes, making it clear that this specific version of New York is largely a product of his calculating and corrupted stare, as well as a dramatic projection of the character's complex interiority. As a consequence, the tension between outer objectivity and inner subjectivity is heightened, given that our perception of the city, alongside our impression of other characters, is almost entirely determined by Bickle's gaze. Thus, he becomes the primary authorial and/or omniscient narrator on whom the spectator must rely to navigate the story world. Nevertheless, this dependent relationship between spectator and protagonist is fairly dangerous when considering how unpredictable and psychologically inconsistent the character is, and presents a vast divergence from the classical Hollywood form, in which a film usually endeavours to establish its own objectivity in order to fulfill the conventional expectations of a dominant audience viewership.

It is certainly possible that the opening of *Taxi Driver* aims to position the spectator in a space of the unknown by introducing an urban world that is not easily defined, immediately accessible or, on several different occasions, remotely recognisable. A level of genre hybridity and manipulation is apparent from the opening moments, and this may be considered to be a constitutive element of the contemporary postmodern film. As Cristina Degli-Esposti maintains, 'Intertextual and hypertextual travels [...] are typical features of any postmodern text [because] they base their very existence on repetition with difference, on recycling the past via the rereading of every story and every

meaning'.⁷ The darkened and mysterious presentation of the city in *Taxi Driver* is reminiscent of familiar noir iconography (especially when accompanied by the slow paced, jazz-inspired instrumental), and the heightened level of darkness, both stylistically and narratively, is primarily used to obscure the many facets of the city space. At the same time, however, it can be argued that these first few minutes are not entirely unlike the opening of a horror film. There is little information provided before Bickle's narration begins and one feels isolated as a consequence, overwhelmed by the creeping sense of the unknown. This immediate establishment of intertextuality, which is sustained throughout the film's entirety, is indicative of 'New' Hollywood technique and postmodern experimentation. As John Thurman observes, *Taxi Driver*, like many other Scorsese films, is 'rife with instances of allusion', and, rather than endeavouring to completely *reconstruct* genre, is instead *combining* preexisting genres of the classical era in order to make something that, whilst familiar, appears cinematically unique and contemporary.⁸

In Mann's *Heat*, however, the city is constructed as an entirely mappable space, equally and disconcertingly desirable and threatening in a manner completely different to the urban streets of *Taxi Driver*. While the two spaces fostered in these films may appear arbitrary or superficially unconnected (one is set in New York, the other L.A.), both texts endeavour to explore the interdependence between the postmodern condition, masculine identity and the impressionable and hyperbolic nature of the metropolis – though *Heat* arguably does this in a much more accessible and generic way. The film glides from space to space, transporting both the characters and the spectator through a multifaceted urban landscape, from the docks to the diner, and finally to the airport – a space that quite literally exists on the fringes of freedom. Despite the dangers, the city seems to represent a form of

⁷ Crisitina Degli-Esposti, 'Introduction: Postmodernism(s)', in *Postmodernism in the Cinema*, ed. by Crisitina Degli-Esposti (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), pp. 3-18 (p. 7).

⁸ John Thurman, 'Citizen Bickle or the Allusive Taxi Driver: Uses of Intertextuality', *Senses of Cinema: An Online Journal Devoted to the Serious and Eclectic Discussion of Cinema*, 37 (2005), n. pag. <http://sensesofcinema.com/2005/american-cinema-the-1970s/taxi_driver/> [accessed 12 April 2018].

escape for the characters, whereby action, interaction and excitement can fully and finally unfold. This is primarily captured by the overall 'appearance' of the film, largely a result of seamless cinematography, smooth transitions and continuity editing. Indeed, most of the film is captured under a muted blue hue that encapsulates an excessively urbanised and contemporary cityscape. Everything appears steely, smooth and sleek, and the characters seem inextricably bound to this hyperreal environment. The city not only surrounds them, it is embodied by them, born from the modern suits they wear, permeating the stilted language they speak, and informing the roles they have seemingly created for themselves. Thus, the city helps to construct, sustain and heighten the 'image', as well as the many identities contained within it.

Like *Taxi Driver*, however, the extent to which these constructed urban spaces remain an authentic and true reflection of reality is perhaps less easily determined, and it is reasonable to conclude that they are no truer nor more authentic than the previous ventures of classical Hollywood. Even though the cityscape of *Heat* appears a degree more recognisable and fluid than that of *Taxi Driver*, it remains a fundamental *construction*. As Nezar Alsayyad observes, 'the links between the 'real' city and the 'reel' city are indirect and complex' as 'film is always selective and partial', and this partiality can be informed by preexisting and prevailing ideologies or collective attitudes.⁹ The simultaneously sleek and gritty presentation of the city is hyperbolic in nature, and suggests that the film is playing with several layers of authenticity, postmodernity and self-reflexivity. Such a construction is not born from a wholly original place or idea, it has been influenced by several other texts, which draws appropriate attention to Stefan L. Brandt's argument that '[t]he urban space in postmodern films is constructed as a hybridised field', or an aesthetically unique and defamiliarised combination of that which already exists.¹⁰ All of which

⁹ Nezar Alsayyad, 'The Cinematic City: Between Modernist Utopia and Postmodernist Utopia', *Built Environment*, 26 (2000), pp. 268-281 (pp. 268-269).

¹⁰ Stefan L. Brandt, 'The City as Liminal Space: Urban Visuality and Aesthetic Experience in Postmodern U.S. Literature and Cinema', *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, 54 (2009), pp. 553-581 (p. 574).

demonstrates the principle conditions of postmodernity – cultural reproduction and a resounding sense of intertextuality.

Textual identities: questioning the actuality and authenticity of the urban ‘self’

In perhaps the most pivotal moment of *Heat*, Al Pacino asks, ‘Did you ever want a regular type life?’, to which Robert De Niro emphatically replies, ‘What the fuck’s that? Barbecues and ball games?’. A certain amount of disillusionment and contempt arise from the alliterative utterance, suggesting that both characters are to some extent aware of their own existential predicament. This scene acts as a direct engagement with the increasingly postmodern condition of contemporary society and closely reflects Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulation and simulacra.¹¹ By referring to ‘barbecues and ball games’, De Niro’s character is drawing attention to the inescapable presence of consumer and capitalist culture, and how this idealistic and utopian image of domesticity has somehow become the ultimate ideological aspiration - an entirely constructed image by which a ‘regular type’ life is ultimately measured. As a consequence, this demonstrates how the image, or language itself, has gradually replaced the ‘real’, so much so that reality has ceased to exist in the modern world. Indeed, as Norman K. Denzin summarises, ‘[t]he Sign has become reality, or the hyperreal [...] the sign, that is, masks the fact that there is no basic reality’.¹² This suggests that the authentic ‘self’ simply cannot exist, and one’s identity is entirely determined by the prevailing culture and surrounding images that constantly pervade contemporary society. The ‘self’ is merely a manifestation of these images that encompass us, and this pivotal exchange between the two characters in *Heat* perhaps demonstrates the desire to not simply break away from this ideology, but also locate the ‘real’, despite it being a place and/or object that can never be fully reached, recognised or identified.

¹¹ Jean Baudrillard, ‘Simulacra and Simulations’ in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 365-367.

¹² Norman K. Denzin, *Images of Postmodern Society: Social Theory and Contemporary Cinema* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 7.

One might even argue that any semblance of what is truly 'real' for these characters is only achieved when they are interacting with one another, particularly for Pacino's Lt. Hanna, who has become disenchanted with the monotony of his regular, married life. His escape from social hegemony, alongside his ability to step outside of his performative role as husband, is provided by both the freedom of the city space and the promise of an encounter with De Niro's culturally transgressive character. There is a perverse connection and a mutual admiration between these two characters, and one might reason that this is perhaps indicative of the film's construction of masculine relations as an inherently homosocialised form, which is a trope of the 'double protagonist' movie, as David Greven argues.¹³ This is where each male protagonist mirrors the other and, as Greven continues, 'compete[s] over narrative power'.¹⁴ Throughout the discussion in the diner, this mirroring is captured largely by the way in which the scene is shot, as the fluid shot/reverse shot technique, whilst not stylistically adventurous, works to establish a visual paralleling between the two characters, and an oral sparring match eventually ensues. Ultimately however, this acute focus on the interdependency between male characters results in the mobilisation of the 'tensions inherent in a homosocialised and homosocialising society'.¹⁵ All of which demonstrates how Mann's film explores the correlation between postmodernity and a masculinity in crisis, or a conflict between masculinity and ideology. Indeed, the frailty and vulnerability of modern identity is regularly addressed throughout *Heat*, as an aspect of postmodernity that is unavoidably forced upon the self, as opposed to something that is independently or willfully created. More so than any other of Mann's films, *Heat* explores the tension between 'the personal and the communal, the active/performative identity and the passive/acculturated persona', as Jonathan Rayner summarises.¹⁶ This concept can similarly be applied to *Taxi Driver*, as Travis Bickle's masculinity is equally frustrated by the inescapable presence of

¹³ David Greven, 'Contemporary Hollywood Masculinity and the Double Protagonist Film', *Cinema Journal*, 48 (2009), pp. 22-43.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁶ Jonathan Rayner, *The Cinema of Michael Mann: Vice and Vindication* (London: Wallflower Press, 2013), p. 71.

postmodernity. Unlike the male characters in *Heat* however, Bickle is presented as an intensely hyperbolic and hyperreal being who, in an attempt to break free from one kind of prevailing ideology, succeeds only in joining another. The paradoxical nature of the postmodern condition, as a self-perpetuating cycle of simulation and performance, is effectively mediated through the unstable psyche of the character. The scene in which Bickle confronts his reflection in the mirror is indicative of this. He is essentially interacting with, and searching for, a different 'self', contemplating an alternative version of cultural masculinity that has similarly been constructed by the postmodern image. Travis Bickle's apparent willfulness and determination to construct a self, alongside his need to change and create a city that befits the idealistic portrait in his own imagination, may be regarded as the ultimate exercise in control, when in fact, it actually shows his complete lack of it.

The film attempts to not simply explore what constitutes masculinity, it also questions whether it is possible for such a thing to even exist in the postmodern age. Indeed, as Barbara Mortimer observes, '[t]hrough the protagonist's efforts to fashion a self, [*Taxi Driver*] ultimately posits postmodern subjectivity as a crisis of masculinity', and 'identity' therefore, becomes no more than an impersonation.¹⁷ This further complicates the authenticity of the character and the diegetic world on screen, which is arguably the pivotal postmodern message that *Taxi Driver* endeavours to communicate. If the character with whom the spectator is persuaded to align alongside is nothing more than a culmination of images and cultural layers, then the world in which this character exists is equally inauthentic. Furthermore, there is the persistent sense that Bickle is contented with his innate performativity – he is somehow gratified by the 'self-righteous' role that he has created for himself. While this may further his unreliability as a narrator, the determined manner with which he conducts his actions, particularly when young girl Iris arrives on the scene, leaves us in little doubt of his true intentions, regardless of their culturally reproductive nature. Thus, the spectator is persuaded to willingly invest in the hyperreal and postmodern world of *Taxi Driver* and its protagonist. Consciously or not,

¹⁷ Barbara Mortimer, 'Portraits of the Postmodern Person in *Taxi Driver*, Raging Bull and the King of Comedy', *Journal of Film and Video*, 49 (1997), pp. 28-38 (p. 28).

we assimilate ourselves within the culture and urban streets of New York City, gradually channeling the gaze of Travis Bickle with little questioning or trepidation. As Leo Braudy summarises, 'Scorsese places his characters at the centre of his films, and the look of the film radiates out from them, just as their moral conceptions of reality and their self-constructions comes from the films they have already seen'.¹⁸ Thus, *everything* is centred around, and determined by, the character – a single, yet entirely necessary, mode of authority that simultaneously recreates and enforces pre-existing ideologies, cultures and 'realities'.

Therefore, alongside this exploration of masculinity (or lack of it), is a reconsideration of the primary function of the male protagonist within film narrative. Travis Bickle acts as a singular point of connection and identification for the spectator, regardless of his apparent unreliability as both a storyteller and as our principal navigator through the filmic world. As Andrew J. Swenson summarises, this narrative instability reflects a level of cinematic modernism that ultimately results in a reevaluation of the archetypal, 'triumphant' male, mainly by depicting 'a persona [that] is alternately a variation, a corruption, and an inversion of the idea of the hero'.¹⁹ This is yet another example of how the film deconstructs the classical Hollywood form, particularly in its exploration of gender roles in relation to the often restrictive boundaries created by genre. Bickle wants to somehow restore and 'save' the urban American environment, and in doing so reestablish a social and moral equilibrium. This premise is familiar to the classical western narrative, in which the lone ranger, with a burdening but innate sense of righteousness, seeks to 'cleanse' the great American landscape by eradicating any force that can be viewed, physically or symbolically, as non-American. For Bickle, New York city *is* this landscape, and has deteriorated into a space that, for him at least, is entirely un-American. His scathing and condemnatory monologues are indicative of this. Therefore he takes it upon himself to become the individual saviour, and reestablish New York City as a space befitting of his traditional and idealistic expectations, to such an extent that he 'enacts a story of

¹⁸ Leo Braudy, 'The Sacraments of Genre: Coppola, DePalma, Scorsese', *Film Quarterly*, 39 (1986), pp. 17-28 (p. 25).

¹⁹ Andrew J. Swenson, 'The Anguish of God's Lonely Men: Dostoevsky's Underground Man and Scorsese's Travis Bickle', *Resurgence: Essays on Values in Literature*, 53 (2001), pp. 267-286 (p. 267).

American heroism', as David Kelly observes.²⁰ As a result, one might consider *Taxi Driver* a return to classical narrative, both thematically and ideologically. However, by effectively communicating these ideas through a character that remains psychologically unstable and increasingly postmodern, the film continues to undermine this prevalent Hollywood discourse, and in doing so reveals the problematic nature of the narrative and symbolic hegemony of the golden era. As David Kelly continues, while Bickle's actions may be informed by 'heroic' intentions, they function as 'an inquiry into the actuality of such traits...and the dissonance between actuality and perception'.²¹ His relationship with Iris is illustrative of this, as while for her own sake he attempts to 'save' her, Bickle can only do so under his own increasingly violent terms – methods that he perceives as entirely justified and necessary.

During his first encounter with Iris, he explains how a 'girl should live at home', be 'dressed up' and 'going to school'. This, of course, is a specific and idealistic image of femininity that Bickle is referring to, and has most likely been influenced by his recent infatuation with the 'pure' Betsy, a self-sufficient and accomplished manager of Senator Pallantine's campaign. The film gives us two polarising examples of the female 'character', but both women, similarly to Bickle, are riddled with inauthenticity. They act has simulations, or as feminine caricatures purposefully designed to reflect, and react against, the unstable taxi driver's spiralling mode of thought. Furthermore, they also work to change the spectator's own opinion of Bickle. His failure to succeed in his relationship with Betsy makes him appear pitiful, but this is immediately counteracted by his determination to save Iris, thus transforming him into a somewhat redeemable, and perhaps even admirable, figure. One might argue that the film never really makes it clear how one is supposed to *feel* about the 'protagonist', regardless of how extreme his endeavours and beliefs appear. Contrary to classical film making, *Taxi Driver* occasionally positions the audience in a rather uneasy place, a place absent of objective authority and awareness. Essentially, Bickle is constructed as a being that exists in isolation, detached from the rest of society, from us, and from the film itself. This

²⁰ David Kelly, 'Model Citizens: The Irish Films of Martin Scorsese', *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 26 (2007), pp. 1-16 (p. 3).

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

isolation is most effectively communicated through the camera work, as Bickle rarely appears 'centred' or part of the frame. His isolation is fully realised throughout the final phone conversation with Betsy, during which the camera eventually pans away, revealing a long and empty corridor. We can hear Travis, but no longer can we see him. The only option left is to return to the dark New York Streets, and once again enter the claustrophobic confines of the taxi. At this point, Bickle compromises the very structure of the film itself, as it appears as though the postmodern text can no longer accommodate the increasingly hyperreal character. Thus, he remains fundamentally out of sync, never quite matching the pace, narrative and tone of the film. This is not an arbitrary decision however, as it works to effectively demonstrate the growing unreliability of the character, and in doing so reveals the equally inconstant and questionable nature of the world in which he exists. What is perhaps more disconcerting however, is the film's increasingly ambivalent attitude towards violent actions, and how this raises the uncomfortable question of whether Travis Bickle, whilst clearly a character that is deluded and psychologically incoherent, is a figure that remains in the 'right' because he has in no way compromised with, or surrendered to, the prevailing system - he has, in fact, created his own. Despite the violence, we are persuaded, to a certain extent, to willfully accept Bickle's erratic attitudes and actions. By demonstrating this 'perversion of ideals and of an idealistically motivated character', as Andrew J. Swenson maintains, the film is constructing Bickle not as a hero, but as the ultimate 'anti-hero'.²² This shows the extent to which the film's stylistic and ideological heteroglossia inaugurates multiple layers of ambiguity and ambivalence, resulting in a diegetic world that is both familiar and unfamiliar, at times coherent and at others wildly unpredictable. Ultimately therefore, *Taxi Driver* occupies a rather obscure space in New Hollywood, as it simultaneously applauds and rejects traditional modes of filmmaking and ideology.

²² Swenson, p. 268.

Locating the old within the new: the stylistic hybridisation of contemporary film narrative

Unlike Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, the notion of communicative multiplicity cannot, perhaps, be so readily applied to *Heat*. Mann's film is arguably a much more conventional text, particularly in terms of narrative style. Despite its release within a transient, post-New Hollywood era, *Heat* presents a return to the classical modes of filmmaking as well as reinstates the narrative expectations that are most often provided by genre. Like other commercial successes of the late 1980s/early 1990s, such as *Speed* (1994) or the *Die Hard* series (1988), *Heat* also acts as an efficient, genre-driven, action film.²³ It reestablishes the familiar tropes and expectations surrounding character and narrative. As Jonathan Rayner observes, 'Mann's explorations of crime on film and television show the influence of classical narrative and its ideology in their stories of crime and punishment'.²⁴ No matter how much the film persuades us to invest in, align alongside, and maybe even have sympathy for the criminal, McCauley's death acts as the ultimate reinforcement of the traditional trope within the crime narrative – simply that 'good' must, and will, triumph over 'evil'. In addition to this, the conclusion works to obscure the potentially provocative issues raised earlier in the film, as well as reinforce the image of a morally, socially and ideologically 'coherent' American landscape. Essentially, Neil McCauley functions as a transgressive figure that disturbs social order and hierarchy. His death, therefore, is inevitable, obligatory and, most importantly, reminiscent of the old Hollywood paradigm.

There are clear 'roles' that are assigned to each character, and their own individual narratives are dependent upon these classical frameworks. As a result, the conclusion of the film sees equilibrium once again restored, allowing each character to return to their 'rightful' place within society, regardless of how undesirable and ideologically homogenised this place may seem. Therefore, all of the issues that are addressed and established throughout the film are never fully realised or remaining by the conclusion, most likely as a result of Hollywood's

²³ *Die Hard*, dir. by John McTiernan (USA: Twentieth Century Fox, 1988)[on DVD]; *Speed*, dir. by Jan De Bont (USA: Twentieth Century Fox, 1994)[on DVD].

²⁴ Rayner, p. 9.

conscience liberalism, in which any political and/or social engagement is inevitably 'mediated by systems of convention', as Richard Maltby observes.²⁵ Indeed, while *Heat's* exploration of masculinity, homosocialised relations, contemporary American society and postmodernity are evident and sustained throughout the narrative, the manner in which they are delivered to us somehow acts as a process of mitigation. Neither the narrative, the characters nor the story world fully commit to one kind of ideology. They instead falter between different ideas and attitudes before finally settling on tradition and classicism. This demonstrates, as Luis Garcia Mainar observes, a 'troubled relation to the values of modernity', and perhaps articulates the liminal spaces between postmodern identity, desire and habitual responsibility.²⁶ Though at times it comes incredibly close, *Heat* never quite breaks away from the boundaries of capitalist Hollywood, or 'mainstream' cinema, not, at least, in the same experimental way that *Taxi Driver* does (though it might be argued that this text is still heavily mythologised).

It might, however, be too premature to argue that *Heat* is solely conventional in its entirety. While it does appear to follow a familiar, causal and ordered narrative, it can be argued that, similarly to *Taxi Driver*, the film does explore a level of intertextuality and hybridity. This works to occasionally complicate the classical persuasion and ideological coherence of the film, particularly when the narrative begins to enter the realms of film noir, a genre that, even in its classical infancy, seemed to inaugurate an ideological ambivalence and deconstruct representational homogeneity. Film noir, as a key generic strand of the popular crime narrative, establishes a darkened and gritty realism that, at the same time, appears seductive and thrilling for both the characters and the cinematic spectator. As Luis Mainar continues, '*Heat* introduces a fundamental theme of film noir: the danger implicit in forging attachments to other people', and there is, of course, an excitement born from such danger – an inevitable thrill created by exploring the forbidden.²⁷ Mainar's observation needn't be applicable

²⁵ Maltby, p. 269.

²⁶ Luis M. Garcia Mainar, 'Generic Hybridity, Style and Film Noir in Michael Mann's *Heat*', *BELLS: Barcelona English Language and Literature Studies*, 17 (2008), pp. 1-12 (p. 5).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

to character alone, it can also occur *outside* of the film world, separate from the diegesis and within the spectator. Just as the 'attachment' between Lt. Hanna and criminal Neil McCauley seems to grow, so does our own interest and curiosity for the characters, their endeavours and their emotional trajectory. Thus, we invest to the point of no return, becoming further entwined with the story unfolding on screen (which, as a reader-response act, alludes to a classical 'Hollywood' effect).

Ultimately, this is the 'danger' that Mainar is referring to, and perhaps the very same danger that the film intentionally complicates and persistently targets as a primary narrative question and/or enigma. This somewhat undermines the seemingly conventional ending, to such an extent that one might surmise that the death of Neil McCauley isn't 'conventional' at all. It may instead act as a moment of reawakening for both Lt. Hanna and the spectator. By shooting McCauley, Lt. Hanna is directly confronting his mirrored self, a transgressive double that must cease to exist in order for Hanna to accept, and return to, the role that society has bestowed upon him, as well as the fundamental ideology that this role manifests. This transition is certainly not an easy one, as is evident by the prolonged close up of Hanna's dispirited expression, followed by the poignant manner with which he takes McCauley's hand, a character that, even in death, proclaims he's 'never going back'. For Lt. Hanna, there is an inevitable loss occurring in this moment - the loss of a potential self, a potential life and a potential freedom. Thus he realises that, unlike his criminal counterpart McCauley, he must, and will, 'go back'. As Cristina Degli-Esposti maintains, 'The desire to digress is what fuels the very existence of the postmodern hypertext',²⁸ and while Lt. Hanna certainly feels this desire, he knows that, ultimately, he can neither savour it nor act on it.

This conclusion, in a highly self-aware manner, is abruptly removing both us and the character from the seductively dramatic and sentimental space that the film itself has persuaded us to create. It acts as a sudden exit from the story world, as well as a swift transition from one 'reality' to another. Thus, *Heat* is using the integral noir trope as a means of exploring and exploiting the spectator's preconditioned mode of thought in relation to narrative and character – thoughts that have, whether consciously or not, been moulded and determined by the concretised frameworks and generic norms ostensibly associated with

²⁸ Degli-Esposti, p. 7.

traditional storytelling and, perhaps, the commercialised ventures of studio-era Hollywood. Therefore, one might reason that this is the stylistic agenda of mainstream postmodern cinema, to take what constitutes 'mainstream' and transform it into something else entirely. Essentially, McCauley's death functions as a stark return to the periphery, a space which exists outside of the highly constructed, inauthentic and formulaic centre of the film world. While *Taxi Driver* completely detaches itself from this 'centre', *Heat* uses it as a means of acute postmodern exploration, creating a dual focus narrative that both applauds and defamiliarises the intrinsic conventionality of classical narratives and their audiences. Here, the film is not only dissecting the obligatory elements of genre and classical discourse, it is scrutinising the extent to which these elements have influenced and defined contemporary cinematic culture and identity.

By comparison, the conclusion of *Taxi Driver*, which sees Bickle change his physical appearance and initiate his own dramatic shoot-out, demonstrates the extent to which an adopted character can be a completely consuming force, overwhelming any semblance of authentic identity. Bickle is surrendering, whether intentionally or not, to his spiralling postmodern existence. Throughout these final stages of the film, he has ventured too far into the persona he has created, to the point of no return, quite literally re-enacting his own personal narrative of vengeance, redemption and heroism. There are multiple layers of different cultural and filmic texts overlapping in this moment, demonstrating an excessively hybridised space that effectively articulates the character's equally hybridised psyche. Indeed, by considering the state of Bickle's mind by this point, it would not be completely fruitless to question the actuality of the scene itself. The reality of the situation is perhaps left to the spectator's own discretion, as it is entirely possible that this grand finale is merely a product of Bickle's imagination. However, whether this discovery is narratively important or not is perhaps irrelevant, as it only serves to add to the overall ambiguity of *Taxi Driver*, as well as cement its position within the frameworks of the 'New Hollywood' era by openly contesting the fundamental expectations of a generic viewership. An inconclusive narrative that refuses to establish any level of equilibrium and perpetuates the enigmas previously raised within the story is a typical feature of the 'new' text, as it refuses to acknowledge the two things that the spectator is most expecting and desiring – knowledge and closure.

Similarly to *Heat*, the conclusion of *Taxi Driver* plays with its audience, deliberately undermining not simply narrative expectation, but also unravelling all that has been established up until this point. Just when we begin to finally form a coherent picture of Bickle, his belief system and the very specific version of the city in which he lives, the film actively rids us of this self-constructed foundation.

In conclusion, *Heat* and *Taxi Driver*, whilst radically different in appearance, aesthetic style and narrative, both appear to explore a synergetic dialogue between the self and the contemporary urban environment. The city is absolutely paramount to this investigation, as it is a space that represents, physically and symbolically, the pinnacle of postmodern existence and modern identity. These films simply wouldn't work if they were set elsewhere, because the cityscape is tantamount to the cultural construction of the characters. As Stefan L. Brandt observes, '[t]he individuals in postmodern urban [texts] seem literally invaded by the noise of the city (and of postmodern consumer culture, in general)'.²⁹ Therefore, postmodern characters such as Travis Bickle, Lt. Hanna and Neil McCauley do not simply exist *within* the city. To a certain extent, they *are* the city – hyperreal, culturally reproductive beings that function as a direct reflection of their surroundings. Indeed, both films concern themselves with the often tenuous notion of identity in the modern age - existential tragedies that ask *what* we are, *who* we are and, perhaps more importantly, *why* we are. Ultimately however, the indefinite and complex nature of postmodernity means that these questions will inevitably remain unanswered.

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To Liberate and Lament: The Duality of Digital Culture and Chechnya's Concentration Camps for Russian LGBT Citizens

Oliver Portillo

The twenty-first century bears witness to a ubiquitous culture that now connects more people together than singular religions do: digital culture.¹ Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook serve as outlets for connectivity, expression, and liberation for those who are oppressed or marginalised, both locally and globally. Furthermore, digital platforms and devices permit individuals to be accessed instantaneously, at the touch of a button, or simply through their own voice recognition. Whilst digitalisation has influenced a rise in innovative sources of connectivity and accessibility, it is treacherous at the same time. This essay will argue that digital culture should be articulated as a 'duality', by illustrating that digitalisation is both liberating, and damaging. The focus will be turned to the LGBT community - who are, as I will argue, greatly exposed to this duality because of their identities - by exploring the duality of digital culture in light of the current abhorrent situation in Chechnya, Russia. In Chechnya, concentration camps have been found to be "purging" men who are suspected of a bisexual or homosexual identity. For the theoretical purposes of this essay, I will utilise the works of modern digital theorists such as Ellis Hanson and Jody Ahlm, in conjunction

¹ Christianity is the world's largest religious group. According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, in 2010 there were '18 billion Christians of all ages living in the world' (Mary Fairchild, 'How Many Christians Are In the World Today?: Essential Stats and Facts About Christianity Today', *ThoughtCo*, 19 Dec. 2017, n. pag. <<https://www.thoughtco.com/christianity-statistics-700533>> [accessed 2 January 2018]). Whereas, by contrast, more 'than 3 billion people are now using the Internet, according to the United Nations agency that oversees international communications' (Jacob Davidson, 'Here's How Many Internet Users There Are', *Time*, 26 May 2015, n. pag. <<http://time.com/money/3896219/internet-users-worldwide/>> [accessed 2 January 2018]).

with seminal theorists such as Michel Foucault and his foregrounding *The History of Sexuality* (1984) and *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Although a mixture of theories, I propose that an overlap of these theoretical positions is required to properly elucidate the duality of digital culture in light of such a case as Chechnya. The combination of Hanson and Foucault in particular will enable me to trace how the advancement of digital culture has had a twofold impact on sexuality and sexual identities — liberation and oppression — and I will therefore place emphasis on their focus of sexuality in particular. As *The History of Sexuality* traces the emergence of sexuality and sexual identities in discourses, and *Discipline and Punish* examines the cultural shifts of how incarceration has been assisted by gradations of power and the body, Foucault's work combines to serve as a pertinent theoretical lens for the barbaric imprisonment of Chechen gay men. Alongside these theorists, I will employ excerpts from contemporary and reputable news articles in order to both support and contextualise the essay with current factual details of the Chechen crisis, and foreground the contemporaneous issues created by the duality of digital culture. Given the turbulence and enormity of the issue in Chechnya, my angle of digitalisation will serve as a contained gateway into shining a light on how digital platforms have both increased victims, whilst globally exposing Chechnya's barbarity towards its LGBT citizens.

First, before exploring the ways in which digital culture plays a dual involvement in this topical issue, it is necessary for me to briefly delineate this current situation in Chechnya. Russia's antipathy towards homosexuals is notably shared by other countries across the globe, but Chechnya's standpoint progressed to means of barbarity as of early February 2017. Confirmed by the Human Rights Watch in the April of 2017, hundreds of men suspected of being LGBT were held 'in secret locations for days or even weeks, and tortured, humiliated, and starved [...] forcing them to hand over information about other men who might be gay'.² These 'secret locations', it was revealed, were confirmed to be concentration camps that facilitated this torture, purging, and murder, and men were captured through the means of digital culture: social media, mobile numbers, and apps orientated for gay men such as

² Nataliya Vasilyeva, 'Russia: Anti-Gay Purge in Chechnya', *Human Rights Watch*, 26 May 2017, n. pag. <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/26/russia-anti-gay-purge-chechnya>> [accessed 11 December 2017].

Grindr. Moreover, it should be noted that Chechnya is a republic governed by semi-autonomous control, with their own codes of law, and are abetted by Russian President, Vladimir Putin, who stresses that each heads of state – such as Chechen’s Ramzan Kadyrov – should reinforce their own traditional beliefs and values. Thus, this process of digital-capturing, as I will now label it, invalidates any seemingly ‘applicable’ LGBT laws in Russia, and subsequently enables sexuality and sexual identities to become catalysts for torture.

Our perspectives of sexuality and sexual identities, I argue, are altered, reshaped, and modelled by the advancement of digital culture, regardless of people’s differing societal viewpoints and levels of acceptance. In order to accurately identify digital culture’s influence on sexuality and sexual identities, I suggest it is important to acknowledge Michel Foucault and Ellis Hanson in alignment to one another, to trace the progression of sexuality prior to the emergence of digitalisation. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault rejects the notion that sex has become repressed or silenced, and gestures instead that there ‘was a steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex—specific discourses, different from one another both by their form and by their object: a discursive ferment that gathered momentum from the eighteenth century onward’.³ This proliferation of sexual discourses, as emphasised by Foucault, thus influenced a rise in different forms of sexual identities, whereby sex became a key indicator of a person’s character. Foucault elucidates this notion in his discussion of the ‘perverse’ nineteenth-century homosexual, by stating that ‘[n]othing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away’.⁴ Foucault’s observation illustrates how sexuality not only became the marker of someone’s characteristics in this period, it determined, universally, the quality of their psyche. This notion can be used to explain how progressive countries have facilitated queer non-conformism, and it can simultaneously be used as a reflection of countries today: this outlook on the connection between homosexuality

³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (Camberwell, Vic.: Penguin, 2008), pp. 1502-1503.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1517.

and psychological perversion remains in Russia, and I will demonstrate in this essay how the digital era facilitates it.

However, as noted by Ellis Hanson, '[t]he World Wide Web came after the age of [Foucault's] death', which highlights that Foucault's work enables us to look at the dissemination of sexual discourses prior to the influence of digital culture.⁵ Hanson, who situates and revises Foucault's 'objects of knowledge' in the context of modern-day digital culture, argues that the internet is not just an outlet for exploring sexual desires, but also serves as an impetus for the more perverse because of the rise in 'sexual hookups, sexual gear, sexual devices'.⁶ Further, in his sub-section of 'aestheticization of gender and sexuality', Hanson updates Foucault's identification of the perverse Victorian homosexual by gesturing that '[q]ueer is the new normal. It thrives with capitalism online', and cites 'the queer erotics of cruising, transience, fragmentation, ambiguity, impersonality, anonymity, experimentation', as notable examples of this 'queer normalisation'.⁷ Therefore, we can discern how digital culture has advanced sexuality through means of exploration and marketisation, and these comparisons allow us to begin noticing the 'dual nature' of digital culture. For instance, on the one hand, digital culture facilitates the emergence and progression of sexuality and identities, thereby becoming a vehicle of emancipation for those who are oppressed such as the LGBT community. However, on the contrary, by providing a platform for what Foucault historically notes to be the 'perverse' and 'non-normative', digitalisation simultaneously gives rise to ignorance and hatred for those who are marginalised, which merely intensifies the oppression they already experience. This duality is identifiable in the case of LGBT citizens in Russia, whereby online users are expected 'to abide by Russia's 2014 gay propaganda law, which outlaws 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships' among minors. The law also bans people sharing 'distorted ideas about the equal social value of traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships'.⁸ Nick Duffy, reporter of LGBT-friendly

⁵ Ellis Hanson, 'A History of Digital Desire, Vol 1: An Introduction', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 110/33 (2011) pp. 583-599 (p. 586).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 585.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 595.

⁸ Nick Duffy, 'US LGBT Bloggers Are Being Forced to Agree to Abide by Russian Anti-Gay Laws', *PinkNews*, 10 April 2017, n. pag. 62

PinkNews, identifies here the constrictions faced by those of 'non-traditional' sexualities in Russia, which spotlights also how digitalisation is used in Russia to impede the progression suggested by the works of Foucault and Hanson. While they can both be used to demonstrate how digital culture has had a twofold impact on sexuality – both a safe space of liberation and outlet of danger – it becomes clear that the positives of digitalisation are perhaps outweighed by the negatives in this duality for those in the LGBT community.

Proceeding with the idea of safe spaces, I want now to draw attention to the concept of spatiality, and more specifically, the question of how digital culture has collapsed the private and public spheres. Critics such as Deborah Nelson demonstrate the ways in which this collapse is one that predates the digital era. Nelson argues that, in the era of the Cold War, 'bureaucratic intrusiveness and abuses of state surveillance in public spaces' influenced privacy to become 'mobile and dependent on context' by the Supreme Court, particularly in the case for women seeking medical advice.⁹ Notwithstanding that this focus is of 1960s America, I argue that Nelson's observations can be used as a foundation to emphasise that digital culture has extended – or, rather, escalated – the collapse of the private and public spheres. It is no secret that digital culture has enhanced connectivity to a point of which you can be in the same room as someone who resides across the globe, though I suggest that the duality of this is overlooked, particularly in the case for gay people.

In *The History of Digital Desire*, Hanson turns his focus to 'queer spatialization' through the lens of Michael Warner, who 'emphasizes the necessity of queer commercial spaces for queer community and also described a nostalgia for queer community organized around iconic locations of queer socialization: the neighborhood bar, bathhouse, or bookstore'.¹⁰ For Hanson, Warner's emphasis of public LGBT spaces serves as a vehicle of theoretical thought, as he proceeds by suggesting that 'online, however, geographical community gives way to digital connectivity with no necessary dependence on the propinquity of queer

<<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2017/04/10/lgbt-bloggers-forced-to-agree-to-abide-by-russian-anti-gay-laws/>> [accessed 12 December 2017].

⁹ Deborah Nelson, 'Beyond Privacy: Confessions between a Woman and Her Doctor', *Feminist Studies*, 25.2 (1999), pp. 279-306 (p. 281).

¹⁰ Hanson, p. 596.

neighborhoods'.¹¹ The allusion, here, is of the phone app Grindr, which collapses the private and public sphere through an online spatial community that is organised by a person's physical distance in the public sphere. This progressive app is used by Russian LGBT individuals as a safe space and community for those who are vilified by their government, and clearly by heads of state. This collapse of spatiality has a dual effect in that it allows Russian gay men to communicate with one another and feel a sense of familiarity and equality, though in Chechnya, this safe space is also disrupted by those with an aim to eliminate their liberation through torturous means. Indeed, the paradox lies in the fact 'officials in the country pose as gay men seeking dates on apps like Grindr, which they use to lure and capture their victims' for means of torture, barbarity, and confinement.¹² Thus, any sense of liberation and solace given to the LGBT community in Chechnya becomes invalidated.

Furthermore, Jody Ahlm's *Respectable Promiscuity*, her recent study of queer liberalism and digital cruising, is indispensable to this focus of Grindr and spatiality. Through digital ethnography, Ahlm explores first-hand the reality that lies within an app that has a reputation of sexual intent. By conceptualising Grindr as 'respectable promiscuity', Ahlm recognises that it is an app that represents an advancement in both digitalisation and sexual identity politics, gesturing that Grindr is 'both a virtual space and a mediator of physical space' and '[changes] the traditional spatial dynamics of gay male sexual culture'.¹³ In this regard, this product of digital culture contributes to the normalisation of homosexuality in society by adapting public spaces for the comfort of the gay community, though to a different extent to that of the bars, bathhouses, and bookstores noted by Warner. With Grindr being digital, public spaces for gay men are not influenced by physical material in the same way bookstores have been, but rather Grindr

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Julie Compton, 'Meet the Canadian Fearlessly Fighting Chechnya's Gay Purge', *NBCNews.com*, 10 Nov. 2017, n. pag. <<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/outfront-meet-canadian-fearlessly-fighting-chechnya-s-gay-purge-n819381>> [accessed 19 December 2017].

¹³ Jody Ahlm, 'Respectable Promiscuity: Digital Cruising in an Era of Queer Liberalism', *Sexualities*, 20/3 (2016), pp. 364-379 (p. 366).

influences LGBT comfortability by the virtual world manifesting itself in physical, material space. We can read Ahlm in conjunction to Foucault here; in his chapter on 'The Deployment of Sexuality', Foucault states that 'it will be granted no doubt that relations of sex gave rise, in every society, to a deployment of alliance: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions'.¹⁴ Taking Foucault's observation into account, it is arguable that the incitement of sexual discourse has, too, become a mediator of virtual and physical space, whereby alliances such as the gay community are formed, developed, and challenged within both the private and public sphere. These paradoxes are identifiable in Russia, for in 2013 Vladimir Putin 'signed into a law a measure that stigmatises gay people and bans giving children any information about homosexuality', but digital spaces have influenced a visibility in people advocating for LGBT rights after this.¹⁵ Taking this into account, while the internet's virtual realm enables it to be perceived as a private sphere, I suggest that Putin's legislation and the impact of apps such as Grindr on mediation in public spaces illustrates how the internet can be a conflation of both public and private spheres. It should be noted that since Ahlm's study, Grindr has introduced a feature which enables you to indicate your HIV status ('positive', 'negative', or 'undetectable'), as well as allowing you to state when you were last been tested. This in reflection on the AIDS epidemic of the 90s, is emancipating for those who have been vilified before. Therefore, with both Hanson and Ahlm in mind, the alteration of spatiality does influence societal progression to some extent.

Nevertheless, we should not overlook the subsequent danger that can be imposed by digital culture's obscuring of spatiality. Ahlm balances her focus of queer liberalism by addressing that the 'ambiguous distinction between private and public space, and sexual and non-sexual space on Grindr produces a multiplicity, and often ambivalence, of user intentions'.¹⁶ Ahlm's observation demonstrates that while digital apps with a specific target audience accommodate

¹⁴ Foucault, *History Of Sexuality*, p. 106.

¹⁵ Associated Press, 'Russia Passes Anti-Gay-Law', *The Guardian*, 30 June 2013, n. pag. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/30/russia-passes-anti-gay-law>> [accessed 15 December 2017].

¹⁶ Ahlm, p. 371.

connectivity, the dual nature lies in the fact that this instantaneous connection between the gay community gives rise to discrimination, which internalises the marginalisation experienced in the public sphere within a person's private sphere. As Ahlm argues, 'homonormativity, like heteronormativity, privileges whiteness. Homonormativity produces a systemic policing of sexuality and gender, in part through a politics of representation that erases queers of colour, poor and working-class queers, and gender non-conforming queers'.¹⁷ Given that this discrimination happens within a digital private sphere that facilitates anonymity, the repercussions of racial, class, and internalized-homophobia discrimination are indeed slim, and perhaps even non-existent in areas such as Chechnya. Recalling Deborah Nelson's observation, who focused on the collapse of the private and public sphere via bureaucratic surveillance in America, I suggest that digital culture has escalated this collapse by permitting this sense of 'surveillance' to be mobile and personalised for an individual. Thus, digital culture offers every user of the internet the opportunity to warp, control, and impose on another person's private space through anonymous identities in the realm of social media and phone apps. This sense of anonymity is significant when addressing the systematically-oppressed individuals within the gay community. Indeed, the false accounts on Grindr used to capture Chechen men can be perceived as a physical manifestation of the emotional invasion that occurs when the identities of marginalised individuals have been erased or warped. Moreover, the anonymity gives rise to the abduction of LGBT individuals by police officials in Chechnya; a warped identity of an 'interested gay man' thus transforming into an uncloaked barbarity for the unsuspecting Chechen gay men.

After discussing the relationship between – or rather, the conflation of – the private and public spheres, it is now opportune to focus specifically on the private sphere and the duality between the lack of privacy and the accessibility of personal information. Privacy is an ongoing issue of contention on the internet, and Hanson spotlights, rather succinctly, the paradox of 'invasion of privacy' by asking '[w]ill the internet revolutionize our understanding of privacy, private commerce, confidentiality, shame, and reputation – or merely hystericize it more than ever and require a more clinical

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 372.

institutionalization?'¹⁸ However, while his question pertinently gestures towards the debate, the limitation of applying Hanson here is due in part to his refusal of combating the negative effects of privacy. Nancy Thumim's book *Self-Representation and Digital Culture*, and more specifically the chapter 'Self-Representation Online', serves as an extension to Hanson.¹⁹ In her study, Thumim addresses the concern over privacy in the realm of the most popular and used social media website across the internet: Facebook, whereby she argues that:

rather than focusing on the question of the extent to which a platform such as Facebook is or is not private, perhaps we should take as given that social networking is not a private activity, and, consequently, that self-representations that are produced in the process of social networking are also not private. This means that education in media literacy skills is of the utmost importance in order for Facebook users to understand the implications of their online socializing.²⁰

Thumim not only affirms the lack of privacy on sites such as Facebook, but also stresses the importance of being able to articulate privacy settings on a website where it is a concerning issue. By adopting Thumim's observation to the issue in Chechnya, it is possible to suggest that those with a more advanced awareness of the implications of their online socialising could perhaps decrease their risks of being captured, or their information (sexuality) given to the authorities. However, in turning to *The New Yorker* reporter, Masha Gessen, who interviewed men that escaped from the Chechen camps, it becomes clear that being astute to technology does not always guarantee immunity from danger. In interviewing escapee, Ali, she notes how he even 'took the SIM card out of his cell phone, inserted it into a spare, blank phone, and hid his regular handset. By the time he was done, two police officers were knocking on the door' for his abduction.²¹ This illustrates the rapidity

¹⁸ Hanson, p. 592.

¹⁹ Nancy Thumim, *Self-Representation and Digital Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

²¹ Masha Gessen, 'The Gay Men Who Fled Chechnya's Purge', *The New Yorker*, 3 July 2017, n. pag.

with which Chechen officials pass on information, thus heightening, albeit to a dark extent, the dangerous implications made by a lack of privacy, and control over private information online.

Privacy, and private information, have become less private and more public in parallel to the rise of social media sites. As our information has become shared with companies for the purposes of capitalist marketisation, I argue there is a definite lack of accountability and ownership. In support of this, Helen Nissenbaum states that '[a]s troubled as we might be by technologies that diminish control over information about ourselves, even more deeply troubling are those that disregard entrenched norms because, as such, they threaten disruption to the very fabric of social life'.²² Nissenbaum changes the perspective here and highlights how the concern over privacy in digital culture becomes more problematic when online corporations, such as Facebook, believe the sharing of private information to be a functioning component of society. Indeed, the 'entrenched norms' she notes to be disregarded, 'sustain essential activities and key relationships and interests, protect people and groups against harm and the distribution of power'.²³ Therefore, the dual nature that lies in advanced connectivity is that our personal data such as web searches, emails, mobile numbers, and even photographs, instantaneously become the property of those who possess no accountability or ownership. Our digital identities, then, have a dangerous impact on our public identity.

While this obscurity of blame and accountability over lack of privacy is indeed dangerous to internet users, both online and in the real world, I want to stress how there are ways in which it is beneficial. For instance, even though Ramzan Kadyrov holds no accountability or ownership for the concentration camps, questioning nonsensically 'if such [gay] people existed in Chechnya', and whilst the flow of private information has proliferated victims, this accessibility of information has also saved individuals from abduction too.²⁴ Masha Gessen

<<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/03/the-gay-men-who-fled-chechnyas-purge>> [accessed 20 December 2017].

²² Helen Fay Nissenbaum, *Privacy In Context: Technology, Policy, And The Integrity Of Social Life* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 3.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Michael K Lavers, 'Chechnya President Again Denies Arrests' *Washington Blade: GayNews, Politics, LGBT Rights* 21 April 2017, n. pag. 68

discloses that when '[Russian] activists heard about the purges in Chechnya, the Network set up an e-mail address and a phone number for Chechens to call', whereby those at risk would contact to hide in Moscow, and some would even be contacted to leave.²⁵ Thus, debates and concerns over privacy and private information online have a paradoxical nature in some cases. Returning to Hanson, who argues that '[no] one should use your information and your image without your permission and payment. True personal privacy is the trademarking of the self'.²⁶ In many instances, this might be true, but I suggest that Hanson overlooks the possibilities of accessibility to information being beneficial in times of crisis.

Keeping in mind the dual effects that digital culture has imposed on sexuality, spatiality and privacy, I want now to bridge to the concept of 'inescapability' and propose that digital culture has created a sense of confinement that manifests, simultaneously, in virtual and physical worlds. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault critically traces the changes in the penal systems of eighteenth-century France, whereby the body and mind function as outlets of punishment. Further, while his argument illustrates that a hierarchal system of punishment and categorisation is also identifiable in schools, factories, hospitals, and military barracks, I propose that digitalisation should also be ranked among these. For as he argues, all these

authorities exercising individual control, function according to a double mode; that of a binary division and branding (made/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of a coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercise over him in an individual way.²⁷

By acknowledging this in light of digitalisation, we are able to identify the omnipresent nature of digital culture, for the ubiquity of the internet

<<http://www.washingtonblade.com/2017/04/21/chechnya-president-denies-gay-arrests/>> [accessed 20 December 2017].

²⁵ Gessen, n. pag.

²⁶ Hanson, p. 592.

²⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 2012), p. 199.

has permitted the global network to be inescapable for us. Foucault's striking use of 'coercive assignment' here is illustrative of the lack of control we have over our identity as internet users whom are under 'constant surveillance' and recalls Nancy Thumim's focus on 'self-representation' as our characterisation and personal information are both forced upon and taken away from us. Moreover, we can also detect here the gradations of binaries that exist within the realm of the digital culture, and this 'binary division and branding' can be used to explain the process by which the Chechen government decide whether to incarcerate their male citizens in the concentration camps or not: if their sexual identity is 'normative' or 'non-normative', for instance. The idea of imprisonment is also echoed in Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, wherein he turns to eighteenth-century schools as an example of suppressed sexual discourse. He gestures '[on] the whole, one can have the impression that sex was hardly spoken of at all in these institutions. But one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation'.²⁸ Applying this to Chechnya, it is plausible that their rigid online anti-gay laws and antipathy towards LGBT men merely creates an incitement of homosexual discourse in Russia. Therefore, as I argue, it is these strictures within the conservative and traditionalist state that influence Kadyrov's statement, whereby he disregarded of the existence of gay people in Chechnya, to be of a counter-intuitive fashion.

The confinement I propose that is constructed and maintained by digital culture is externalised and made physical for those in Chechnya. Returning to the case study of Ali, Gessen discloses how he was taken 'down to a basement, where there was a large central room, with cells and small chambers around the perimeter. In one chamber, officers dunked prisoners' heads in a vat of ice water; in another, they attached clothespin-like clips wired to a large battery to earlobes or extremities'.²⁹ This sensitive disclosure of the barbaric reality within the Chechen concentration camps highlights the extreme outcomes caused by the exposure created by digital culture. The description of the 'large central room, with cells and small chambers around the perimeter', I argue, is analogous to the functions of digitalisation. For instance, the

²⁸ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, p. 1508.

²⁹ Gessen, n. pag.

central network of the internet serves as an outlet for universal connectivity, though communities—and within that, individuals—have both shared and isolated experiences of emancipation or danger. This can be extrapolated through Foucault's chapter on 'Panopticism', a phrase coined by the theorist himself, in *Discipline and Punish*, in which he discusses the measures taken by the French penal systems at the end of the seventeenth century when the plague became widespread. He notes that '[e]ach individual is fixed in his place. And, if he moves, he does so at the risk of life, contagion or punishment. Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere'.³⁰ We can apply this observation to both the duality of digital culture and the current abhorrence in Chechnya. Certainly, in 'moving', or exploring through the realms of digitalization, we affect not only our own identity, but also the identities of those around us. Whether it is through means of liberation or vulnerability, there remains 'ceaseless inspection' from both online corporations and individuals whose intentions are uncertain. By contrast, for Chechnya, the Chechen government enact 'the gaze', given that they have enforced the abductors to torture men until they 'gave up the names of others, and the police began arresting them', thus reflecting Foucault's observation that movement, or communication, is done so 'at the risk of life, contagion or punishment'.³¹

While I argue that the omnipresent nature of digital culture permits the internet to function as a virtual prison of sorts, I also want to spotlight the ways in which these certain elements of confinement have been used for means of liberation, safety, and care. For example, I suggest that if we perceive 'the digital gaze' – a term I will use to conflate Hanson and Foucault – to be composed of every user of the internet, then we can begin to notice the dual nature of digital inescapability: as well as facilitating and perpetuating abhorrence, digital culture simultaneously globally exposes it. This is apparent with Chechnya; Elena Milashina, reporter at the Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, 'broke the story of Chechnya's anti-gay campaign. Shortly after her articles on the subject appeared – sparking coverage in the West and an uproar among readers, activists, and politicians in the United States

³⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 195.

³¹ Gessen, n. pag.

and Europe – Milashina, fearing for her safety, left Russia temporarily'.³² This account in *The New Yorker* illustrates not only the rapidity of which breaking news disseminates across the globe, but also the duality of digital culture. Digitalisation has provided witness to such a barbaric issue, and has subsequently entered the discourse of political parties, and has raised questions by the likes of Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch. Furthermore, in exposing the concentration camps to the digital gaze, Milashina equally destabilises Putin's online laws that aim to impede the societal progression of LGBT individuals, and therefore amplifies Hanson's conception of a 'digital revolution'.³³ Certainly, Hanson concludes his revision of Foucault by suggesting that the 'digital revolution is already under way. Something that smacks of revolt, of promised freedom, of the coming of age of a different law, slips easily into this discourse of digital desire'.³⁴ At face-value, Hanson's liberating declaration addresses the discourse of sex and sexuality online, though I argue that it hints also at a 'promised freedom' that exists in the physical world, whereby digitalisation serves as a vehicle of liberation for those who have been condemned for their sexual identity, gender identity, or any kind of 'non-normative' identity difference.

The dual nature of digital culture, as I have demonstrated, can be identified in a plethora of thematic concerns, the majority of which appear more negative than positive at first glance. Regarding the inevitable binaries that we encounter on the internet, and outside of it, I propose that the key way to dealing the duality of digital culture is finding balance: utilising it to one's own advantage. As Milashina and the survivors and escapees of Chechnya have demonstrated, creating awareness is instrumental in both uncovering dangerous situations and pursuing accountability. An example that is currently contemporaneous with Chechen concentration camps is the rise in women from Hollywood who are bravely speaking out against the men – such as Harvey

³² Anon., 'How a Russian Journalist Exposed the Anti-Gay Crackdown in Chechnya', *The New Yorker*, 10 June 2017, n. pag. <<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-a-russian-journalist-exposed-the-anti-gay-crackdown-in-chechnya>> [accessed 15 December 2017].

³³ Hanson, p. 598.

³⁴ Ibid.

Weinstein – who have sexually assaulted them, with social media serving as the most successful outlets for creating awareness. It has been noted that more than fifty women ‘have made allegations against Harvey Weinstein and the number continues to grow each day. Among the Hollywood mogul’s accusers are household names who were still looking to establish themselves when the alleged offences took place’.³⁵ As with the Chechen concentration camps, the more people who speak out that were – and still are – affected, the more awareness that there is to instigate change. Jody Ahlm, albeit with the gay community, makes central the issue of ‘visibility’. Ahlm observes that the ‘more contemporary variant of LGBT politics, especially the marriage equality movement, has shifted the meaning of visibility away from the politics of sexual liberation and towards an essentialist and assimilationist mode of being out’.³⁶ By adopting Ahlm’s observation to my notion of ‘balancing’ the dualisms that exist within digital culture, it is apparent that bringing issues to the forefront of online discourses and platforms is a route to creating change and altering perspectives in society. This sentiment gives way to Foucault’s examination of the increase in sexual discourses that I mentioned earlier in the essay, and the same is applicable to the digital era: discussion, of all levels, is a key ingredient of change.

In reflecting on the theorists – and their theories – that I have used in this essay, I propound that the dual nature of digital culture is indisputable. Both the liberating and damaging consequences of digital culture coexist in the virtual and physical worlds, and somewhat more intimately, given the collapse of spatiality addressed by modern theorists such as Hanson and Ahlm. The distinct focus of the LGBT community, and the topical case study of Chechnya, has spotlighted the ways in which digitalisation serves as a vehicle of societal progression for sexual identity, both digital and physical, while simultaneously giving rise to oppression. Through this focus, too, I have demonstrated how digital culture has altered perspectives of sexuality with the assistance of Foucault and Hanson, and while the explorative uses of

³⁵ Caroline Davies and Nadia Khomami, ‘Harvey Weinstein: A Life of the Women Who Have Accused Him’, *The Guardian*, 21 Oct. 2017, n. pag. <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/oct/11/the-allegations-against-harvey-weinstein-what-we-know-so-far>> [accessed 2 January 2018].

³⁶ Ahlm, p. 374.

digitalisation perhaps normalise previously ‘perverse’ desires and sexualities, it also, by contrast, reinforces the disallowance exercised in countries such as Russia. However, as I have gestured towards in the final parts of this essay, I also argue, in agreement with Hanson, that we are currently bearing witness to the cusp of a revolution that is both orchestrated and facilitated by digital culture. While it is difficult—and in some cases impossible—to ascertain the eventualities of the negative effects caused by the dual nature of digital culture, I finally want to stress that as we are all participants in the digital gaze, we are thus equipped with a virtual voice that can potentially thwart the continuation of damaging situations. Therefore, the dual nature of the internet and digital culture leaves us with crucial choices to make, whereby we can use the duality to one’s advantage and bring social issues, global politics, and catastrophe into immediate and widespread discourses. While the internet is a danger to instigating harm in public spheres, it simultaneously provides an outlet for activists, global cultures, governments, and academics to tackle issues within their field, and issues, such as Chechnya, that overlap and manifest into several distinct areas. This essay has demonstrated how academia, in particular, can be used to counter and address the complexity that occurs between the political, cultural, and human crises. Remaining silent, on any issue, will not contribute towards change. It will merely sustain it, if anything. Although the concentration camps and antipathy towards homosexuality remain in Chechnya, the digital exposure of the camps, and the increased consciousness of them in political discourses, has decreased the number of victims in the latter half of 2017. Perhaps, then, the duality of digital culture is beginning to have a more alleviating impact for the LGBT community. Despite this, there is still a long way to go.

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Who'd Want a See-Through Daughter?

Christina Clover

It was a rare time that I was looking forward to visiting my mother. As I walked up the terraced path, I could breathe, for the first time in days.

I rang on the bell – I couldn't just walk in this time.

She opened the door, her hair wrapped in a towel.

She looked at me, furrowed her brow for a second, and then her mouth fell open. She stepped backwards.

"What on earth happened?"

"What?" I said.

"Tara, you're see-through."

Oh. That.

I stepped past her into the hallway, holding my bag in front of me so I didn't knock her with it. She pressed herself against the wall.

She shut the door and turned to me. "Where're your colours?"

I looked down at my transparent hand, clutching the handles of my bag. You couldn't even see any bones. "Venice," I said.

She tutted. "I knew that place was no good."

"You can still see me."

"Only just."

She muttered this with a huff, as if I'd done it to spite her, and shuffled off towards the kitchen.

She had a point, of course. Who'd want a see-through daughter?

"You might as well have lunch," she said.

The lounge looked the same as always. A vase of flowers – sweet peas this time – smiled, prim, from the windowsill. The sofas at each end of the long room were pristine, untouched, whereas the armchair beside the fire had various possessions littered around it: glasses, iPad, mug, phone. The seventies' cushion covers were worn but intact. The chair basically was my mother.

I stepped quickly past the mirror beside the fireplace – I wasn't ready yet – and perched on the sofa at the far end.

Mum came in carrying a tray. It held the usual: a cheese sandwich, a plate of tomatoes and chopped cucumber, and a glass of lemonade. This hadn't changed since I was eleven. She stopped a good metre away

from me and leaned out to hand it to me. I sat forward and stretched out to meet it, then sat back, the tray in my lap. Mum sat down in her usual place, facing me. From where I was sitting, the angle meant that I could see the sweat peas over her shoulder. The pale pink flowers matched her jumper.

She picked up her phone from the floor and idly fiddled with it.

"How's Sadie?" she said, not looking up from the screen.

"She's okay," I said. I hadn't expected this so early on in the visit.

"Actually, Mum," I said, "I'm not with Sadie anymore."

"Another one bites the dust," she said, her gaze still on the phone.

Oh well, at least that was done.

I sipped my drink.

Mum straightened the towel on her head. As she did, she glanced at me, then screwed her face up. "Oh Tara, that's just disgusting," she said, her hand to her mouth.

"What?"

"I can see the lemonade," she said.

I looked down. The liquid was pooling in my invisible stomach. It was translucent, just like me. It was also strangely tasteless. I put my glass down before it slipped out of my clammy hand.

"I'm going to rinse off this colour," said Mum, standing up and pulling the towel off her head, revealing deep red oiliness. "I don't think I can bear to see the sandwich too."

She was still chuckling about her joke as she left the room.

I sat and ate the bland food with my eyes closed. With no vision, I could imagine Sadie was sitting next to me, like she was the last time I was there. She'd overdone it with my mum – she had a habit of doing that – by being over-exuberant and making puns. When Mum had gone to bed that night, Sadie had turned to me and covered her face with her hands, mortified. We'd laughed for hours, and then weeks, about it. I tried to make her feel better and tell her that she could have another try in the morning, but really, I knew that my mother would never take to her. I think I'd always known that.

I left my tray on the floor and took my bag upstairs. As I trudged up the familiar staircase, I noticed the photos of me, in chronological order, ascending parallel to the banister. Winning a sack race, aged five. Being handed a trophy for horse riding, aged nine. Graduating from my sociology degree, aged twenty-one. All of the photos were as bright as rainbows. Growing up, friends had been jealous of my mother's

celebration of my successes. They failed to notice that there was not one photo of me climbing a tree, or messing around with face paints, or laughing.

The water was still running in the bathroom. Mum always had long showers.

I pushed open the door to my bedroom. Over the last couple of years, Mum had started to use it as an office, so her laptop and various books were scattered on the desk. Other than that, though, it was still very much my room. A cuddly giraffe and tiger sat side-by-side on the bedside table, and the walls contained photos and a painting of my horse, many years dead now.

I dropped my bag on the floor and stood in front of the mirrored wardrobe. There wasn't much to see, as Mum had alluded. I had an outline – strangely dark, like a child's drawing – but nothing much inside that. The light from the window shone through me and reflected off the mirror. The statue of a lion growled at me through my back and stomach. On my colourless body, my clothes also lost their solidity. My jeans and vest top had become thin veils over, seemingly, nothing.

I sighed and stepped away from the mirror to close the bedroom door. Then I collapsed on my bed and stared up at the ceiling. I thought of Sadie. This was unsurprising; after all, she was never far away. Even when I thought I was concentrating on something else, she would be there somewhere, looking over a fence, or peering through a door, or laying with me, the way she had been that day when everything changed.

We'd been on my bed, the Venetian sun streaming in through the open balcony doors. The suncatcher danced and sparkled, sending a shower of bright speckles across the bed and onto the walls.

Despite the canal breeze, our naked bodies were sweaty and pinked. Music was playing just how I liked it: loud and immersive. We were kissing. Kissing Sadie was always vaguely ethereal. I don't know if she designed it to be that way, or if perhaps I did. But on this day, she was beside me, propped up by one elbow, her other electric hand on my waist.

I ran my hands through her hair and kissed her, and as my eyes fell closed and the colours started to flow, she pulled back a few inches.

"Wait there," she whispered.

Intrigued and smiling, I kept my eyes shut and stretched out, aware that she had got up and was rummaging under the bed. The music pounded through me, blurring with the images rushing in and out of my mind.

I felt her place something heavy on the bed. I half opened my eyes and saw a suitcase; I hadn't remembered there being a suitcase under the bed. I rested my hands behind my head and watched as she unzipped and folded the lid back, so it rested on the footboard.

As she smiled at me, her green eyes were wide yet calm, and glistening. Her dark hair hung around her shoulders, ending just above her breasts. She'd never looked more beautiful.

She reached into the suitcase and took out a small knife. It looked old, like a vegetable knife from the sixties. It had a worn, wooden handle, and the metal of the blade was a dull grey.

My stomach tightened. Though I'd never seen this knife before, it was familiar. Sadie had described it to me shortly after we first met. It was the imaginary knife that she used on herself as a child. But, she'd told me she'd unimagined it when she was nineteen and had "worked on her stuff." She held it up towards the balcony, and turned it around in her hand, the sunlight reflecting off the metal and creating a moving flash on the bedroom ceiling.

She looked back at me and moved the knife towards my stomach.

I flinched but didn't move away until the tip of the blade touched my skin. Then I sat up.

She smiled, her eyes dancing. "I won't hurt you," she said.

"It's not really my thing," I said, straining my voice to speak over the music.

"You can trust me." The light from the suncatcher reflected off her teeth.

"I know," I said. Did I know? "It's just, I don't like blood."

She shook her head. "No blood. I promise."

On all fours, she kissed me. She rested her hand behind my hair and laid me back down.

"Relax," she whispered into my ear, "or it won't work."

"What won't?"

She brushed her cheek against mine. "You'll enjoy it."

She was probably right. Besides, I'd already agreed with myself to let her do whatever she wanted to do – blood or no blood.

She kissed me again, and as her tongue touched mine, she pressed the tip of the blade into the skin on my hip. She ran the knife downwards, to the top of my thigh. I waited for the pain, but it never came. Instead, it felt like small puffs of cool air on my skin. It moved in a square shape, about four inches across. My head swam with Sadie's smell.

She straightened up and took the detached square in her hands. It was glowing gold. She held it up to the light, in much the same way as she had done the knife. She smiled, a wide, closed-mouthed smile, and then carefully placed the strip into the suitcase.

"You're taking it?" I asked.

"It's only tiny," she said. "You won't miss it."

She looked at me, and I knew that I loved her. She could take whatever she wanted. I reached up and stroked her face.

When she laid back down next to me, she was like a spider. She was everywhere: on me and under me and inside me, all at once. She took me to somewhere I'd never been before. She stroked my face and pressed herself against me. As I closed my eyes and slipped into her, she cut another piece: a triangle this time. Deep purple. The beat of the music became my pulse: our pulse. And the woody incense mingled with the scent of our sweaty skin. She cut two more squares, both yellow, a green heart-shape, and a turquoise diamond. She slid against me and inside me, and I swear we left Earth. Everything was warm and colourful, and all I could see or think or feel, was her.

Afterwards, she zipped up the suitcase, trapping the colours inside. I looked a little patchy, but basically ok.

It didn't really become noticeable for a few weeks. The transparency was something that happened very gradually, so gradually that I easily got used to it. By the time I left Sadie and came to England, I'd almost forgotten that I was ever a solid, full human being. I was blasé when my mother mentioned it, because really, I knew that I could have left so much more behind.

The week with my mother passed with some awkwardness. She never really got used to me. If I came around the corner unexpectedly, and she didn't have time to mask her expression, I would see her upper lip curl.

An unexpected benefit, however, was that I never got in her way. I could linger wherever I wanted in the lounge, and she could carry on watching TV, through me if necessary. When she was working at my desk – her desk – I could sit on the windowsill and watch her, and I didn't block the light, or cause a shadow. In this way, we moved around each other much more easily than usual.

The day before I returned to Venice, she came into the lounge looking pink and smiley, and slightly out of breath. She had a carrier bag in her hand.

"I've got a surprise," she said, sitting next to me on the sofa. She reached into the bag and pulled out a packet of thick felt tip pens. She held them up. "These will make you feel better."

"Oh, lovely," I said. "I haven't drawn in years."

She opened the box and tipped the pens into her lap. Unlike the brightly coloured pens on the packaging, these were all pastels.

"They're different to the ones on the front," I said.

"I asked the shop assistant to swap them." Mum picked up a pale blue and looked at it carefully, removing its lid.

She turned to face me. "Hold up your hand." She grasped my translucent wrist and turned my hand so that my thumb was on top.

She squinted and pressed the blue felt tip onto the knuckle of my thumb. She started off slowly, colouring in a circle, the size of a ten pence piece.

She stopped to inspect it and smiled. "Yes, these are definitely the right colours."

I stared at my thumb. It'd been so long since I'd seen any colours there – my hands had been among the first parts to go. It felt warm.

Mum picked up a green and started on my index finger. Her colouring was quicker this time. Within a minute, most of my finger looked like washed out grass.

She chose a pink next and continued. Bit by bit, my hand was becoming a hand again. Where she'd started on my thumb, was already starting to absorb the colour, and was looking like normal flesh. The rest of my hand was a mixture of cool, refined colours, petering out into the see-through of my arm. It looked rather like the vase of sweet peas.

I shifted in my seat. "I don't think this is working, Mum," I said.

"Of course it is. Look – it's solid." She tapped my normal looking thumb with the end of the pen.

"I want to stop now," I said.

"Don't be silly." She scraped the pink pen harder into my palm.

I tried to pull my hand away, but she tightened her grip.

I could feel sweat forming on my back. The warmth of my hand was turning to hot.

Mum gripped harder, coloured harder. She moved the pen to my elbow, started scribbling up my arm, no longer caring if she filled in the gaps. Her face was frowning and flushed. She grabbed another pen. It matched the pastel yellow of her jumper.

I yanked my hand away and stood up. The force of the action pushed her back, so she was leaning against the arm of the sofa. I shook my hand, hoping that I could prevent the pastels from sinking in.

Mum stared up at me, a cluster of lidless pens in her lap. "What on earth?"

"I said no." I tried to keep my voice level, but I was struggling to catch my breath.

"But I went to all this trouble."

"I know. I'm sorry."

"And those pens were expensive."

"I'll give you the money," I said. "I don't care."

She stood up and returned the pens to their box. "You'll regret being so ungrateful."

"I can choose my own colours," I said.

She let out a laugh, more like a bark. "You can't seem to keep them. At least you have some now."

I stared at my pastel-coloured hand. My mother's hand. I strode into the kitchen, opened the drawer and took out a vegetable knife.

"What are you doing?" Mum had followed me and was standing in the doorway.

I had to do it now, or I'd lose my nerve. I laid my hand on worktop, the mottled fake-marble shining through. I held the knife to my thumb and pressed into my skin, just as Sadie had done.

"Oh my god, Tara, stop," Mum hissed. She stepped towards me, trying to grab the knife. I turned my back on her and quickly ran the knife around the edge of the blue, feeling those same puffs of air, and then pulled it off. I slung it on the floor and started on the green. Mum pulled at my shoulders, but I shook her off. I worked quickly, cutting and pulling, until all the pieces were off, and I was see-through once again.

I turned to face my mother. She stared at the discarded colours on the kitchen lino. She shook her head. "You stupid girl."

The next day, she saw me off at the door, but when I got to the end of the path and turned back, the door was already closed. Through the lounge window, I could see her standing beside the fireplace, staring into the mirror.

I ambled to the train station, reminded of Sadie, and how she'd looked on that last evening.

I'd opened the door to her flat and the sound of her singing was coming from her bedroom. A bottle of champagne behind my back, I followed her sultry voice and peeked around her bedroom door. The room was dim. The tall buildings and narrow alleyways of Venice meant that even in the summer, hardly any natural sunlight reached the ground floor windows.

As my eyes adjusted to the gloom, I noticed Sadie standing in front of the mirror, with her back to me. She was swaying to her own song, wearing black underwear but nothing else. From that distance, I could only just see her face in the mirror. She looked different, but I wasn't sure how. I stepped inside the room, no longer caring if she saw me. As I dropped my hand to my side, the champagne bottle clinked against the buckle on my jacket. She spun around.

Her face changed shape. Her forehead became longer, her eyes higher up. If she'd been a rabbit, her ears would have pressed tightly down against her head.

She looked so different that I squinted, trying to figure out if it was really her. There was a deep purple patch on one of her cheeks. I stepped towards her – it looked like it had been sewn on with big, hurried tacks. She turned to her bed and reached for her dressing down, but I grasped her thin arms and pulled her back to face me.

She struggled for a second but then stopped and hung her head. "Please don't look at me," she said. She was grotesque, but also strangely beautiful.

My hands were sweaty against her skin, and I trembled as I looked down and noticed a golden rectangle on her collar bone, a turquoise triangle on her thigh. I released her arms and stood back. She was covered in them. Every coloured piece that she'd cut from me was now crudely sewn onto her body.

I released Sadie's arms and left the apartment, closing the door on her crying.

I ran down the alleyway, still holding the champagne, my footsteps echoing off the stone buildings. I was surprised my weight even made a sound anymore – would that be the next thing she took?

I strode over the bridges and through the backstreets, into the center of Venice, to find that St Mark's square was flooded again. It didn't take much rain for that to happen. At least, not by British standards. People said that Venice was sinking. I didn't know what I felt about this. On the one hand, I hated it. How could my beautiful city sink? How could there ever be a time that it would no longer exist? On the other hand, if it sunk, I would sink with it, and I would live under the waters that I had spent so many hours staring at and loving. Everyone else would leave town, but I would never leave. Everything that was mine was there. Would I even exist in England anymore?

The flooding platforms were already erected. I walked across them, towards the bright lights of the Basilica. I negotiated a route that meant I wouldn't have to pass any of the handful of people that were also there. It was dangerous for me to be beside water, especially at night. I needed one of those 'low visibility' road signs around my neck.

My phone beeped as a text came through. I reached into my pocket and pulled it out. I'll never do it again. Please come back.

I reached the Basilica and sat at the top of the steps, above the flood waters. I pulled the cork out of the champagne bottle and took a long swig. A young couple crossed the square: messing around, pretending to push each other off the platform, laughing. I remembered when Sadie and I used to laugh like that, pull one another around, kiss in public. That was back when I was tangible. She used to look up at me somehow, despite us being the same height. It was shortly after I'd noticed it, that the night with the knife happened.

I could have gone back to her, right that moment. Despite everything, I wanted nothing more than to be with her, as if this hadn't happened. I stared at her text. She said she wouldn't do it again. I could have pretended that I believed her, like I had so many times before. But I knew that the problem was bigger than that. Sadie couldn't really have stolen all my colours, unless I'd somehow wanted her to.

I stood up and peered down into the water. As I failed to see my reflection, I had to acknowledge that it was me who had placed that

suitcase under the bed, just as it was me who had imagined that knife back into existence.

Swigging champagne as I walked, I returned to my apartment, packed a bag, and left for England.

The train pulled up and I climbed on, quickly finding a place beside the window. There were only three other people in the carriage: the benefit of travelling at midday. I didn't know what I would do if someone came to sit next to me. How could I ever explain?

I sat back in my seat and tried to breathe, as the English countryside fell away. Venice was only a matter of hours away; I just had to get through this last bit. Coming to England to protect myself hadn't worked out as planned. I needed to return to Venice and get my colours back, or at least find some new ones.

That morning when I'd gone downstairs in my mother's house, the kitchen floor had been mopped and the colours were gone. For a second, I'd wondered what Mum had done with them, but then decided that I'd rather not know.

I stretched out my legs and smoothed the material of my jeans, the maroon-orange pattern of the seat visible through my thighs. Something itchy brushed against my wrist; it felt like a spider walking across my skin. I turned my hand over to see that a few inches of my outline had come loose. From the base of my thumb, down to where my veins would have been, I had nothing separating me from the air. It would probably need sticking back on, somehow. As I picked at the black ribbon-like strip, I thought how perfect it would look, used as a tie for Sadie's hair.

Engmalchin and the Plural Imaginings of Malaysia; or, the 'Arty-Crafty Dodgers of Reality'

Brandon Liew

The title of this article stems from a comment made by Devan Nair, a Malaysian/Singaporean politician who served as the third President of Singapore,¹ in his parliamentary speech on 14 March 1980 describing writers who write in English as 'snooty arty-crafty types' and 'arty-crafty dodgers of reality'.² The subject of ridicule in his speech was not limited to the local writer and literary critic, but anyone who did not commit to a pragmatic societal ethos; 'posturing humbugs' had no tangible value to society as they were out of touch with national and economic reality.³

Though eerie as it may seem in light of current anxieties within the humanities, his comment at the time reflects the inimical environment of literary development in Malaya in the mid-twentieth century. It also highlights the adversarial relationship between local 'realities' – realities of identity, realities of society, reality that is imposed, and reality that is reflected. In this sense, Nair's labels take on another meaning: Malayan writers in English have a habit of dodging the realities presented to them. From colonial constructions to national ideologies to Eurocentric perspectives, it would seem that these 'snooty arty-crafty' writers in English are as unrelenting as they are elusive.

This article focuses on the reality of cultural pluralism told through Malaysian Literature in English, primarily from the perspective of the failed Malayan literary movement Engmalchin in the 1950s. This

¹ Singapore was part of colonial Malaya until joining the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia in 1963, only to secede in 1965. Thus, it is included in the term 'Malaya' but branches out into its own field of literary study. Still, their literary history to this point is a shared one.

² Devan C.V. Nair, 'Speech in Parliament in the General Debate on the Budget on Friday' in *Commentary*, section 4(3), 14 March 1980, pp. 1-5 (p. 2).

³ Ibid; Miyuki Kosetsu, 'Towards a Creative Use of the Alien Tongue: A Study of Singapore Literature in the English Language', *Southeast Asian Studies*, 22 (1984), pp. 92-107 (p. 93).

literary experiment, derived from its amalgamation of three languages: English, Malay, and Chinese (hence, 'Engmalchin'), sought to create a literary form that could accurately represent an emerging local reality that was at heart, culturally plural. It sought to see a reality that was neither through the lens of colonial subject, nor homogenous nationalist; its short existence fell in between the tail end of Empire toward the mid-century, and the formation of the Malayan state leading up to 1957.

In the first section of this article I will explicate the historical role of colonial and national institution in the construction of plural Malaysian society. To do this, I draw on perspectives from two eminent scholars in Malaysian Literature, Daniel P.S. Goh and Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, who argue that the Malaysian state's exclusionary discursive practices in their management of plural society were inherited from colonialism. This section will set the scene for our understanding of Malaysian pluralism and Engmalchin's vision.

In second section I offer an in-depth study of Engmalchin as a literary movement, and its significance to Malaysian society. I will first outline the evolution of Malayan Literature in English through the early period of imitation and representation, in order to situate Engmalchin at the birth of a nationally conscious English-Language literature. Then, using autobiographical accounts and samples of Engmalchin's poetry and its contemporary analysis, I will highlight its formation and eventual failure as an imperative to our understanding of Malaysian pluralism and its different historical realities.

The problematic postcolonial

A traditional postcolonial reading of Malaysian society is problematic as its narratives do not account for the plural dimension of societal inception here. Its theoretical forms and ideological underpinnings centre around the single rubric of European time and its universal aspirations fail to describe the multiplicity of histories that it seeks to represent.⁴ This is a stance taken by most Malaysian literary scholars, and it is certainly a critical point that echoes throughout a vast volume

⁴ For discussion on the pitfalls of postcolonial terms, see: McClintock, Anne, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"', *Social Text*, (1992), pp. 84–98.

of work in this marginal field, going as far back as 1988 when Shirley Lim chastised a monocultural reading of emerging Asian literature in English using British literary traditions, in the false belief that it was a simple extension to British cultural analysis.⁵ In the same vein, cultural pluralism in the postcolonial tradition stems from the binary relationship between (post)colonial subject and Empire, centred around multiculturalism in Britain toward the end of the twentieth century.⁶ It is unfeasible to consider Malaysian pluralism as an extension to British multiculturalism. But then, how do we think about a society that is intrinsically both postcolonial and culturally plural in its imagining?

Broadening perspectives

Edwin Thumboo in his essay 'Literary Creativity in World Englishes' makes explicit the complexities of this event: '[m]ore than for the writer who inhabits one language, one culture, and one literary tradition, the writer's situation in the new literatures is open to compulsions revealed by the array of forces at work in a multilingual, multicultural, multiliterary society [...] where language goes, its criticisms and key assumptions tend to follow'.⁷ Thumboo does this in order to give us perspective on the 'English-Language' dimension of this new literature. His position is clear: '[c]riticism still assumes one-language, one-literature equation: varieties of [one] language lead to varieties of [one]

⁵ Shirley Lim, 'Voices from the Hinterland: Plurality and Identity in the National Literatures in English from Malaysia and Singapore', *World Literature Written in English*, 28 (1988), pp. 145–153 (p. 145-6). Also, for the dangers posed by dehistoricised postcolonial readings of Malaysian literature, see: Gaik Cheng Khoo, *Reclaiming Adat: Contemporary Malaysian Film and Literature* (University of British Columbia Press, 2007), and Philip Holden, 'Communities and Conceptual Limits: Exploring Malaysian Literature in English', *An International Journal of Asian Literatures, Cultures and Englishes*, 3 (2009), pp. 54–68.

⁶ For a fuller critique of multiculturalism as a Western phenomenon centred on post-1965 immigration of non-white people into Western nations, see Vijay Mishra, 'Multiculturalism', *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*, 10 (2002), pp. 226–258.

⁷ Edwin Thumboo 'Literary Creativity in World Englishes', in *The Handbook of World Englishes*, ed. by Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, Cecil L. Nelson (Wiley-Blackwell 2009), pp. 405–427 (p. 408).

literature. This is definitely not the case with English'; Thumboo rejects any notion of 'second tongue' or 'contact literature' along with dehistoricised postcolonial linkage.⁸ To him, while the inheritance and response to a colonial history accounts for the emergence of various Englishes in Asia, there is no place for the blanket generalisations such as a singular 'Asian English' in our theoretical frameworks.⁹ We must treat these literatures in their own context, despite their sharing of English, by viewing the historical and contemporary forces behind their emergence in order to develop an informed criticism.

Scholarly relevance

The notion of pluralism is at the heart of Malaysian Literature in English. As I will demonstrate in the following pages, the expression of this complex pluralism is, and has been, its greatest anxiety. Contemporary scholarship on the postcolonial Third World using pluralist theory has yet to move on from presumptions of natural ethnic conflict and economic development.¹⁰ In recognising colonial racialisation and its repercussions, we come closer to an understanding of the realities that define the pluralism that these writers seek to represent. This article aims to provide exactly this perspective to the field, and suggests that there are avenues for critical literary frameworks such as postcolonial studies to be contextualised productively.

THE INSTITUTIONALISM OF PLURALISM

Historical contexts

Before any investigation into the era of colonial institution, it stands that we should pay close attention to the historical context of the region. Before the arrival of the British in the late-eighteenth century, the region known as the Malay World in Southeast Asia served as a strategic

⁸ Ibid., pp. 408-409.

⁹ Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁰ Daniel P. S. Goh, 'From Colonial Pluralism to Postcolonial Multiculturalism: Race, State Formation and the Question of Cultural Diversity in Malaysia and Singapore', *Sociology Compass*, 2 (2008), pp. 232–252 (p.238).

maritime trading post in between Calcutta and Canton.¹¹ As one would expect, it was a mingling place between the Malays and people from the Netherlands, Portugal, Yemen, South Asia, Indochina, Southwestern China, Japan and the Indonesian archipelago, and was home to a large number of these communities including the Chinese, the Europeans, Tamils, Parsees, Gujeratis, Bengalis and so on.¹² Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, who writes on the origins of race in Malaysia, reminds us that the heterogeneous and creolised contexts here play a vital role in our discourse of ethnicity, that ‘the multi-ethnic complexities of Malaysia are [not] to be solely attributed to the exodus of peoples generated by the British Adventure’.¹³ Indeed, it is these contexts that surround the initial identification of “Malayness”, which was a collective identity shaped around allegiance to a ruler or ‘raja’ that later became ‘an open and inclusive enough a category to encompass any person who became part of Malay-speaking trading networks, spoke and wrote the language, wore certain clothes and ate certain foods’, as a non-biological inclusion.¹⁴

Empire and pluralism

The age of British Malaya saw the racial division of labour and other homogenising colonial policies as part of colonial strategies to ‘define and rule’.¹⁵ This meant that the economic, social and political contexts of Malaya became racialised; The Malay Reservation Enactment in 1913 legally codified the classification of “Malay”, who were then only allowed to grow rice or rubber.¹⁶ Large numbers of other Chinese and Indians arrived to become labourers and would later form a significant

¹¹ Sharmani P. Gabriel, ‘The Meaning of Race in Malaysia: Colonial, Post-Colonial and Possible New Conjunctures’, *Ethnicities*, 15 (2015), pp. 782–809 (p. 788).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ For more insight on the colonial policies of ‘define and rule’, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹⁶ Gabriel, p. 789.

minority.¹⁷ But because the Chinese were deemed untrustworthy, they were sent exclusively to the tin mines while the supposedly docile and semi civilised Tamils were employed in more steward-like roles in municipal and construction labour and as well as looking after European cash crops.¹⁸

These racial policies, a result of the anthropological imagination of oriental Chinese, medieval Malay, and subservient Tamil, form the basis of the plural institutionalisation of Malaya. Daniel P.S. Goh explores the definition of race here in the context of its appropriation by the Western world to explain the cultural behaviour of people groups, through the association of pseudo-scientific biological essences, to justify the missions of Empire:

[The concept of race] reflects social realities that have been historically structured by colonial racialisation... Race then is not simply an artificial idea to be deconstructed but a sociological fact, a category of analysis that should be examined in specific historical contexts and its link to social institutions [...]

In Malaya, the British saw the Chinese as economically useful but perfidious orientals to be kept out of the colonial body politic while the Malays were lazy but picturesque medieval to be advanced in civilisation by political and agricultural training and the Tamils from South India to be cared for as docile savages working European-owned plantations.¹⁹

This thinking, the imposition and contrast of 'noble savage', 'medieval' and 'oriental' identities, loomed over all vertical and horizontal facets of Malaysian life. Systems of education in Malay and Tamil vernacular were devised to intentionally segregate these social groups; stock images of lazy Malays were often contrasted with equally distorting representations of hardworking immigrant Chinese and Indian; the

¹⁷ The Chinese would make up 45% of the total population by 1950. For a fuller statistic, see Maurice Freedman, 'The Growth of a Plural Society in Malaya', *Pacific Affairs*, 33 (1960), pp. 158–168.

¹⁸ Goh, p. 236.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

status of 'British subject' was rewarded only to descendants of those in the middle class Chinese-dominated Straits Settlements who were increasingly anglicised, exacerbating feelings of disparity; the everyday relationship between the colonised and each other became the reinforcement of this discourse that intentionally provoked antagonisms and entrenchment of difference between social groups.²⁰

The explicit reorganisation of the social economy to this pluralist model can consequently be viewed as both an anthropological construction of a racially pluralist worldview and an institutional construction of plural social structures.²¹ Furthermore, the creation of fixed racial categories serves as proof that the British colonised 'not only the physical and spatial imaginaries of Malaysia, but also the native epistemological space'.²² The transethnic solidarities common to Malayan history, even in the early periods of colonisation, were wholly and systematically weakened and erased. We can see here that racial conflict and division were not natural outcomes of cultural difference and economic modernity, as some would still believe, but complicit constructions for the colonial model of pluralism.²³

The interest of Empire to 'define' colonised reality to this model was so that it could 'rule' it – on its own terms of exploitation that preserved the power relationship of colonised/coloniser and subject/governor. In other words, the reframing of the cultural dynamics and diversities of Malaysian society together with its existing lack of social cohesiveness and its potential instability into modalities of power, knowledge and governance was implemented to rule this society from the outside. In Gabriel's terms, 'in contrast to prior modes of constructing imagined community that emanated or were forged from within, the pluralist paradigm was a template for social community that was imposed from outside and above society. It was a concept that sought to describe, and then rationalise social differences for the vested interests of the state'.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 236-237; Gabriel, p. 789. Goh further outlines the confining of certain economic sectors according to race. But he does this to elicit its significance to race relations, rather than to enter discourse on colonial economic policy.

²¹ Goh, p. 236.

²² Gabriel, p. 789.

²³ Goh, p. 237.

²⁴ Gabriel, p. 791.

The inheritance of race

This interventionist racial form of governance and its (divisive) pluralist worldview were inherited and sustained by the nationalist elites in the process of decolonisation. Though discussion on colonial inheritance and its exploitative forms of governance are already well present in the current discourse on postcolonial state formation, the racialisation of the political realm in post-independence Malaya calls for an added dimension of approach; the sheer inseparability of race from politics, economics and imagined epistemological society means that any analysis here must be socio-historical in addition to postcolonial. Because the categorisation of race was entrenched in the colonial system of administration as an apparatus of control it quickly became an expedient tool for political mobilisation in the hands of the new ruling elite.²⁵ This is reflected in the multi-party ruling coalition *Barisan Nasional* (National Front) that 'derive[s] [its] origins, ideologies and imperatives from colonial contexts'.²⁶ Each party in the coalition – United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), and Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) – 'has been formed on the legitimising platform of race and race interests'.²⁷ The result of this is an 'a priori' view of race that excludes the once diasporic Chinese and Indian descendants from the terrain of the national; 'Malaysianness' is still viewed primarily in relation to one's ancestral culture without taking into account the significant transitions and transformations of its society.²⁸

The politically charged fabric of modern Malaysian pluralism can be traced back to the tumultuous period of history where the relationship between 'race' and 'nation' came to be defined in the official discourse. Goh's explanation of this is crystal clear:

[i]n decolonising Malaya, the chief disagreement was whether the political primacy of the Malays maintained by the colonial state should continue, making Malaya a 'Malay Malaya' where the non-Malays would recognise Malay primacy in exchange

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 792.

for equal citizenship rights, or that formal racial equality should define the nation, making Malaya a 'Malayan Malaya' where a new hybrid national culture would be cultivated.

This originally pitted the conservative multiracial alliance [*Barisan Nasional*] led by the United Malay National Organisation against the radical anticolonial left. After the left was decimated by British repressions, the disagreement was expressed by political competition between the ruling elites in Kuala Lumpur and the People's Action Party elites in Singapore. The charged political environment led to the Chinese-Malay riots in 1964 and then eventually to the separation of Singapore and Malaysia in 1965 [...]

The internal tension continued in Malaysia, with opposition parties filling in the gap left by Singapore elites, but this was resolved in favour of the dominant Malay-primacy nation-building project after bloody Chinese-Malay riots in May 1969.²⁹

May 13, 1969

The clashes of 1969, deceptively labelled as 'race riots', were not born from the escalation of 'natural ethnic tension' but from internal political contestation within UMNO over this issue of Malay primacy.³⁰ The event saw a number of mass killings over several days in the capital Kuala Lumpur and Chinese-dominated Penang immediately following the conclusion of general elections where the opposition, who pushed for a vision of formal racial equality, made substantial gains.³¹ (Revisionist) accounts of the events accuse 'political dissenters' within UMNO, insecure over the lack of state reform to address the disparity of Malay poverty against the economically dominant Chinese, as deliberately instigating the racial outbreak. This pitting of 'Malay vs Chinese' framed the violence of the clash and saw ultimately to the justification of state intervention into and regulation of the economy, leading to the implementation of the New Economic Policy in 1971, a

²⁹ Goh, pp. 240-241.

³⁰ Gabriel, p. 792.

³¹ Ibid; Goh, p. 241.

race-based affirmative action program aimed to restructure economic participation and wealth ownership.³²

The ever looming threat of another 'May 13' became a political tool invoked to shape the national imagination, keeping society mired in the same racial assumptions and classifications in exploiting the 'unheimlich terror of ... [the] race of the Other'.³³ Gabriel refers to Bhabha's concept of the 'Other' in noting that the riots themselves, in sustaining the idea of national comm(unity) through the prism of 'otherness', are a hallmark of the contradictions present in the pluralist narrative of the nation. The new interventions into the politico-economic, which are both correction to and continuation of colonial constructions of race, define today the reality of Malaysian pluralism, and therefore the reality of a Malaysian identity.³⁴

ENGMALCHIN AND THE PLURAL IMAGININGS OF MALAYA

It is the early 1950s. Following the Second World War, the colonial mission is nearing its end in Malaya as negotiations for independence eventually come to fruition in 1957. It is a season of change. A group of students at the University of Malaya discuss the possibilities of a new 'Malayan' culture pieced together from distinctively local traditions.³⁵ Among them, a literary student, Wang Gungwu, puts forward the idea of 'creating a Malayan poetry of a fusion of English, native languages and local idioms'.³⁶ The realisation of this project would become the syncretic literary language of Engmalchin (the conflation of the first syllables of the three languages of its composition – English, Malay, Chinese).

Wang Gungwu, in an autobiographical discussion of these events in the editorial of *The Malayan Undergrad Vol 9. No. 5* in July 1958, 'Trial

³² Gabriel, pp. 791-792.

³³ Bhabha, qtd. in Gabriel, p. 793.

³⁴ The continuation of state policies to this effect include the National Development Policy (NDP) in 1990 and The Race Relations Act in 2011 (ironically based on the UK legislation of the same name).

³⁵ Philip Holden, 'Interrogating Diaspora: Wang Gungwu's Pulse', *ARIEL* 33 (2002), pp. 105-129 (p. 115).

³⁶ Philip Holden, "'Somewhere Foreign Enough To Belong To'", *Interventions*, 18 (2016), pp. 483-497 (p. 492).

and Error in Malayan poetry', gives us an untitled poem written in 1949, prior to Engmalchin but exemplary of its pluralist vision:

*Multiplicity of cultures,
Intrigue
of cosmopolitan art –
Their fragments lie about the world,
Fallen pieces of pottery,
Discarded
Because the painter could not keep
His vision whole.³⁷*

Periods of imitation and representation

The beginning of English-Literature in Malaysia and Singapore is widely attributed to the publication of the literary magazine 'Cauldron' in Singapore in the late 1940s. Although the 'colonial tongue' at this stage was really only spoken fluently by the 'minority elites', English survived as an expressive medium for a select few.³⁸ This period was one of imitation – poetic styles were largely derivative of classical English tradition, in particular Romantic and Victorian poetry.³⁹ Out of this period however, writers became increasingly conscious of the 'inexorable doubt [that] whatever they write will never be anything more than a pathetic imitation of English poetry'.⁴⁰ This frustration is apparent in the following passage from Lloyd Fernando's 'Variation on a Theme by T.S. Eliot':

*I would meet you upon this honestly
I was near to your heart and saw your beauty
But I have lost my passion
Why should I need to keep it*

³⁷ Wang Gungwu, 'Trial and Error in Malayan Poetry', *The Malayan Undergrad* 9 (1958), pp. 1-7 (p. 1).

³⁸ Raihana Mohd. Mydin., 'Malaysia and The Author: Face-to-Face with The Challenges of Multiculturalism', *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, 5 (2009), pp. 43-63 (p. 46).

³⁹ Kosetsu, p. 93.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

*Since what is kept must be
Adulterated dismal imitation?*⁴¹

We can infer that 'you' refers to the mode of English Literature that he questions. By comparing T.S. Eliot's original passage from *Gerontion* we can see also that Fernando's mimicry is not one of mockery, but an existential reflection.⁴² Eliot's original passage, expressing man's inability to surrender completely to love, reads:

I would meet you upon this honestly.
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom,
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?⁴³

In this realisation, the period of 'imitation' quickly turned into one of 'representation' as writers like Fernando 'sought to create definitively Malayan poems' and wrote on 'consciously Malayan subjects and scenes' in the effort to reflect a growing national consciousness.⁴⁴ The period of representation here saw to the domestication of the English Language to the local context where writers tried to 'bend, tend, acculturate, or nativise it so as to render it suitable and workable as an instrument for forging an authentic image of themselves'.⁴⁵ It is in this transition that we can place the literary project of Engmalchin.

⁴¹ Lloyd Fernando, 'Variation on a Theme by T.S. Eliot' in *Who Are You My Country?*, ed. by Winston Toh Ghee Wei et al (Singapore: Landmark Books, 2018), pp. 94-95 (p. 94).

⁴² Kosetsu, p. 94. Kosetsu originally used this comparison to show the transition from imitation to consciously local modes.

⁴³ T.S. Eliot, 'Gerontion' in *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), pp. 31-33 (p. 31).

⁴⁴ Kosetsu, p. 94; Alastair Pennycook, *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (Longman, 1994), p. 272.

⁴⁵ W.P. Chin Holaday, 'Singing in a Second Tongue: Recent Malaysian and Singaporean Poetry in English', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 18.1 (1983), pp. 27-41 (p. 131).

Engmalchin and 'Ahmad'

The following poem by Wang Gungwu, 'Ahmad was educated', is a prime example of self-conscious code-switching typical of culturally plural interaction and an unmistakably local subject matter, arranged in a vestigial English form:

*Ahmad was educated.
He never liked his masters, but he was.
He can be a clerk, all thought,
But in his heart he had stirrings for Cam,
Where his Head had been, who was so clever.*

*His wife with child again.
Three times had he fasted,
And puasa [fasting] was coming round once more.
One hundred to start with — a good scheme;
Quarters too,
With a room for his two little girls.
Kampong Batu [Batu Village] was dirty!*

*Thoughts of Camford fading,⁴⁶
Contentment creeping in.
Allah has been kind;
Orang puteh [white man] has been kind.
Only yesterday his brother said,
Can get lagi satu wife lah! [You can get another wife!]*

*Ahmad was educated;
The education was complete.⁴⁷*

Ahmad is an English-educated family man with a common, plain Malay name – a 'John Doe' of a certain kind, perhaps an everyman of this imagining of society. The reference to Malay customs such as *puasa* (religious fasting), the season of Ramadan, *Allah* (God), and so on form the body – his thoughts of a content Malayan life. We also see that

⁴⁶ 'Camford' is a portmanteau of Cambridge and Oxford.

⁴⁷ Wang, 'Trial and Error', pp. 2-3. Translation and glosses by author of article.

although he describes the colonial master/*Orang puteh* as having been kind, kind enough that he could be content, he is uncomfortable with their comparison ('He never liked his masters, but he was [educated like them]'). The particle '-lah' derives from Hokkien (a dialect of Chinese) frequently used in informal speech, and Malay words here are not substitutes for English ones but conversely are the subject of which the English words describe; there is no effect of 'translation' here but it is a flow of natural speech. If we look closer at the polyglot effect of the third last line '*Can get lagi satu wife lah!*', we see that it resembles the informality and syncretism of *Bahasa Pasar* (Market Language) – *Can get* (appropriated English) *lagi satu* (Malay for 'one more/another') *wife* (English) – *lah* (Hokkien particle). The entire sentence kept together is an old Malayan idiom, meaning 'Life is going so well, you can get another wife'.

Wang describes the significance of the idiom here:

But we continued to be self-consciously Malayan and puzzled about the Malayan idiom [in *Ahmad*], especially about the way people in Malaya used the English language. We observed the words which have been accepted into the English language, noticing one of our professors saying, without batting an eyelid, 'When the *towkay* ['leader'] goes into the *kampong* ['village']'. There was no problem there. What floored us was the illegitimate mixing of various languages; our stock example of this was 'Itu stamp ta' ada gum ta' boleh stick-lah' ['That stamp has no gum, it cannot stick']. What can we make of that? We could not even decide whether that was Malay with a few English words or English with a Malay syntax.⁴⁸

Bahasa pasar/market language

The amalgamations of *Bahasa Pasar* can be attributed to naturalisations over a period of time – a common occurrence in all societies where English is spoken in a multilingual context. However, it is imperative that we distinguish Engmalchin, which is a formal literary syncretism, from 'Market Language' – it is precisely the contrast between the rigid English structure and the malleability of the Malayan idiom in 'Ahmad'

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

that begets the question that Wang Gungwu poses here. In fact, Engmalchin was often criticised for its artificiality that alienated an English-Language audience unfamiliar with Malay or Chinese.⁴⁹

Contrast with postcolonial literatures

Philip Holden in 'Interrogating Diaspora: Wang Gungwu's Pulse' discusses the problems in placing Wang in the early narrative of postcoloniality that intersects with the emergence of national literatures. Having previously made the point that Engmalchin would never be recognised by both Singaporean and Malaysian nationalisms, Holden suggests nevertheless that the task of Engmalchin's hybridity to 'fully appropriate English forms for local use', although failed at this time, would later develop into a defining particularism of postcolonial literatures.⁵⁰

But let us elaborate on Holden's statements here. We must also distinguish the specific polyglot effect of Engmalchin's appropriation of English from that of later postcolonial literatures. The insertion of unglossed and untranslated words, phrases or concepts from a first language into an English-Language text makes known the cultural gap between the writer's world and the colonial culture; the untranslated first language's resistance to interpretation is used to represent the writer's world to the coloniser and emphasise difference from it. Bill Ashcroft defines this as the effect of the 'metonymic gap' in postcolonial literatures.⁵¹ What Engmalchin tries to do is not to contrast the three languages to show fundamental difference in culture, but to show how they work together to represent the reality of language, politics, and society, all of which were inescapably plural. Engmalchin's poetry is not seamless in appearance (of course the 'seams' may be attributed largely to the categorical constructions of race), but it is seamless in function. Bill Ashcroft's metonymic device exists within Engmalchin, in that it tries to differentiate itself from the world of the coloniser, but it does so through its syncretism: the cultural gap is formed, not through

⁴⁹ Rajeev S. Patke and Philip Holden, *The Routledge Concise History of Southeast Asian Writing in English* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 52.

⁵⁰ Holden, 'Interrogating Diaspora', pp. 116-117.

⁵¹ Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London: Routledge Psychology Press, 2001), p. 75.

the jarring contrast of untranslated first language, but how the untranslated first language(s) incorporates English and each other in a completely functional way. In this way, Engmalchin can declare that Malayan language (at the time) consists harmoniously of English, Malay, Chinese, and to a lesser extent Tamil, while English, the language of the coloniser, in and of itself, cannot say the same.⁵²

These attempts are a hallmark of the period of representation, which was a response to the period of imitation. Engmalchin's image of plural society, reflected in its syncretism, responds accordingly. The language of the coloniser, in Romantic and Victorian prose, could never accurately represent the detachment of local peoples from Empire in that decade. But then, neither could the Malay tradition, for it could not speak intimately for the Chinese or Indians. Neither could Mandarin, as it could not differentiate itself from the language of China nor its many other diasporic migrants and dialects. These experiments with language and form, although more radical, align themselves with the goal of postcolonial literatures, which is to comment on the postcolonial identity.

Engmalchin and the plural identity

Consider this untitled poem written by Wang in 1950:

*We are the audience
Of the three camps.
We are the campsters, too.
We rush around
To see the others,*

⁵² Although Tamil as a diasporic language is present and amalgamated in Bahasa Pasar, its use within Engmalchin is evidently limited. However, English is sometimes used to represent the diasporic experience of the Indian community in Malaysian literature, for example, the prolific works of K.S. Maniam. For a contemporary discussion on the marginalisation of the Tamil language, see Rajantheran, M, Balakrishnan Muniapan, and G Manickam Govindaraju, 'Identity and Language of Tamil Community in Malaysia: Issues and Challenges', in *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research* (2012), pp. 78-82.

<<http://repository.um.edu.my/26405/1/Humanities.pdf>> [accessed 8 May 2018].

*But the mirror is a prism blue*⁵³

Pluralism by this time was already an ingrained identity, as outlined in the previous section, but the incoming horizon of independence meant that now, the question was not '[a]re we plural?' but instead '[h]ow do we define ourselves as Malayan? Is it by how we view each other?' The question of perception is clear in the imagery of 'audience', 'mirror', and 'prism', in context of the line '*To see the others*'. What is the mirror? What is the prism? Is it the prism of cultural otherness? Why would we look for the others in a mirror, except if they are not a distortion of our own self? And if we are both the audience of others and performer to others, what are we without the relation of the other? Perhaps we could describe this poem as an act of cultural enunciation, or even an exercise in cultural trigonometry.

Wang explains his hopes for a synthetic poetry/constructed identity:

We persisted, however, not so much for the art of poetry as for the ideal of the new Malayan consciousness. The emphasis in our search for 'Malayan poetry' was in the word, 'Malayan'.

In our many trials, we were moving away from the poetry to the political assumptions behind it. Some of us thought we had things to say of political significance which we could say in poetry.

What it was that we called 'Malayan' was no less difficult to determine then as it was now [1958, a year after independence]. Most of the time we were merely hopeful that the three major communities would throw up from their native or imported civilisations the material for a new synthesis.

This synthetic product would then be infused with the stuff of European poetry and bound firmly in the English language. This was cosmopolitan art and we had come round to thinking that Malayan poetry would have to be cosmopolitan.⁵⁴

The imbued political assumption of course was the idea that Malayan poetry *had* to be cosmopolitan. They were not so much looking for an expression of identity through poetry as they were looking for a tangible

⁵³ Wang, 'Trial and Error', p. 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

embodiment of it. What they could not possibly foresee was the violently contested nature of the Malayan identity (or Malaysian, since the departure of Singapore in 1965) well into contemporary times as a result of the continued racialisation of politics and the economy. There is no doubt they were aware of racialisation in the colonial era— that this form of pluralism was created by the British. But this was no barrier to their efforts. This was a season of change. And in this change, they sought a constant.

The death of Engmalchin

The death of Engmalchin came ultimately as a consequence of their appropriation of the English Language. Their experiments immediately prior to independence were met with fierce opposition, because ‘to use language in a way other than that sanctioned by the English canon offended the neo-colonial sensibility’.⁵⁵ They found themselves unable to ‘situate themselves as the subject of the language rather than adopting linguistic and literary frames of reference which cast them and their experiences as deviations from the ‘norm’.⁵⁶ It is interesting to encounter here again the ‘norm’ of local reality as our great antagonist. Essentially, Engmalchin’s English was considered more trouble than it was worth at the time.

Wang describes here the moment of realisation:

Our later attempts were sadder for we became less certain of our purpose [...] We were confident at the start that we knew what was Malayan and what was not. By 1953, almost carrying inversely with the political consciousness of other people in Malaya, we had lost our earlier vision [...]

Curiously enough, the most serious error was the one we realised earliest and the one we were most reluctant to admit. This was the contradiction between our search for Malayan poetry and our decision to base that search on the English verse forms. [...]

⁵⁵ Anne Brewster, *Towards a Semiotic of Post-Colonial Discourse: University Writing in Singapore and Malaysia 1949-1965* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 1989), p. 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

We had, in fact, decided on using English for the wrong reasons. We used it not because we thought it did not really matter what language we used nor because we thought English was the most appropriate or the best medium. We used English because it was convenient and because [*sic.*] were in a hurry. We were impatient to write Malayan poetry which we thought needed only to consist of Malayan images and sentiments.⁵⁷

Much of the commentary on Engmalchin within the history of Malaysian Literature begins and ends on a single sentence: that they were the first to do it but too hasty and artificial to see it through.⁵⁸ As I have demonstrated, its short-lived existence is not one to be dismissed so easily.

Besides its implications for both Malaysian English and English-Language Literature, which are well studied, Engmalchin gives us an early conception of a plural postcolonial identity at odds with the emerging reality of the times.

The arty-crafty dodging of reality

Raihanah M. M. gives us two contrasting conceptualisations of reality to analyse the writer's role within Malaysian Literature: 'authorial-defined social reality', which to us is the defined plural society of colonial and national construction, and 'author-defined social reality', which stems from 'everyday-defined social reality'.⁵⁹ She does this to resolve the contradiction between the writer's persona as either wholly 'public' or 'private', between writing as a political act and writing as an act of intellectual freedom, and equip them with a tripartite identity – as a member of a multicultural nation, a member of an ethnic group,

⁵⁷ Wang, 'Trial and Error', p. 4-5.

⁵⁸ See Kotetsu, p. 95; Patke and Holden, p. 52; Holden, Philip, 'A Literary History of Race: Reading Singapore Literature in English in an Historical Frame', in *Race and Multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore*, ed. by Daniel P. S. Goh, Mathilda Gabrielpillai, Philip Holden, and Gaik Cheng Khoo (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), pp. 19–35 (p. 28); Pennycook, p. 272; Rachel Leow, *Taming Babel: Language in the Making of Malaysia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 191.

⁵⁹ Raihana Mohd. Mydin., p. 55.

and as an individual – in order to give them a creative license to be a ‘voice of conscience for the nation’.⁶⁰ These conceptualisations give us the means to situate Engmalchin within ‘issues such as identity politics, racialized representation and the state of plurality in the country’; they allow us to evaluate writers in the nation-building context where otherwise impossible, using meaningful variables such as degrees of national recognition.⁶¹ More importantly, they put forward the notion that the distinguishing feature of the writer is to see these realities, move between them, critique them, to ‘dodge’ them, to imagine them – to create not just social commentary, but use their public position to influence reality. Writers create links between ‘the real with the fantastic, the physical with the metaphysical, the personal with the social’ in order to make sense of ‘the real from the vainglorious, truth from inanity’.⁶²

In this way, much to the dismay of Devan Nair, we can say being an ‘arty-crafty dodger of reality’ is exactly the point: in thinking critically and reflectively on realities of identity and society, we, like Wang Gungwu, may not ascertain necessarily the answers we seek, at least not immediately, but in doing so – in the metamorphosis of question and experimentation – we form invaluable perspective.

Concluding statements

Contemporary discussion on Malaysian Literature in a national context remains divisive. Literatures in English, Chinese and Tamil are still seen as ‘foreign literature’ written in ‘non-indigenous languages’ in ‘narrow and chauvinistic traditions’.⁶³

Immediately following the ‘May 13, 1969’ killings and reformations of Malaysian society, an exodus of sorts took place among writers in

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Raihanah Mohd. Mydin., and Shahizah Ismail Hamdan, ‘Afterword: Malaysian Writers and the Malaysian Self’, in *Linking Literary Identities: Malaysian Society, Culture and the Other* (Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press, 2003), pp. 66-73 (p. 69); Lloyd Fernando, *Cultures in Conflict: Essays on Literature & the English Language in South East Asia* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1986), p. 103.

⁶³ Raihanah Mohd. Mydin., p. 48.

English. Some chose to leave the country, like Shirley Lim, who went to America and found critical acclaim there as an Asian-American writer and English professor. Following suit, Ee Tiang Hong, one of the co-founders of Engmalchin, left for Australia and up to his death in 1990 wrote profusely on the events of May 13. Some like national laureate Muhammad Haji Salleh, made a conscious decision to distance themselves from English and write only in the national language of Malay. Among those who stayed, Wong Phui Nam, abstained from all writing for twenty-one years as a form of protest at these policies. At a press conference in 2009, aged 74, Phui Nam declared Malaysian Literature in English as dead.

In remembering Engmalchin, we can point back to an imagining of national pluralism that is neither a one-dimensional nor parochial representation but one that recognises the modality of culture in a postcolonial society.⁶⁴ In a wider context, by contrasting literary assessments of social reality across a history, we chart not only the evolution of a society, but the evolution of its literary imagining.

Perhaps here we can end on a word of encouragement from Wang Gungwu. Having learnt from his mistakes in Engmalchin, he implores us:

We were so impatient for results that we could not see a truth that I can see now. This is that when the Malaysians appear, there will be Malayan poetry. Until then good poetry is all we need.⁶⁵

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⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 51-53 for critiques of Malaysian Literature in English being either Parochial or One-Dimensional in their representation of local pluralism.

⁶⁵ Wang, 'Trial and Error', p. 6.

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'I am Cinderella': Naming, Power and Identity

Sally King

In Disney's live-action *Cinderella* of 2015, at a pivotal moment in the film, the Fairy Godmother says the words 'names have power', pointing to the importance of naming in the film.¹ Indeed, names are of significance in most versions of the fairy tale Cinderella, with the actual process of naming forming part of the narrative, whether explicitly or implicitly, because Cinderella's name is a sobriquet. Names and naming therefore play a key role in the eponymous character's status and identity, and the Fairy Godmother's quotation highlights the prominence given to these themes in this filmic adaptation. However, even though 'power' could be interpreted negatively or positively at this stage in the film due to the scenes that precede and follow it, the eventual resolution of the film involves returning power to the patriarchal norm. The later declaration by Ella, the Cinderella character, of 'I am Cinderella' comes to have great bearing on the film's portrayal of power and identity, which are intimately linked to the naming of this character and its relationship to femininity. Ultimately, the step-family's empowered feminist act of naming is portrayed negatively, while Ella's assertion of her inferior position through negative self-naming is framed in a positive manner, leaving the patriarchal labelling system intact.

In this essay, relevant feminist arguments – some well-established, some more recent – will be harnessed to explore the interrelationship between naming, power and identity, with the varied choice of theories reflecting the film's own combination of the traditional and the modern. There will be occasional reference to inter-lingual renderings of the name 'Cinderella' in translation, subtitle and voice-over since these processes can expose and underscore the nuances of the English text. In particular, the languages of French and German will be considered, due to the influential part played by Charles Perrault's French *Cendrillon* (1697) and the Brothers Grimm's German *Aschenputtel* (1812-1857) in the trajectory of the Cinderella tale in the Western

¹ *Cinderella*, dir. by Kenneth Branagh (Walt Disney, 2015) [on DVD]; *Cendrillon*, [French-language DVD, 2015].

world.² Scenes from the live-action *Cinderella* that deal most significantly with the topic of naming will be unpicked, drawing on appropriate theories at applicable stages.

In the opening scene, specific reference is made to naming. The voice-over, which we later discover is the voice of the Fairy Godmother, tells us that '[o]nce upon a time, there was a girl called Ella...', before the image shows the face of a baby girl. At various points in the film, 'calling', 'naming' and 'being' are used, each having its own connotations and significance. Here, with 'calling', we are dealing with interpellation and entry into society in the sense presented by Louis Althusser, as Ella is surrounded by her father and mother looking down upon her, granting her societal access. In Althusser's work, 'interpellation' or 'hailing' are processes by which individuals become subjects, gaining a name and recognition while also becoming embroiled in societal mechanisms.³ The idea of bestowing a name upon an individual and hence introducing them into society is also present in Disney's earlier animated *Cinderella* (1950) via mice.⁴ In parallel to activities surrounding the birth of a baby, Cinderella, acting as parent figure, provides a newcomer mouse with clothes and a name, Gus, thereby initiating him into society. The mouse requires a name to be accepted into the house-mouse society. Significantly, Cinderella initially mistakes him for a female mouse, and the name and clothes are selected by Cinderella to correct any ambiguity. In this act, gender dichotomies are reinforced since the mouse is given a traditionally masculine name and outfit. The live-action film then goes on to reinforce the alignment between name and gender through the act of

² Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (London: Random House, 1994), pp. xii–xiii, 202–203, 294; Charles Perrault, *Histoires, Ou Contes Du Temps Passé, Avec Des Moralitez* (Paris: C. Barbin, 1697), pp. 117–148; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- Und Haus-Marchen Gesammelt Durch Die Bruder Grimm*, 2nd edn, 3 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1819), I, pp. 114–123.

³ Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays: Notes Towards an Investigation*, trans. by Ben Brewster (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 127–186 (pp. 173, 176).

⁴ *Cinderella*, dir. by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske (RKO/Walt Disney, 1950) [on DVD].

naming or calling, as we are introduced to Ella with gender-specific 'girl' rather than the more neutral 'baby'.

The practice of naming and the resultant gendering relate to the broader topic of language and its application in society. Judith Butler highlights Monique Wittig's suggestion that language structure is not inherently misogynistic but tends to be handled to misogynistic ends. In her novel *Les Guérillères* (1969), Wittig adopts the French third person feminine plural pronoun 'elles' rather than the default masculine 'ils', utilising language as a tool to fight back against patriarchal oppression.⁵ She uses her writing to present how women can reassert themselves within the current language system by applying it differently to its current use.⁶ Similarly, Betty Friedan specifically discusses naming as a potentially powerful antidote to repression and loss of identity. Her reference to 'the problem that has no name' conveys how the ability to name an issue, the existence of which might otherwise be questioned, can be hugely empowering and liberating.⁷ This ability gives voice to someone who is otherwise at a loss for words and whose identity becomes subsumed into misunderstanding. Naming can thus be a way of coping with the world. Yet Dale Spender, while supporting Friedan's viewpoint, also argues that '[n]aming [...] is not a neutral or random process' and '[a]ll naming is of necessity biased'.⁸ As such, naming is arbitrary from a linguistic point of view, but has come to be highly strategic from a political perspective. While naming has the potential to liberate an individual by enabling mastery in the form of self-confidence and assertion, it is often abused for the benefit of the dominant parties to overbear others in a negative form of mastery.

⁵ Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969).

⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 36, 140, 159; Monique Wittig, 'The Mark of Gender', *Gender Issues*, 5.2 (1985), pp. 3–12; Monique Wittig, 'The Point of View: Universal or Particular?', *Gender Issues*, 3.2 (1983), pp. 63–69 (p. 63); Monique Wittig, 'The Straight Mind', *Gender Issues*, 1.1 (1980), pp. 103–111 (p. 108).

⁷ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 1963), pp. 16–17; Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, 2nd edn (London: Pandora Press, 1998), p. 188.

⁸ Spender, pp. 163, 164.

In contrast to Wittig, Luce Irigaray argues that a whole new language is necessary to move beyond the confines of current language and the relations of power and identity engrained within it. Although, according to Toril Moi, Irigaray's understanding of women and patriarchy is at times univocal and simplistic, approaching them each as monolithic rather than multi-faceted entities, her work is nonetheless insightful.⁹ Irigaray writes that:

the feminine can try to speak to itself through a new language but cannot describe itself from outside [...] except by identifying itself with the masculine. The alternative, however, is silence: the alternative is to be a muted group.¹⁰

Irigaray suggests that remaining within language as we know it automatically conscribes women to its patriarchal structure, meaning that to not be subsumed, women must not speak at all. This view points to the notion of phallogocentrism, as Jacques Derrida calls it, as our way of understanding is shaped by and reinforces the power of male dominance conveyed through language, particularly speech.¹¹ Moi writes that the process of naming and labelling betrays 'a phallogocentric drive to stabilize, organize and rationalize our conceptual universe'.¹² From this perspective, language and naming – as a particular form of language – provoke entrapment within a male-defined order, as they establish and maintain a fixed framework around identity and power.

Naming is a central feature of the film and these arguments indicate the options available to Ella. The name 'Ella' suggests that the fairy-tale character with which we are familiar has a new lease of life in being renamed and offered an alternative to the traditional 'Cinderella', potentially working in line with Wittig's argument of the subversive use to which language can be put. Yet it soon emerges as the film unfolds

⁹ Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 147, 148.

¹⁰ Luce Irigaray, 'Women's Exile', trans. by Couze Venn, *Ideology and Consciousness*, 1 (1977), pp. 62–76 (p. 65).

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Le Facteur de La Vérité', *Poétique*, 21 (1975), pp. 96–147 (p. 145).

¹² Moi, pp. 159–160.

that Irigaray's understanding of language's stranglehold is the most applicable, displacing the potential positivity of Wittig's ideas and their bearing on the film. Ella's line of 'I am Cinderella' constitutes an act of speaking out by planting herself firmly in the male-defined order; she ironically breaks her silence to assert her inferior, subjugated position, in line with Irigaray's argument. She seems to seize the power of naming, but rather than using it to break out of the patriarchal language system, she adopts it in such a way as to submit to its power. Significantly, it is women – the step-mother and step-sisters – who provide the name 'Cinderella'. Nevertheless, these women end up being punished for attempting to manipulate language to their own ends.

The scene in which the step-sisters and step-mother devise Ella's nickname at the breakfast table somewhat exposes naming as a construct. Ella has slept lying 'by the dying embers of the hearth to keep warm'. Commenting on and mocking Ella's ash-covered face, one step-sister, Anastasia, titters '[i]t's ash from the fireplace' and 'you'll get cinders in our tea'. The other, Drizella, then says 'I've got a new name for her... Cinder-wench'. The dirtiness and dustiness of ash contrasts with the cleanliness of cinders, as has been highlighted in various discussions of the tale Cinderella, including by Bruno Bettelheim and Philip Pullman.¹³ Yet even though in this extract of the film Ella has ash on her face, and the step-sisters have mentioned both ash and cinders, she is referred to as 'cinder'. As such, while 'Cinder-wench' itself means 'a female whose occupation it is to rake cinders from among ashes' the emphasis is on the 'cinders', not 'ash', and Drizella's choice of a name draws on the cleaner element instead of highlighting the dirtiness.¹⁴ The relative cleanliness of the name belies its nasty connotations, and the innocent façade conceals its damaging nature.

The cleaning up of the name can be traced in the development of the Cinderella tale through versions by Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Disney. In Perrault's 1697 version of *Cinderella*, the eponymous character is called 'Cendrillon', with the French 'cendres' meaning both

¹³ Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), p. 253; Philip Pullman, *Grimm Tales for Young and Old* (London: Penguin, 2012), pp. 126–127.

¹⁴ "cinder, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2018, <www.oed.com/view/Entry/33070> [accessed 16 May 2018].

'ash' and 'cinders'.¹⁵ In Robert Samber's first English translation of 1729, 'Cendrillon' was rendered as 'Cinderilla', which later became 'Cinderella'.¹⁶ The use of 'cinder' removes the sense of ash from the name, thereby eliminating its grimy connotations. While Samber's translation in general remains close to Perrault's text and does not significantly alter the tale's character, his choice of name removes the degree of ambiguity in the French term, altering our perceptions of the character through naming.

Perrault's tale also refers to the older step-sister's cruel nickname for Cinderella, 'Cucendron', which suffixes 'cendres' to 'cul', the latter meaning 'arse' or 'bottom'.¹⁷ 'Cucendron' is translated by Samber as 'Cinderbrech', itself combining 'cinder' with 'brech', meaning a person's buttocks.¹⁸ Hence, when Drizella concocts 'Cinder-wench' in the live-action film, there are echoes of the 'Cinder-brech' from Perrault and Samber, albeit euphemised. Disney therefore further sanitised names and their derivations, continuing the approach pursued by Samber. Yet the sanitising process merely presents a shiny veneer, as the problematic connotations are not removed but pressured into latency.

Another influential version of the Cinderella tale focusses on ash rather than cinders, giving the name a much less clean sense. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm produced seven editions of their version of Cinderella between 1812 and 1857. Their character's name is 'Aschenputtel', with German 'Asche' meaning 'ash' and less commonly 'cinders'.¹⁹ The ash-

¹⁵ Perrault, *Histoires*, pp. 117–148.

¹⁶ Charles Perrault, *Histories or Tales of Past Times. With Morals.*, trans. by Robert Samber (London: J. Pote and R. Montagu, 1729), pp. 73–91; Charles Perrault, *Mother Goose Refigured: A Critical Translation of Charles Perrault's Fairy Tales*, trans. by Christine A. Jones (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016).

¹⁷ Perrault, *Histoires*, p. 120.

¹⁸ Perrault, *Histories or Tales of Past Times*, p. 75; Warner, p. 206; "brech, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2018, <www.oed.com/view/Entry/23009> [accessed 16 May 2018].

¹⁹ Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- Und Haus-Märchen*, 1st edn, 2 vols. (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812), I, pp. 88–101; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Kinder- Und Hausmärchen: Gesammelt Durch Die Brüder Grimm*, 7th edn (Göttingen: Verlag der dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1857), I–II, pp. 119–126.

inflected name reflects this Cinderella character whose wishes are granted by a tree rather than the Fairy Godmother of Perrault, rooting her in nature. The first English translation of the Brothers' *Aschenputtel*, among other tales, was performed by Edgar Taylor in collaboration with others, and published in 1826, with the name 'Aschenputtel' being rendered as 'Ashputtel'.²⁰ The translation thus preserves and emphasises the ash of the German name, evoking a tarnished appearance, rather than the ambiguity of the French and the cleanliness of its descendants. It can therefore be seen that 'ash' is also a part of Cinderella's heritage, yet 'cinder' has come to dominate via the Disney manifestations in the Anglophone world and many other countries strongly influenced by it. Henry A. Giroux and Jack Zipes highlight how Disney's seemingly innocuous material conceals often problematic depictions of women, while making audiences forget predecessors Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, to become the sole meaning-maker.²¹ In sanitising the tale, Disney presents its material as child-friendly and harmless, yet the philosophy conveyed by Disney tends to be far from innocent, as is evident in its handling of naming in the live-action Cinderella.

Anastasia follows Drizella's suggestion of 'Cinder-wench' with 'Dirty Ella'. Briefly, there is the possibility of Disney wavering in its steadfast use of the unblemished 'Cinderella', but this subversion is quickly suppressed. Drizella finally settles on 'Cinderella, that's what we'll call you', to which Lady Tremaine coos 'Oh girls, you're too clever'. As with the opening sequence, the extract again utilises 'call', this time placing the step-family as the parental figures of authority who perform the interpellation. In this way, they initiate the Ella/Cinderella character into their fold and force her to adhere to their societal structure, which is a matriarchal one based on patriarchal rules. The

²⁰ Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *German Popular Stories, Translated from the Kinder- Und Hausmärchen*, trans. by Edgar Taylor and David Jardine (London: James Robins, 1826), II, pp. 33–46.

²¹ Henry A. Giroux, 'Memory and Pedagogy in the "Wonderful World of Disney": Beyond the Politics of Innocence', in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender and Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 43–61; Jack Zipes, 'Breaking the Disney Spell', in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender and Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 21–42.

verb 'to call' creates a distance that is not present in the later verb 'to be', and 'you're called Cinderella' is eventually assimilated by Ella to the extent of becoming not just 'I'm called Cinderella', but 'I am Cinderella'.

The use of 'call' in 'Cinderella, that's what we'll call you' almost bears the force of a performative, as framed by J. L. Austin. He points out that in utterances such as 'I do' in a marriage ceremony or 'I declare war' the words themselves carry out that which they depict.²² Just as Butler refers to gender performativity as 'a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint',²³ the scene in which Ella is first called 'Cinderella' forms part of a ritual, rather than constituting an isolated incident. Although we witness the initial occasion on which the step-sisters force the new label onto Cinderella, the name itself, like gender, will come to stick through reiteration and habituation, which are processes that are not shown. This snapshot into the conception of the name, while showing its manufactured status, does not highlight the repetition involved in normalising the name and rendering it unquestionable, which is what leads Ella to identify herself as Cinderella.

The fact that the name is not immediately established, but takes time and repetition to become firmly fixed, is intimated by the step-mother's closing remarks in this scene, which she speaks cackling: 'Wouldn't you prefer to eat when all the work is done, Ella... or should I say, Cinderella?' The transition is being made from 'Ella' to 'Cinderella', but is not yet fully implemented. According to Butler, 'No "act" apart from a regularized and sanctioned practice can wield the power to produce that which it declares' and it is only through citation, repetition and iteration that the performative holds firm.²⁴ The step-mother's line gives a suggestion of the repetition involved in performativity, but the film does not offer a sustained exploration and exposition of the topic, which largely unfolds without the audience observing it. Butler argues that performativity has the 'power to establish what qualifies as "being",

²² J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 5, 7.

²³ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 60.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71, 178.

which rings true with the naming of 'Cinderella'.²⁵ While the girl was called Ella by her parents, those having seized power now call her Cinderella, submitting the character to their warped patriarchal rule since, as Butler writes unpicking Lacanian theory, '[t]o be named is [...] to be inculcated into that [paternal] law'.²⁶ Although it is a matriarchal household, the step-family, who perform the naming, they have adopted a patriarchal naming system, which results in their ultimate downfall. Meanwhile, Ella's submission to the paternal law is reinforced and not challenged.

The scene alludes to names as arbitrary and fabricated, rather than inherent and meaningful, since the step-sisters do not immediately arrive at the nickname 'Cinderella', but create it after two other configurations. Even so, the new name brings with it old luggage and old hierarchies. Moreover, the banality of this breakfast setting seems to suggest the way in which labelling occurs naturally, but it does not reveal the extent to which the name infiltrates and is normalised, often in a problematic manner.

Names, while arbitrary and fabricated, also have the power to elevate or denigrate an individual. Following Ella's humiliation by her step-family at the breakfast table, the Fairy Godmother's voice-over proclaims the pivotal phrase: "Cinderella": names have power, like magic spells'. The following line '[a]nd, of a sudden, it seemed to her that her step-mother and step-sisters had indeed transformed her into merely a creature of ash and toil' suggests that the power of naming has been seized by Ella's step-family to force her into a submissive role. Yet in the subsequent scene, it appears, on the contrary, that Ella is empowered, riding a horse and meeting the Prince on her own terms. The use of indefinite 'seemed' in the Fairy's phrasing thus suggests that despite the injurious nature of the epithet given to Ella by her step-relatives, there is the potential for her to withstand this nomenclature and show belief in herself that is not defined by others. At this stage in the narrative, there is a degree of ambiguity about the term 'power', and whether it suggests power used by the already powerful, power used by the underdogs, or both. Although the step-family here wield the power over Ella through naming her, there is still some glimmer of possibility

²⁵ Ibid., p. 140.

²⁶ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1985), p. 177; Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 41.

that Ella will subvert this domination. Nevertheless, eventually the emphasis lies on power exclusively held by the powerful, with negative implications for women; rather than suggesting that the disempowered and downtrodden may turn the tables, seize power and use it to their advantage, the status quo prevails, leaving the powerful in charge and the powerless subjugated. The patriarchal structures and strictures are not critiqued nor challenged.

Ella's first encounter with the Prince follows this powerful invocation about naming. Ella has ridden off on a horse and happened upon the Prince hunting, although she is oblivious to his royal stature. In the scene directly preceding the encounter, her face was sullied with dirt and dust as her step-family have reduced her to 'a creature of ash and toil'. Yet notably in Ella's meeting with the Prince, this dirt has disappeared, and she is slightly bedraggled, but clean. The removal of the ash could be for purely aesthetic reasons. Alternatively, it may be that the dirt has been eliminated to make it clear that it is the clean-faced Ella, rather than Cinderella – the creature of ash and toil – who is meeting the Prince. In this case, the girl 'Ella' is staying strong and not being forced to become 'Cinderella' in a highly symbolic act of self-assertion and preservation of personal identity, which disappointingly later crumbles.

In their first encounter, the Prince asks, '[w]hat do they call you?', to which Ella responds, '[n]ever mind what they call me'. There is a defiance in her word choice and her tone, as Ella suggests that names are merely labels, terms applied to a person that do not alter that person's essence. 'Call' is used again, which together with pronoun 'they', creates a separation between the name bestowed upon Ella and the way in which Ella would identify herself, if allowed to do so freely. She suggests that identity should not be changed by this categorisation imposed by others. There is perhaps the intimation that it does not matter what they (her step-mother and step-sisters) call her – what matters is her birth name, even though she does not pronounce this name either. At this point, while supposedly accepting the Althusserian 'hailing' that her parents granted her by calling her 'Ella', she does not accept the later 'hailing' as 'Cinderella'. All the same, she utters neither name, resisting the definition that comes with naming and refusing to be pinned down or branded by a name.

Throughout the film, we are led to believe that Ella's power and identity derives from her unspoken self-belief. She is portrayed as being

natural and kind through acts of goodwill, ranging from handling the mice with care, saving the deer from the hunters, and treating her step-family with patience. The recurring message of the film reiterates Ella's mother's dying words to her daughter, which she promises to follow, namely 'have courage and be kind', to be true to who she really is, with the suggestion that inner strength and benevolence will eventually prosper.

Towards the end of the film, when the step-mother, having found the glass slipper hidden by Ella, says '[a]nd who are you? How would you rule the kingdom?', Ella gives no answer. Her silence is significant, and as in the first scene with the Prince, Ella still has not spoken her name nor identity. In the sequence that leads to Ella trying on the other glass slipper in the shoe-test ritual, the Royal troop discovers her locked in the attic by her step-mother. This discovery angers the step-mother since Ella is now able to escape and try on the slipper. When the step-mother says to the Prince's Captain 'I am her mother', Ella retorts '[y]ou have never been, and you never will be, my mother', framing the step-mother as 'someone entitled to name babies but not intended to name this one', which Austin presents as a criterion that must be satisfied for the naming of a child to occur.²⁷ Ella asserts that the step-mother has no authority to name her, which is contradicted shortly afterwards in Ella's act of self-naming; she demonstrates an assertiveness that withers in the following moments. As Ella is leaving the room, the step-mother vehemently hisses '[j]ust remember who you are, you wretched...', leaving the sentence to trail off. These words act as a final stamp to instill in Ella a sense of inferiority, and they appear to work, acting as a catalyst that tips Ella into referring to herself as 'Cinderella'. Her supposedly unspoken self-belief is soon to falter.

As Ella descends the stairs to meet the Prince and try on the slipper, the Fairy Godmother's voice-over tells us that no matter 'who she was, who she really was in her heart, there was no magic to help her this time. This is perhaps the greatest risk that any of us will take: to be seen as we truly are'. These words establish that what follows carries considerable weight. Ella's mother's voice echoes with '[h]ave courage and be kind', a reminder that Ella does not seem to heed. Indeed, upon greeting her, the Prince asks, '[w]ho are you?', and she replies, 'I am Cinderella', in a seemingly simple and innocent response. However, in

²⁷ Austin, p. 23.

referring to herself this way, she denies herself a considerable amount of power and identity that she could achieve through positive self-naming. She does not acknowledge and advertise that even in her rags, even as an 'honest country girl' with 'no carriage, no parents, no dowry', she is Ella. She has become the cruel nickname that has been forced upon her, and the title of the film *Cinderella* – rather than Ella – seems to amplify this sentiment.

Self-naming is discussed by Butler in the context of the term 'queer' as a self-reference for homosexuals, and her reflections on whether 'a term that signalled degradation [...] [can be] turned [...] to signify a new and affirmative set of meanings'.²⁸ Butler probes into whether such terms can be 'taken up', 'reformed' and 'deformed' to be adopted in a wholly different context.²⁹ She suggests that there is a 'conceit of autonomy implied by self-naming', with the history of power embedded within the term never being wholly wiped clean.³⁰ While applied to a very different context, Butler's arguments are nonetheless helpful in understanding the way in which Ella reforms a name previously used to degrade her. Yet, in line with Butler's argument, Ella's self-naming is ultimately doomed to failure, as she uses the process to identify herself in an inferior position. Indeed, Naomi Wolf writes '[a] banned or ostracized person becomes a non-person', and in using the name given to her in her ostracized state, Ella presents herself as a non-person who lacks any definable identity or power.³¹ She does not take hold of the power of naming to stand up to her oppressors, but merely repeats and accepts the name they have given her.

Althusser argues that 'every individual is called by his name, in the passive sense, it is never he who provides his own name'.³² While referring to a Christian religious context, he presents the argument as an illustration of broader ideological mechanisms, applicable in other contexts. Receiving a name is an inherently passive process, with the name being bestowed upon an individual by another rather than initiated by the individual. Yet when her chance comes to turn a passive

²⁸ Butler, p. 169.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

³¹ Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used against Women* (London: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 259.

³² Althusser, p. 177.

process into one with greater agency and resistance, in her choice between 'Ella', 'Cinderella' or even another name, the character bows to 'Cinderella' and the compliance that it entails. The characters in the film refer to Ella in a range of ways, with her parents, other members of the household, the lizard-footman and the Fairy Godmother calling her 'Ella', 'Miss Ella', 'Miss' or 'Darling' even after the step-family have labelled her 'Cinderella'. Meanwhile, her step-family say 'Cinderella', 'Cinders' or on occasion 'Moon-Face' or 'ragged servant girl', establishing a gap between the two strands of names and indicating the pointedness of Ella's later choice. While both groups of names are loaded, the latter are notably derogatory.

By referring to herself as 'Cinderella', Ella demonstrates her subservience to the rule of her step-family rather than that of her family who allow her greater independence; she accepts her restrictive step-family as the ultimate wielders of power. Despite the step-family being matriarchal while her family is patriarchal, the former group operates through greater oppression, control and power imbalances rendering the name 'Cinderella' symptomatic of patriarchal practices. The step-family have misappropriated the power to name and Ella does not endeavour to escape from being impuissant. Perhaps the duality of Ella/Cinderella demonstrates the ambiguous and paradoxical nature of subjectivity, which empowers an individual with the ability to act according to her own free will as the Ella character, and conversely subjects and submits an individual as the Cinderella character.³³ Ella appears to be a carefree yet resilient and autonomous character, while Cinderella is one who has been subdued. As Moi highlights, despite a seeming orderliness offered by names, they can also perform a repressive and constraining function.³⁴ By allowing Cinderella to dominate, Ella relinquishes any power she might have thought she possessed, even if it was illusory. Butler maintains that 'the occupation of the name is that by which one is, quite without choice, situated within discourse'.³⁵ Although it seems that when giving her name Ella does have a choice and chance to situate herself in another form of discourse, she does not seize it, and resigns herself to the lack of choice.

³³ Ibid., 182.

³⁴ Moi, pp. 159–160.

³⁵ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 82.

Spender writes that male supremacy acts by 'precluding women from the process of legitimating any positive names they may have for themselves and their existence' and it seems that the step-family have done just that to Ella.³⁶ Through the relationship established between Ella and her step-family via naming – with Ella's ultimate denial of her own system of naming, as she cedes to the nomenclature imposed by her step-family – there is the suggestion that the step-family occupy the masculine position in the hierarchy while Ella maintains the feminine position. Ella is rewarded in the logic of the film for remaining in her allotted subordinate position and under the imposition of naming, while the step-family are castigated for challenging gender hierarchies in that they are women attempting to take on male roles of empowerment, authority and naming. Representations of the step-family throughout the film portray them acting in what is depicted as an unladylike manner: drinking alcohol, gambling, guffawing, squabbling, and speaking loudly. They are presented as masculine, although they try to masquerade as feminine, and the film reprimands their actions and attributes as unbecoming of a woman.

The step-family's masculine comportment is epitomised by their approach to naming, as they participate in what Spender refers to as 'a systematic process of the manipulation of language for [their ultimately] male ends'.³⁷ Essentially, the film is not critical of this male-dominated practice, but reinforces and justifies patriarchal, misogynistic norms. The step-family comprise females in the male 'dominant group' and the 'superior position'; they are presented negatively for trespassing into this other territory and attempting to blur the distinction between what is deemed to be masculine and feminine. Ella is, in Spender's terms, the 'muted group' in an 'inferior position'.³⁸ Framing Ella as the heroine, the film positively portrays her resignation to the subjugated category and her lack of agency, and the 'happy ending' simply involves Ella being transferred from step-family to Prince, with Ella now having identified herself as the pitiful 'Cinderella'. There is no suggestion that she is wrong for listening to the step-family who have falsely seized power; rather, she is rewarded for having followed the rules of the dominant, 'male', patriarchal group, albeit one filled by females.

³⁶ Spender, p. 170.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

The film castigates the authoritative, domineering female figure, reinforcing the stereotype that a female in a powerful position is automatically a demon. There is no reminder that a woman can be assertive, authoritative and loud without being domineering, and that there are many kinds of good woman, other than one who is reserved and patient. The complex, multi-faceted term 'women' is smoothed over, as the only other female role models are Ella's mother, of whom Ella is very much a carbon copy, and the Fairy Godmother, whose magical status means that she is understood to belong to a different plane of characters.

Spender's framing of the 'dominant group' and 'muted group' have similarities to Wolf's schema for feminism, with Ella resorting to what Wolf depicts as 'victim feminism', as opposed to 'power feminism'. Some of the characteristics that Wolf identifies with victim feminism include that it '[u]rges women to identify with powerlessness even at the expense of taking responsibility for the power they do possess', which Ella does by referring to herself with her derogatory nickname 'Cinderella'.³⁹ Indeed, Wolf's presentation of victim feminism as denigrating leadership, seeing money as contaminating and portraying women as co-operative, peace-loving and closer to nature than men can all be detected in the film through the contrast drawn between the step-family and Ella.⁴⁰ The step-mother is described as 'high-spirited', depicted as authoritarian and loud, gambling and colluding with the Grand Duke, which connects her with leadership and money. Ella follows orders and avoids confrontation. Aligned with nature, she wears mud-covered shoes, while butterflies and flowers decorate her hair and dress, and she is symbolised by the traditional song *Lavender's Blue*. Her request from her father on his travels, adapting the Brothers Grimm's tale, is a branch, in contrast to her step-sisters' demand of parasols and lace, highlighting their excessiveness and inauthenticity.⁴¹

Ella's form of feminism based on victimhood is commended, while the step-family's is decried. Although the victim feminism of which Ella's behaviour seems emblematic should not be condemned or rejected, it must be emphasised that Ella frustratingly does not seize a

³⁹ Naomi Wolf, *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century* (London: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 148.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 148–151, 181–182.

⁴¹ Grimm and Grimm, 2nd edn, p. 115.

degree of power and redefine her identity when she has a chance. Spender's and Wolf's ideas therefore both shed light on Ella's problematic status in the film through her self-naming as 'Cinderella'. Whether her step-family and Ella are understood to be respectively masculine and feminine, or power feminist and victim feminist, Ella's role is problematically presented as the only valid option for women. The film states that kindness has power and magic, yet it appears that the power offered by benevolence is ultimately that of modesty and courteousness.

Zipes highlights how the Cinderella character in tales by the Brothers Grimm and the seventeenth-century Neapolitan tale, 'La Gatta Cenerentola', by Giambattista Basile is relatively proactive, while Perrault's is not.⁴² He argues that '[t]he task confronted by Perrault's model female is to show reserve and patience', which seems applicable to the live-action Cinderella.⁴³ In interviews, director Kenneth Branagh and other members of the film team have argued that Ella is by no means a passive character, and that the way in which she acts is due to her own volition.⁴⁴ In their view, Ella is not controlled by other characters, and Branagh goes to the extent of describing Ella as 'empowered', which seems questionable, particularly considering the way in which naming is handled.⁴⁵ The maxim of inner strength and the motto of 'having courage and being kind' conceals and sugar-coats

⁴² Giambattista Basile, 'The Cat Cinderella', in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*, ed. & trans. by Jack Zipes (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), pp. 445–449; *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*, ed. & trans. by Jack Zipes (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p. 444.

⁴³ Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1983), p. 25.

⁴⁴ Edith Bowman, *Cinderella* London Press Conference, Claridge's Hotel, 19 March 2015; Benjamin Lee and Henry Barnes, *Cinderella* Director Kenneth Branagh: 'Shakespeare Academics can be as Bitchy as the Fans of Comic Book Movies', video interview, *The Guardian*, 26 March 2015, n. pag. <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/video/2015/mar/26/cinderella-kenneth-branagh-disney-video-interview>> [accessed 12 Dec. 2017].

⁴⁵ Tracy McVeigh, 'Kenneth Branagh's Corseted Cinderella Fails the Frozen Test, Say Critics', *The Observer*, 21 March 2015, n. pag. <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/mar/21/cinderella-disney-branagh-fails-frozen-role-model-test>> [accessed 12 Dec. 2017].

Ella's ultimate disempowerment. Ella does not voice her discontent until almost the end of the film at which point she stands up to the step-mother, only to assimilate her system of naming. Ella does not vocalise her troubles, which reduces her to internalising all her woes in a cliché of a well-behaved woman. A comment made by actor Emma Watson upon declining the role of Cinderella, before going on to play the more feminist role of Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), was that 'the passive character didn't "resonate" with her'.⁴⁶

Ella's declaration, 'I am Cinderella', and the context within which it is spoken, can be further unpacked. While in the first encounter between Ella and the Prince, the Prince asks, '[w]hat do they call you?' to which Ella replies, '[n]ever mind what they call me', in the shoe-test ritual the Prince explicitly asks, '[w]ho are you?', meaning that Ella's answer raises considerable questions around identity and authenticity. In the first encounter, Ella's clean face seemed to defiantly identify her as 'Ella'; the later statement 'I am Cinderella' seems to undermine this sentiment.

The choice of verb 'am' in 'I am Cinderella' becomes particularly meaningful if we consider the French rendering in the film's subtitles and dubbing. In response to the Prince's question, which is dubbed as '[q]uel est votre nom?' (what is your name?), and subtitled differently as '[q]ui êtes-vous?' (who are you?), Ella replies 'Je m'appelle Cendrillon' in both dubbed and subtitled versions. The differences in structure between French and English mean that Ella's French reply can be glossed as '[m]y name is Cinderella', 'I call myself Cinderella' or even 'I am called Cinderella'. The final gloss could be construed as '[t]hey call me Cinderella' – suggesting 'but that is not my real name' – which is a sense that does not exist in the English version. The connotations of the phrase in French and English respectively echo the nuances of the name itself in that language: the French phrasing is more ambiguous just as the name 'Cendrillon' incorporates cinders and ash, whereas there is a finality to the English phrasing just as 'Cinderella' encompasses only cinders.

⁴⁶ Nicholas Barber, 'Emma Watson: The Feminist and the Fairytale', *The Guardian*, 9 Feb 2017, n. pag. <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/feb/09/emma-watson-feminist-fairytale-beauty-and-the-beast-disney>> [accessed 16 Dec. 2017]; *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. by Bill Condon (Walt Disney, 2017) [on DVD].

Given the centrality of naming, authenticity and identity to the film, the fact that Ella – at a pivotal moment in which she has revealed her true bodily form to the Prince and finally has a chance to reveal her identity – gives her name as another is remarkable and insightful. Considerable mystery and significance have gathered around Ella's name and identity, particularly at the Prince's ball. While all the other guests are named as they enter, Ella is not. A highly-placed guest, Princess Chelina, asks the Grand Duke '[w]ho is she?', to which he replies, 'I've no idea'. Subsequently, the Grand Duke demands '[w]ho is she?' to the Royal Crier who responds with '[s]he gave no name'; Palace Officials and Guards are later heard saying '[n]ame, we need her name' as Ella flees. These pieces of dialogue emphasise that her name and identity are sought-after, meaning that when Ella eventually does give her name, it is a significant moment in the film's construction of meaning.

The Prince and Ella have a conversation at the ball that also revolves around her name and identity. The Prince's '[w]on't you tell me who you really are?' receives the reply from Ella of 'If I do, I think everything might be different', in response to which the Prince beseeches 'I don't understand; can you at least tell me your name?' Having been refused the answer to who she really is, the Prince requests her name, signalling a meaningful distinction between the two. Ella says, '[m]y name is...' and is on the point of revealing it when midnight strikes, and she must leave. As such, when Ella finally pronounces her name and identity just before her shoe-test ritual and does so with the phrase 'I am...' rather than '[m]y name is...', the line carries great import. She has harboured her courage to the extent of risking that 'everything might be different', and yet she says, 'I am Cinderella'.

The choice of 'am' also relates to Butler's discussion of the terms 'being' and 'having' in reference to gender.⁴⁷ The verb choice is part of one of the key feminist debates between the inherent 'being' of essentialism and the ascription of 'having' a gender that is bestowed upon us. Butler argues that the English language emphasises and enforces the former, with the question '[w]hat gender are you?'. From this perspective, Ella's statement 'I am Cinderella' reflects total submission to her ascribed identity, her gender role. Ella does not challenge the position but identifies herself in essence as a slave who is

⁴⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 10.

mistreated by her step-family, rather than a kind, resilient young girl who has experienced great difficulties. Hailed as 'Cinderella', she has been forced to deny her inner 'Ella'. Adhering to Butler's argument about discourse, 'through citing the conventions of authority', Ella's phrase 'gain[s] the authority to bring about what it names'.⁴⁸ In other words, by drawing on the sobriquet 'Cinderella' imposed by her authoritative step-family, Ella 'cites the conventions of authority', mimicking the master's words.⁴⁹ The step-family's transgression into an authoritative role must be reprimanded, even though the law they are imposing on Ella is not questioned. It is poignant that following shortly after Ella's declaration of 'I am Cinderella' the step-sisters enter crying 'Cinderella, Ella, my dear sister, I'm sorry', finally referring to her by her birth name. Indeed, they are the ones who reveal Ella's identity to the Prince, attempting to ingratiate themselves through feigning respect and begging for forgiveness by stepping down from the patriarchal position that they wrongly assumed. The step-sisters are wavering in their system of naming, yet it is too late, as Ella has ceded to the patriarchal rule.

Ella's self-identification as 'Cinderella' suggests that through repetition this name has become her own. Looking beyond the limits of the film into wider culture, the name 'Cinderella' is now considered the standard name for this fairy-tale character by western Anglophones, even though at various times different variations have been used, including Samber's 'Cinderilla' and Taylor's 'Ashputtel' in England. Through domestication, the name has been made to seem natural, obvious and recognizable — as Althusser characterises ideology — and previous manifestations of the name, such as Cendrillon, Aschenputtel and Cenerentola, and their respective connotations, are usurped, omitted, effaced.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, this name has become increasingly embedded within the language to such an extent that returning to its foreign antecedent starts to seem tiresome or unnatural. The way in which Disney has come to dominate certain parts of visual and literary culture and society operates via similar mechanisms to wider patriarchal practices in that naming enforced by those in power comes to dominate the consciousness, allowing little or no room for alternatives.

⁴⁸ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. xxi.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Althusser, pp. 156, 171–172.

To conclude, naming plays a vital role in Disney's live-action *Cinderella* and offers considerable insight into the film's portrayal of power and identity. Certain scenes hint at the ceremonial and performative nature of naming, pointing to the interconnectedness of Ella's name, status and identity, and how they were initiated. In this way, the film evokes the idea that names are constructs forced upon individuals, which have considerable consequences for the course of their lives. Yet while some social and cultural progress is thus seemingly shown, troubling depictions of women stubbornly persist. By assimilating 'Cinderella' as her name, Ella does not challenge nor subvert her step-family's rule and the resultant injustices. Ella's self-denial as 'Ella' and reference to herself as being Cinderella problematically constitutes a resignation on her part, as naming serves to subdue and contain her. We are left with a mildly nuanced but essentially fettered female lead character, and an evil step-family who try but fail to manipulate language to their own ends. A binary understanding of gender prevails, transgression of which is reprimanded, and the only acceptable form of feminism is presented as victim feminism, leaving minimal scope for current patriarchal naming structures to be challenged.

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Identities in Fiction: The Imposed Identity of Leopold Bloom

Linda Horsnell

The character of Leopold Bloom, the main protagonist of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), is depicted as the son of Rudolph Bloom, a Hungarian Jew who has some Austrian ancestors, and Ellen Higgins, who was a 'half Irish and half Hungarian Jewess'.¹ Having been born in Ireland, Bloom sees his nation as Ireland.² Furthermore, he has decided not to follow any religious doctrine or practices of worship. Yet his lineage is shown to add a certain complexity to his Dublin life, since he is identified and labelled as a Hungarian Jew by his Dublin acquaintances, as the conversation in Barney Kiernan's pub in the 'Cyclops' episode illustrates: 'Is he a jew or a gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler or what the hell is he? Says Ned / [...] / He's a perverted jew, says Martin, from a place in Hungary'.³ Although the word 'perverted' could be a play on the word 'converted', the use of such a word, with its negative connotations, at once implies the lack of regard in which he is held. This paper argues that the perception of Bloom as a Hungarian Jew, which effectively imposes an identity on him, has placed him on the outer edges of the social sphere, leaving him with acquaintances but no true friends and subject to being treated with contempt.

The following quote from Lewis Hyman's *The Jews of Ireland* (1972) explains the difficulties of the Irish Jew:

The mere concept of the Irish Jew raised a laugh in the Ireland of Joyce's day. Edward Raphael Lipset (1869-1921), A Dublin

¹ John Henry Raleigh, *The Chronicle of Leopold and Molly Bloom: Ulysses as Narrative* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p.17.

² See James Joyce, *Ulysses* [1922], ed. by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (London: Bodley Head, 1986, repr. 2002), p. 272. Further references to this edition are given following usual academic practice, in the form of episode and line number, preceded by the letter *U*.

³ *U*, 12.1631-1635.

Jew, journalist, novelist, and playwright, wrote impressions of the Jews in Ireland in 1906, under the pen-name of Halitvack: 'There is an invisible but impassable barrier between Jew and Christian – a barrier which the one part will not, and the other cannot break through. You cannot get one native to remember that a Jew may be an Irishman.'⁴

Although he had no close Jewish friends in Dublin, Ira Nadel reports that Joyce 'recognised the universal condition of the Jew which meant exclusion and mistrust which his friendships and experiences in Trieste corroborated and enlarged'.⁵ Joyce modelled Leopold Bloom on '[s]everal persons, some Dubliners, others Italian, Greek and Hungarian'.⁶ One of the Dubliners Joyce referenced was Joseph Bloom, a Jew. Another was Alfred J. Hunter, an Ulster Presbyterian who 'became a nominal Catholic when he married' and who also 'would have been out of place in Dublin society'.⁷ As Andrew Gibson argues, 'Dublin's Jews tended to acculturate in Protestant rather than Catholic ways', which 'partly explains instances of Catholic antagonism towards them'.⁸

Regrettably, Dublin was not atypical in how it perceived those who followed Judaism. The writings of Otto Weininger, a contemporary of Joyce and described by Davison as 'one of the most controversial

⁴ Louis Hyman, *The Jews of Ireland from Earliest Times to the Year 1910* (Shannon, Irish University Press, 1972), p.176; quote from the *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 December 1906.

⁵ Ira B. Nadel, *Joyce and the Jews: Culture and Texts* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 198.

⁶ Hyman, p. 169.

⁷ Peter Costello, *James Joyce: The Years of Growth 1882-1915* (West Cork: Roberts Rinehart, 1992), pp. 228 – 231. For a more detailed description of the Hunter and Bloom family, see Hyman, pp. 169-176.

⁸ Andrew Gibson, 'Review of *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce: A socioeconomic History* by Cormac Ó Gráda, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006)' in *James Joyce Quarterly*, 45 (2007), pp. 151-154 (p. 153).

psychobiologists in Vienna after 1903', were both misogynistic and anti-Semitic.⁹ He expressed a view that:

Judaism and Christianity [...] show the greatest, most immeasurable contrast. Of all forms of being, the former is most divided and most lacking in inner identity, while the latter has the firmest belief and utmost trust in God. Christianity is the highest degree of heroism; the Jew, on the other hand, is never integrated and whole. That is why the Jew is a coward, and the hero is his diametric opposite.¹⁰

John McCourt suggests that, given the 'interest in Weininger among Triestines, it would have been difficult for Joyce to have remained immune to his ideas and influence'.¹¹ However, Davison goes further, stating there is reasonable evidence that Joyce had read Weininger's work, whilst simultaneously pointing out that certain aspects of 'Weininger's beliefs about 'Jewish Nature' are both inverted and discredited' in *Ulysses*.¹² The most obvious example of such inversion is Bloom's position as a just 'hero' in *Ulysses*, transcending the bigoted arguments of the citizen and the transgressive behaviour of his wife.

Despite not following any religious doctrines, in the 'Ithaca' episode Joyce informs the reader that Bloom has been baptised as a Protestant twice (although the second seems to have been merely a schoolboy re-enactment) then as a Catholic.¹³ The reason for his conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism is revealed as follows:

[t]o Master Percy Apjohn at High School in 1880 he had divulged his disbelief if the tenets of the Irish (protestant)

⁹ Neil R Davison, *James Joyce, Ulysses, and the Construction of Jewish Identity: Culture, biography, and "The Jew" in Modernist Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 139.

¹⁰ Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles* trans. by Ladislaus Löb, ed. by Daniel Steuer with Laura Marcus (Vienna, 1903; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 259.

¹¹ John McCourt, *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste 1904-1920* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 229.

¹² Davison, pp. 138.

¹³ *U*, 17.542-546.

church (to which his father Rudolf Virag (later Rudolph Bloom) had been converted from the Israelitic faith and communion in 1865 by the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews) subsequently abjured him in favour of Roman Catholicism at the epoch of and with a view to his matrimony in 1888.¹⁴

Having rejected precepts of Protestantism as a school child, Bloom finally took the step to change his faith to Catholicism in order to accommodate his marriage (although Luca Crispi points out that the assumption that this was an actual requirement is an 'erroneous idea').¹⁵ However, the information in brackets regarding his father's conversion from Judaism can be read as suggesting that it was an action that was taken based on the need to make himself more favourable to the community in which he now lived. This is particularly pertinent if one accepts the views expressed in a leaflet written in 1918: 'Jews have been driven in increasing numbers to emigration, physical or spiritual. Vast numbers have sought refuge and betterment in Western Europe and America; many have given up the struggle and accepted baptism as a means of escape'.¹⁶ Maurice Fishberg made a similar point some seven years previous to this, acknowledging the prevalence of voluntary baptism among the Jews and making an associative link with the desire to remove 'the disabilities from which they, as well as their ancestors, for generations ha[d] suffered' in terms of social success.¹⁷ This would also explain why his father had felt it necessary to change his name. As Neil Davidson suggests, whether or not Joyce had read Fishberg, he would 'have recognised the prevalence of such controversies about 'the Jews' in fin-de-siècle Europe'.¹⁸

¹⁴ *U*, 17.1635-1640.

¹⁵ Luca Crispi, *Joyce's Creative Process and the Construction of Character in Ulysses: Becoming the Blooms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 87.

¹⁶ Chaim Weizmann and Richard Gottheil, *What is Zionism? Two Chapters from "Zionism and the Jewish Future"* (London: Zionist Organisation, 1918), p. 6.

¹⁷ Maurice Fishberg, *The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment* (London: Walter Scott, 1911), p. 451.

¹⁸ Davidson, p. 138.

With this in mind, it is worth considering the narrative regarding Leopold Bloom's multiple baptisms. The relevant part of the 'Ithaca' episode, with its catechistic format, reads as follows:

Had Bloom and Stephen been baptised, and where and by whom, cleric or layman?

Bloom (three times), by the reverend Mr Gilmer Johnston M.A., alone, in the protestant church of Saint Nicholas Without, Coombe, by James O'Conner, Philip Gilligan and James Fitzpatrick, together, under a pump in the village of Swords, and by the reverend Charles Malone C. C., in the church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar. Stephen (once) by the reverend Charles Malone C. C., alone, in the church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar. (U, 17.540-7)

As Crispi explains, the 'Ithaca' proto-draft of 1921 was somewhat different. Firstly, the question was different and only applied to Bloom: 'Was he baptised?' Secondly, the account differed in 'number, location and tone': 'Twice. First, in church. Second, under pump at Santry by some schoolfellow in friendly jest at his former religion. In both cases the water being poured at the same time as the words were spoken'.¹⁹ Crispi concludes that whilst this earlier version was 'probably meant to be more humorous' what is emphasised is 'the bullying maltreatment that Leopold receives from his 'friend' at school because of his familial and cultural heritage'.²⁰ Although this element of prejudice was essentially removed by Joyce from the episode before *Ulysses* was completed, Bloom's encounter with the bigoted citizen in the 'Cyclops' episode and his treatment in the carriage on the way to Dignam's funeral in the 'Hades' episode serve to illustrate how his imposed identity results in him being viewed with contempt.

The behaviour of the citizen is far more blatant than that of his acquaintances in the funeral carriage, overtly exemplifying the attitudes that the Jews were often met with. Although Jacques Mercanton states that there was 'no hostility' towards the Jews in Dublin, only 'contempt', Joyce portrays the citizen's prejudice erupting into anger and aggression

¹⁹ Crispi, p. 85.

²⁰ Ibid.

towards Bloom.²¹ Wrongly believing Bloom has won some money on the horses, when he does not offer to buy a round of drinks, the citizen's expressed disgust is centred around his identification of Bloom as a Jew: '[t]here's a jew for you! All for number one. Cute as a shithouse rat'.²² When later Bloom dares to inform the citizen that the Christian 'God was a jew', his abuse is both verbal and physical. Ranting 'I'll brain that bloody jewman for using the holy name. By Jesus, I'll crucify him so I will', he follows his verbal abuse by targeting Bloom with a biscuit tin thrown with some force.²³

With Davison's report of evidence that Joyce had read Weininger's *Sex and Character*, it is possible that he had the following quote in mind when creating the citizen:

[w]hen we hate we delude ourselves into believing that we are being threatened by somebody else, and we pretend that we are purity itself under attack, instead of admitting to ourselves that we must weed out the evil in ourselves, since it lurks in our own hearts and nowhere else. We construct the evil in order to have the satisfaction of throwing an inkwell at him. The only reason why the belief in the devil is immoral is that it is an unacceptable method for making our struggle easier, and that it shifts the blame.²⁴

The citizen's hatred and intolerance are laid bare by Joyce, which culminates in the throwing of the biscuit tin, rather than a metaphorical inkwell. Described by Davison as representing 'the convolutions both bigotry and violent republicanism make to sustain their hatreds', the citizen 'can see nothing but a nation-wide egoism', and labels Bloom a

²¹ Mercanton in recalls how Joyce related that '[t]he Jews were foreigners at that time in Dublin. There was no hostility toward them, but contempt, yes, the contempt people always show for the unknown'. See Jacques Mercanton, 'The Hours of Joyce', in *Portraits of An Artist in Exile: Recollections of James Joyce by Europeans*, ed. by Willard Potts (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979) pp. 206-252, (p. 208).

²² *U*, 12.1760-1761.

²³ *U*, 12.1808-1812.

²⁴ Weininger, p. 220.

stranger and swindler as well as a 'bloody freemason'.²⁵ The use of this expletive emphasises the negative view in which freemasonry was held. His membership of the society makes Bloom an 'enemy' in the eyes of the Catholic Church:

[w]hen he was named to the Holy See in 1879, three years before Joyce's birth, Leo XIII began a crusade that called for all Catholics to join the fight against Socialist, Freemasons, Jews, and a host of other enemies of the Church. The Pope himself had a particular fear of Freemasonry as a destructive element amongst Catholic populations.²⁶

In addition to his perceived Jewishness, his freemasonry has the effect of exacerbating the mistrust and suspicion with which Bloom is evidently viewed and separating him further from his Christian acquaintances.

In direct contrast to the bigotry and violence of the citizen, Bloom's journey in the carriage to Dignam's funeral exemplifies in a far more understated, though no less poignant way, his perceived Jewishness and status as outsider. Since mediaeval times Jews have been associated with money lending and commerce and Bloom's astute money management is a detail Joyce provides about his character that can be seen to mark him out from his companions in the coach. When a comment is made about a beggar, Cunningham makes a backhanded remark whilst looking at Bloom: '[w]e have all been there [...]. Well, nearly all of us'.²⁷ In fact, Joyce does make it known later in the novel that in the past Bloom 'has been there' through the conversation Ben Dollard has with Mr Dedalus and also through Bloom's interior monologue in the 'Nausicaa' episode: '[t]en bob I got for Molly's combs when we were on the rocks in Holles Street'.²⁸ However, despite Cunningham's remark it is at this point, possibly in response to his sense of disparity with the others in the carriage, that Bloom, who is generally quiet and left to his thoughts during the journey to the

²⁵ *U*, 12.1150-1151; *U*, 12.300; Davison, p. 220; Richard Ellmann, *The Consciousness of Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 63.

²⁶ Davison, p.54.

²⁷ *U*, 6.259-261; Cf. Fishberg, pp. 393-394.

²⁸ *U*, 13.840-841.

cemetery, is shown to 'speak with sudden eagerness'.²⁹ One is given the impression that he is hoping his awareness of the story of Reuben J Dodd and his son will promote some form of inclusivity. However, as Fritz Senn notes: 'Bloom's narrative talent would not qualify him to negotiate "the funny party"'.³⁰ For a supposedly amusing anecdote, Bloom's language is far too formal ('[t]hat's an awfully good one') and sometimes journalistic ('[t]here was a girl in the case'), which only serves to further emphasise his difference from his companions.³¹ Consequently, Simon Dedalus keeps interrupting and misunderstands what Bloom is trying to say, causing Cunningham to take over the telling of the story, 'rudely' thwarting Bloom's speech.³² Yet, despite being 'rudely' interrupted, he cannot help himself and attempts to continue with the story as he endeavours to fit in with the group, only to be thwarted by Cunningham for a second time.³³ The willingness of his companions to interrupt and talk over him signifies both his outsider status and a form of rejection.

Bloom's multiple baptisms are shown to carry no weight with his fellow Dubliners. To them he is ostensibly a Jew and therefore viewed as 'other' by the mainly Christian society of Dublin. This is a label of which he is acutely aware, and which he acknowledges in his conversation with Stephen: '[h]e [the citizen] called me a jew [...] though really I am not'.³⁴ The narrator reinforces Bloom's lack of commitment to any religious belief system throughout the novel via comments such as those regarding Bloom's 'impatience' with regards to his father's 'beliefs and practices' in 'Ithaca';³⁵ his rejection of the possibility of an afterlife in 'Hades': 'once you are dead you are dead',³⁶ and the portrayal of Bloom's thoughts as he sits in All Hallows: '[t]hing

²⁹ *U*, 6.262.

³⁰ Fritz Senn, 'Bloom Among the Orators: The Why and the Wherefore and All the Codology', in *Bloom's Major Literary Characters: Leopold Bloom*, ed. by Harold Bloom (Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publishers, 2004) pp. 39-56, (p. 45).

³¹ *U*, 6.264; *U*, 6.269.

³² *U*, 6.277.

³³ *U*, 6.285-290.

³⁴ *U*, 16.1082-1085.

³⁵ *U*, 17.1894-1895.

³⁶ *U*, 6.677.

is if you really believe in it'.³⁷ Indeed, Geert Lernout interprets Bloom as 'think[ing] of religion, and more specifically Catholicism, as little more than an extremely successful scam'.³⁸

Bloom is, however, presented as living his life in what could be described as a 'Christian manner', with Joyce providing many examples to the reader of his sympathy and consideration towards his fellow Dubliners. His thoughtfulness and generosity toward the Dignam family are illustrated by his donation of 'five shillings', given 'without a second word', to a fund for the family.³⁹ Similarly, Joyce describes Bloom's tongue as 'clack[ing] in compassion' as he learns of Mrs Purefoy's long labour and later in the day he is shown taking time to visit the lying-in patients in hospital, and to enquire after her.⁴⁰ Extending also to animals, his thoughtfulness is made plain in 'Lestrygonians' where he notices some seagulls ('poor birds') and promptly buys some cakes to feed them with.⁴¹ Moreover, in nighttown he takes on a protective and paternal role towards Stephen, making sure Bella Cohen does not overcharge him for the damage to the lamp, looking after him after a fight, providing him with food at the cabman's shelter and finally inviting him into his own home and offering him a room for the night. His actions, which can be seen to simultaneously fulfil his own emotional need for a father/son relationship, result in Stephen being shown the only true concern and kindness he has received that day.

Yet despite Bloom's generous nature it is difficult to find the portrayal of any reciprocal benevolence from his fellow Dubliners, in word or deed. When Cunningham, Power and Nolan are discussing his donation to the Dignam family, Cunningham is unable to resist a sarcastic and implicitly anti-Semitic comment regarding Bloom's generosity: 'strange but true'.⁴² This causes Nolan to respond with a quote from *The Merchant of Venice*: 'I'll say there is much kindness in the Jew'; a line in the play aimed at the Jewish money lender, Shylock,

³⁷ *U*, 5.364.5.

³⁸ Geert Lernout, *Help My Unbelief: James Joyce and Religion* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 169.

³⁹ *U*, 10.974-977.

⁴⁰ *U*, 8.285-290; 14.111-113.

⁴¹ *U*, 8.51-76.

⁴² *U*, 10.978.

whose malevolence can be seen to emanate, at least partly, from the way he is treated by his gentile acquaintances.⁴³ Although Bloom is not portrayed as a villain, the slights he receives from Cunningham and the physical violence from the citizen show that he is scarcely any more welcome than such an unsavoury character would be. This therefore reinforces that, at best, he is viewed with dubiousness and suspicion. Even Stephen chooses to recite the anti-Semitic song of 'Little Harry Hughes' whilst in Bloom's house.⁴⁴ Margot Norris has analysed various critical responses to this event before going on to suggest that any malice on Stephen's part may have been unintentional; following his reciting of the 'Johannes Jeep song about sirens who lure their sailors to their death', now 'tired and muddled' Stephen picks a song 'as an unthinking variant on the theme of the siren'.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, whether intentional or not, it has the effect of making Bloom 'sad' and causes him to consider that the deed of ritual killing related in the song 'should by him [Stephen] not be told'.⁴⁶ As Gottfried notes, perhaps one of the few genuine acts of good will towards Bloom that did occur during the day is in the 'Sirens' episode when Richie Goulding offers to eat with him in the Ormond Bar.⁴⁷

Discussing Bloom's solitary status, Declan Kiberd takes a positive view, suggesting that he 'rather likes to live at an angle to the community', arguing that:

[h]is inner life offers rich compensations for the poverty of social intercourse in a city whose denizens are often more fluent than articulate and where every conversation seems to be repeated many times over.⁴⁸

⁴³ *U*, 10.980.

⁴⁴ *U*, 17.801-828.

⁴⁵ Margot Norris, 'Stephen Dedalus's Anti-Semitic Ballad: A sabotaged Climax in Joyce's *Ulysses*', *European Joyce Studies*, 18 (2010), pp. 54-75 (p. 72).

⁴⁶ *U*, 17.838-840.

⁴⁷ Cf. Roy K. Gottfried, *The Art of Joyce's Syntax in Ulysses* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 61.

⁴⁸ Kiberd, Declan: *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 89.

However, he later appears to contradict this argument when he considers why Bloom is actually attending Dignam's funeral when he 'scarcely' knew him and suggests that 'as an outsider' Bloom may be 'seeking acceptance in a major Irish ritual from which he cannot decently be excluded'.⁴⁹ It is entirely plausible to read his attendance as part of his struggle to gain acceptance. The portrayal of his conversational efforts in the carriage, although failing dismally, further supports such an interpretation.

Whilst Bloom's acquaintances are unable to see past his lineage, his efforts to gain acceptance are likely to be in vain. His experiences throughout the day can be seen to reflect the social tensions that existed between Jew and gentile in Ireland, which eventually spilled over into violence in Limerick 'in the middle months of 1904', when a Rabbi and his companions were stoned.⁵⁰ As Marvin Magalaner explains, the 'vitriolic outburst of anti-Semitism and its more philosophical aftermath, became big news on the front pages of leading newspapers and magazines in Dublin'.⁵¹ Through the character of Bloom, Joyce was able to show what Margaret Mills Harper terms the 'petty viciousness' of a supposedly pious society.⁵² Hence he chose to depict Bloom on the edges of his social sphere; at best able to partake in polite conversation with his acquaintances and at worst a target of abuse, both physical and verbal, for characters such as the citizen.

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⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁵⁰ Marvin Magalaner, 'The Anti-Semitic Limerick Incidents and Joyce's "Bloomsday"', *PMLA*, 5 (1953), pp. 1219-1223, (p. 1219).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Margaret Mills Harper, *The Aristocracy of Art in Joyce and Wolfe* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 129.

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No D*

I love to write.

I am a writer.

I am a writer without
a language.

I dream in English, count
in Hebrew; when I feel
lonely I listen
to my breath.

My writing: dreams unlived,
letters unsent; brush strokes
broad and thin, in colours
bright and dull.

Art?

3D

2D

1D

No D

My home is here.

My home is nowhere.

I can hold it firmly in my hand, yet
it is nothing but air.

No, not air: no one can
breathe my home.

Rinat Harel

* Inspired by Mark Danielewski, *House of Leaves* (London, Transworld Publishers, 2000)

Queer Victorian Identities in *Goblin Market* (1862) and *In Memoriam* (1850): Uncovering the Subversive Undercurrents of the Literary Canon

Jonathan Hay

Just as the lives of lesbians and gay men are enhanced by a knowledge of their history, so too will the field of history be enriched by a reclamation of the homosexual past.¹

Queerness/normativity: a generative dichotomy

Although the historic Parliamentary Same Sex Couples Marriage Act of 2013 reflected the continuing rise in visibility of LGBT+ rights in the UK, long-established prejudices against those who identify with queer communities have persisted since its implementation. Queer people are often stigmatised as, amongst other things, sinners; prone to infidelity; diseased; morally degenerate; perverted; and/or afraid of heterosexual intimacy. These prejudices inevitably lead to the further marginalisation of queer lives and voices within society. A recent study, for example, found that 'only 11% of universities are able to demonstrate good or excellent inclusivity for LGBTQ students', a finding which its author concludes, highlights that 'institutionalised homophobia needs to be raised as a topic and heteronormative cultures need to be challenged within university settings'.² Prejudices against queer people however, are by no means exclusively found within higher education institutions. Rather, it is vital to remember that in the modern day, as María E. López states, it still remains 'illegal to be homosexual in almost 80 countries around the world', seven countries still impose the death penalty upon

¹ George Chauncey, Jr., Martin Duberman, and Martha Vicinus, 'Introduction', in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. by Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 1-13 (p. 13).

² Michelle E. Grimwood, 'What do LGBTQ students say about their experience of university in the UK?', in *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 21.4 (2017), pp. 140-143 (pp. 140, 142).

'perpetrators', and 'more than 2.7 billion people still live under regimes that condemn homosexuality with imprisonment and lashes'.³ Even in more accommodating countries, queer culture is regularly still subject to censorship, as is often patent in mainstream queer art. Despite being an homage to openly homosexual public figures and a protest against the reduction in the visibility of such idols in recent years, the title of the song 'Good Guys', a 2015 single by the pop singer Mika, deliberately remains appositely covert about its queer agenda, presumably as a ludic means of further critiquing the perceived censorship of queer identities. Furthermore, the deluxe edition of the track's parent album depicts the singer in black and white pinstripe attire, evocative of a prison uniform, implying that contemporary queer identities are still subject to suppression by the heteronormative societies they exist within.⁴

Consequently, it seems beneficial to retain an essentialist view of queer identity, acknowledging that whilst 'many factors other than sexuality itself may influence, deform, alter, or transform conceptualizations of sexuality among peoples and individuals', the rigorous demonstration of an overarching queer ancestry bears the potential to satisfactorily unite these disparate terms.⁵ I conceive that such historicisation of societal non-normativity has radical possibilities, in particular, the potentiality to destabilise the cultural hegemony that still largely licences the marginalisation of queer identities in contemporary society. Many scholars have already begun the important work of uncovering records of queer lives throughout history and, as such, the substantial, yet often surreptitious, role that queer identities have occupied in numerous civilisations throughout human history is beginning to become more and more apparent. Resultantly, it is becoming ever more evident that while queer communities have a very

³ María E. López, 'Homosexuality and homophobia in Europe' in *European Social Problems*, ed. by Stuart Isaacs (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 220-236 (p. 220).

⁴ Mika, 'Good Guys', *No Place in Heaven (Deluxe Edition)* (Universal, 0602547336255, 2015)[on CD].

⁵ John Boswell, 'Revolutions, Universals, and Sexual Categories' in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. by Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 17-36 (p. 29).

real historical basis, utterly normative societies do not. Throughout this study, my contention is that the comprehensive reappraisal of numerous canonical narratives, with the goal of exposing and emphasising their historical representations of queerness, is a task still as necessary today as it was when Eve Sedgwick penned *Between Men* in 1985. This paper therefore attempts the queer reappropriation of two canonical Victorian poems, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1862) and Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850).⁶ As I shall demonstrate, the queer affective features of these poems express the viability of alternative modes of relation, and so convey a poignant sense of the insurrectionary elation that can be realised through affective relationships that subvert normative sexual conventions.⁷

At the time the poems were published, contemporary scientific discourse stigmatised women who exhibited a sex drive as nymphomaniacs.⁸ This discourse also criminalised female-female love as 'the great damage of young girls and neuropathic women', while love between men was congruently deemed to arise from either 'a pathological perversion or a moral perversity'.⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, both poems' narratives express their queer agenda covertly, by utilising techniques of deception and secrecy, with certain qualities of each poem disguising their respective queer affective undercurrents. The specific techniques of deception and secrecy employed in each

⁶ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* [1850], ed. by Erik Gray (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004); Christina Rossetti, 'Goblin Market' [1862], in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. E: The Victorian Age*, ed. Julia Reidhead (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012), pp. 1496-1508. All references to Rossetti hereafter will refer to the line numbers, as opposed to the pages.

⁷ Although this study focuses on recovering the queer affect displayed in prominent texts by each of these two writers, it is not within its remit to determine whether or not Tennyson and Rossetti had homosexual relationships. To do so would be a task for a historian, rather than a literary theorist.

⁸ Gustave Bouchereau, 'Nymphomania', in *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c. 1880-1900*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 293-297 (p. 295).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 296; Richard von Krafft-Ebing, 'Psychopathia Sexualis with Especial Reference to Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study' in *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c.1880-1900*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 297-303 (p. 302).

case vary greatly however: whereas in *Goblin Market* the queer agenda is relatively clandestine, principally masked by the overriding presence of the fantastical eponymous market itself, *In Memoriam*'s queer agenda is effectively the central focus of the text and is only made less palpable by an adroitly constructed tactic of deception. The subversive methods employed to express the poems' queer agendas not only helped ensure both narratives were considered suitable for publication, but also provided an inconspicuous means for them to express sexually dissident views within their contemporary society once they had been issued.

Accordingly, it is patently understandable that *Goblin Market* and *In Memoriam*, along with many works, opted to utilise secretive methods of expressing queer identities and desires, given that there is, and always has been, a widespread propensity in Western society to silence any voices which dissent from the established hegemonic socio-normative ideologies. One important way in which such socionormative ideologies function to marginalise queer identities, Eva Illouz suggests, is to obscure 'men's and especially women's gender identity', to the extent that this identity becomes purely 'a sexual identity: that is, [...] a set of self-consciously manipulated bodily, linguistic, and sartorial codes geared to elicit sexual desire in another'.¹⁰ Queer Theory must therefore identify, and find historical precedent for, terms other than identity through which queerness can be defined.

Although they are fundamentally non-normative, expressions of queerness are nonetheless conditioned by social forces. Referring back to my opening point, it seems evident that a heteronormative culture extant for centuries cannot be obliged to undergo cessation by means of constitution, however emancipatory the Parliamentary Same Sex Couples Marriage Act may have been. Such an abiding cultural ideology is far too potent. Louis Althusser defines an ideology as a collective normative 'system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group', which specifically promotes 'not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live'.¹¹ Although it was penned in

¹⁰ Eva Illouz, *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 42.

¹¹ Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)', in *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, ed. by Fredric 152

1970, Althusser's delineation of ideology is still pertinent today. I draw attention to a report by the United Kingdom Home Office recording a 29 percent increase in offences against individuals' race, sexuality, gender, disability and religion between 2016 and 2017, 'thought to reflect [...] a genuine rise in hate crime around the time of the EU referendum', the widespread vitriolic political rhetoric of the period seeming to have ideologically licensed this adverse trend.¹² Likewise, since any ideology produces a drastic dissimilitude between the subject's real and imagined conditions of existence, many modern labels used to describe sexuality themselves are just as fantastic a fabrication of identity as the heteronormative culture they seek to elide, still asking the subject to subscribe to and be conditioned by the distinction of 'either/or - or a "bisexual" combination' of two predefined sexual categories.¹³ Queerness, however, can be realised as a broader concept, one that encompasses a wide range of LGBT+ individuals and their non-normative experiences, and perhaps offers a valuable alternative to the tyranny inherent in designating alternative identities using preordained categories. Queerness, it can thus be reasoned, should come to be a concept that is affect- rather than identity- based.

Applying Althusser's notion of ideology within a more contemporary, and specifically queer context, Berlant and Warner state that '[h]eterosexual culture achieves much of its metacultural intelligibility through the ideologies and institutions of intimacy', and hence, it is necessary for queer discourse to challenge heteronormative ideologies by scrutinising the erroneousness of normative constructions of affect.¹⁴ As 'Ideologies and institutions of intimacy are increasingly offered as a vision of the good life [...] away from the confusing and unsettling distractions and contradictions of capitalism and politics',

Jameson, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), pp. 85–126 (pp. 107, 111).

¹² Aoife O'Neill, 'Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/17', *Statistical Bulletin*, 17 Oct. 2017, pp. 1-27 (p. 1).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf> [accessed 19 January 2018].

¹³ Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of HeteroSEXUALITY* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 91.

¹⁴ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, 'Sex in Public', in *Critical Inquiry*, 24.2 (1998), pp. 547-566 (p. 553).

queer critique must re-emphasise the existence of queer modes of affect, which hold the potential to disrupt such ideological notions.¹⁵ Since heteronormativity 'is more than ideology, or prejudice, or phobia against gays and lesbians; [...] is produced in almost every aspect of the forms and arrangements of social life', heteronormative ideologies dominate social thought, and '[q]ueer culture, by contrast, has almost no institutional matrix for its counterintimacies'.¹⁶ Thus, by further historicising queerness through the institutional matrix of the literary canon, it can be proven that queer modes have long existed as subcultures within, and as viable alternatives to, normative cultures. If queer identities can never comprise absolute liberation from socionormative conditions, as 'the efficacy of queerness, its real strategic value, lies in its resistance to a Symbolic reality that only ever invests us as subjects insofar as we invest ourselves in it, clinging to its governing fictions, its persistent sublimations, as reality itself', they are nevertheless expressions of the self which are of significant utility to their proponents, collaboratively amounting to the basis of a potent countercultural movement.¹⁷

In an analysis derived from contemporary accounts of nineteenth century boarding-school relationships between women, Martha Vicinus observes that:

[a]fter a [woman] had received some sign from her [crush] that feelings might be reciprocated, moments of greater intimacy were sought, though not necessarily in private, for secrecy could be created in the public domain of the school. The two lovers found means of speaking silently to each other, of sharing words and thoughts that could not be, and would not be, talked about in the general strategy sessions among peers. The secret sharing of a private world in a public place became a major source of pleasure; it affirmed the love.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 554, 562.

¹⁷ Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 18.

¹⁸ Martha Vicinus, 'Distance and Desire: English Boarding School Friendships, 1870-1920', in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. 154

I contend that the above account exemplifies the profound capability of queer counterculture to, if not provide a means of absolute escape from, successfully subvert antagonistic cultural paradigms through the axis of affect. By these women finding an anti-language of 'speaking silently' within an otherwise 'public place', the cultural norms of that location were subverted, allowing an otherwise concealed queer counterculture to momentarily intrude upon the public sphere, and resulting in a 'source of pleasure' born of affect.¹⁹ By collective adoption, queerness is able to metamorphose from a 'marginal' to a potent alternative identity, the reinforcement of its own ideology steadily rendering the formerly dominant heteronormative ideologies less authoritative. Queerness, like any serviceable counterculture, then, exposes the hypocrisies of normative culture by reading it back upon itself. For example, Rees notes that even medical discourse is normative, as many of the supposedly essential gendered characteristics which sex reassignment surgery attempts to cure, such as 'length of hair', are merely 'social constructs' of either maleness or femininity.²⁰ As queer countercultures offer a momentous source of cognitive enfranchisement amidst an often hostile climate of homophobia, and given that there remains an indissociable 'link between the apparently dissimilar processes of desire and identification',²¹ it is unsurprising that since the latter half of the twentieth century, 'the development of a powerful movement publicly and actively affirming a gay and lesbian "identity" [...] has freed thousands of women and men from a deep, painful, socially induced sense of inferiority and shame'.²²

In *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, however, Lee Edelman convincingly argues that queerness can never truly constitute a liberative form of identity due to the symbolic nature of social reality. Instead, he advocates for negative affect, construing this as a force that

by Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 212-229 (p. 218).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Emma, L. E. Rees, *The Vagina: A Literary and Cultural History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 245.

²¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 24.

²² Katz, p. 98.

holds the power to negate conservative ideologies by exposing the fixity of a future lived under their thrall:

[f]or just as compassion allows no rhetorical ground outside its logic, no place to stand beyond its enforced Imaginary identifications [...] compassion is always conservative [...] so irony's negativity calls forth compassion to negate it and thereby marks compassion and all the components of desire, its defining identifications as well as the fantasies that sustain them, with the negativity of the very drive against which they claim to defend.²³

For Edelman, although positive affect masquerades as a solution to queer persecution, it is actually only a socionormative analeptic for queer disenfranchisement, a mode of existence that implicitly affirms, and is thus powerless to prevent, the same socionormative conditions being perpetually reproduced throughout history. Instead, he proposes that those who identify as queer must work to oppose the reproductive futurism which normative culture ideologically promotes, by embracing the opposition queerness figures to the 'image of the Child' via the espousal of negative affect (or queer negativity).

The near absolute cultural hegemony that reproductive futurism exerts in contemporary societies is demonstrable, to give merely one example for the sake of brevity, through 'Dad Behavior', a recent episode of *The Simpsons*. In a radical subversion of the show's regular opening titles sequence, the preface to the episode shows the various members of the Simpson family failing to carry out the implausible activities they usually perform unproblematically within the familiar opening footage, with almost exclusively fatal consequences. After Maggie drives the car she and her mother are sat in into a lake, Marge's corpse soon floats to the surface, yet, although it seems inevitable that she too must have died, Maggie's corpse is pointedly not depicted. For the episode to kill Maggie would be for the episode to kill the image of the Child and thus expose the illusory nature of a social order which perpetually defers the achievement of an Imaginary wholeness onto its ensuing generations. Accordingly, the dismal portrayal of Marge's corpse figures as an uncompromising admonition of her ineptitude in

²³ Edelman, p. 89.

having (somehow) left her child unsupervised in the front seat of her car, endangering the safety of the image of the Child which forms the symbolic guarantee of reproductive futurism. Later in the episode, upon realising he isn't the father of a fellow resident of his retirement home's unborn child, Abraham Simpson demonstrates queer negativity in practice when he remarks with glee that 'not having kids keeps you young'.²⁴

The immense cultural prevalence of cultural ideologies that espouse reproductive futurism aptly proves the continuing utility of Edelman's philosophy to the field of Queer Theory. Nevertheless, whilst Edelman attempts to relocate queerness as an identity outside of the fantasies of normative culture altogether, his conception of queerness still necessarily remains positioned in opposition to ordinary culture, figuring an indissoluble dichotomy between queerness and straightness, defined by whether they (literally) conceive the futurity of life or not. Where Edelman therefore proficiently utilises an essentialist conception of queerness to suggest a direction by which the queer future may be negotiated, my analysis is more disposed to attempt the further exposure of the queer past. Whilst it may ostensibly seem problematic to apply modern conceptions of queerness to Victorian texts, given that social conceptions of sexuality have undergone massive alterations in the intervening time, this study will embrace an awareness of queerness as being detectable as a variously expressed, yet ultimately contiguous, force throughout recorded human history.

In contrast to Edelman's position, Tyler Bradway contends that queer negativity is only one method of queer existence, and that positive affect can be just as useful to queer movements. He therefore argues that discourse on the importance of negative modes of affect has 'tended to eclipse other forces of queerness', and that there is a need for queer theorists to establish a queer affective archive, a textual record that 'positive affects can encode desires for queer social relations in historical moments when those relations are under attack'.²⁵ He holds that queer affect is actualised through the 'axis of affect – the body's immanent openness to qualitative change', and can be figured as a 'pre-ideological sensual domain' that exists on the margins of normative

²⁴ Steven Dean Moore, dir., *The Simpsons*, S28:8, 'Dad Behavior' (Fox, 2016).

²⁵ Tyler Bradway, *Queer Experimental Literature: The Affective Politics of Bad Reading* (New York: Palgrave, 2017), p. vi, 152.

culture with forceful countercultural potential.²⁶ From this perspective, queer affect, however ephemerally, is held to be able to prefigure and radically exceed the purview of ideology altogether. Hence, Bradway conceives that queerness itself is not defined by the performance of erotic acts as such, but instead by the generation of queer affect. His conception of queerness thus forestalls the popular contention that earlier cultures didn't have the same apprehension of sexuality as modern societies and thus weren't queer, since his politics of queer affect is unquestionably demonstrable across history.

This analysis will attempt to determine the locations of affect in the two aforementioned canonical Victorian texts, *Goblin Market* and *In Memoriam*, in order to reclaim their politics of queer affect. Undoubtedly, a number of notable discourses by queer theorists have already begun the task of queering the canon, so it should be emphasised that the work of this study is in many ways a continuation rather than an unprecedented intervention.²⁷ However, as has been stated, both texts hold the potential to advance the comprehensive queer affective archive suggested by Bradway, and thus this study forms a contribution towards a prevalent mode of discourse in the field of Queer Theory.

***In Memoriam* (1850)**

While Alan Sinfield persuasively argues that *In Memoriam* is composed of 'complex structures of language' in a way that ensures 'careless reading is likely to provide the least satisfactory approach' to its textual meaning, in truth the structural complexity of Tennyson's poem does

²⁶ Bradway, pp. 153, 154.

²⁷ Alongside Bradway, Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Madhavi Menon (ed.), *Shakespeare: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare* (London: Duke University Press, 2011); Eric Haralson, *Henry James and Queer Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and most recently, Maxime Foerster, *The Politics of Love: Queer Heterosexuality in Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2018) are all major examples of queer critical readings of canonical texts.

not distract from its manifest queer agenda whatsoever, as even a surface reading reveals.²⁸ As its title suggests, *In Memoriam* A.H.H. is a solemn elegy to Tennyson's male companion Arthur Henry Hallam, and Tennyson's uttermost anguish at the loss of his friend is unmistakable throughout. Bereft that he can be Hallam's 'mate no more', Tennyson's autobiographical speaker finds himself torturously afflicted by 'An inner trouble' which 'makes [him] cold'.²⁹ As when Hallam is earlier evoked as 'the comrade of [his] choice', the language of the poem not only frequently exhibits homosexual undertones, but moreover conveys a forceful sense of the speaker's utter despondency at the nature of his bereavement.³⁰

Hallam being described as 'Dear as the mother to the son' and 'more than my brothers are to me' implies that he and the persona had a very close relationship, one in which each of them was irreplaceable in the eyes of the other. Thus, the persona of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* exhibits a queer choice of affect object in his desire for Hallam.³¹ His idiosyncratic affective choice accordingly emphasises that 'object choices are not equivalent', with some forms of desire bearing the potential to take the individual 'beyond the horizon of intimacy', and towards the phenomenological attainment of euphoric emotions.³² Indeed, the passionate terms Tennyson uses to describe his late relationship with Hallam are frequently homoerotic, particularly when the speaker figures himself in a female and submissive role in relation to Hallam, as 'some poor girl whose heart is set' on a lover 'whose rank exceeds her own', and must therefore remain deferential to her partner.³³

²⁸ Alan Sinfield, 'Diction: Simple Words and Complex Meanings', in *In Memoriam*, ed. by Erik Gray (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), pp. 160 - 172 (p. 161).

²⁹ Tennyson, XLI. 20, 18, 19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, XIII. 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, IX. 19, 20.

³² Sara Ahmed, 'Happy Objects', in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 29-51 (p. 44).

³³ Tennyson, LX. 3, 4.

Furthermore, when the speaker presents himself as the 'widow'd' spouse of Hallam, he figures the two of them in familial terms.³⁴ It is intriguing then, that Mary Jean Corbett argues it is actually 'normative forms of Victorian familialism and conjugality'³⁵ which allow the expression of the persona's desire in the poem, and that Tennyson's affective bond with Hallam is the result of them being brothers-in-law.³⁶ Although Corbett states that it was a familial norm in the Victorian period to treat 'a sibling's spouse [as] one's own sibling' or as an even more intimate relation, such behaviour would be decidedly queer by modern standards.³⁷ Notably, then, the ideologies that condition contemporary affect choices are actually more restrictive and far more prohibitively categorised, than they were in the past. Furthermore, Chris White asserts that, in texts from the Victorian period which depict affect between males, 'there is a language for love between men which appears in the form of intense, emotional friendship that can fulfil the individual', and I contend that it is in this manner that Tennyson's persona figures his desire for Hallam.³⁸ Since the concept of 'homosexuality' did not exist in the period in which the poem was written, it is of particular note that Tennyson is nevertheless able to recognise and promote his affect as a form of emotional liberation. Precisely because his affect is unconditioned by the arbitrary and often stultifying label of 'homosexual', Tennyson's persona is granted a greater range of social modes of expression for his desire.

Though select turns of phrase in the poem are clearly highly suggestive, better confirmation of the overt homosexual agenda in the text comes when Tennyson's persona 'locates his devotion to Hallam with Shakespearean love' in section LXI where, as Jeff Nunokawa states, 'he identifies his desire with a standard Victorian figure for the male

³⁴ Ibid., IX. 18.

³⁵ Mary Jean Corbett, 'No Second Friend?: Perpetual Maidenhood and Second Marriage in *In Memoriam* and "The Conjugial Angel"', in *ELH*, 81.1 (2014), pp. 299-323 (p. 301).

³⁶ Through Hallam's engagement to Emilia Tennyson.

³⁷ Corbett, p. 301.

³⁸ Chris White, 'Love', in *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Chris Wood (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 236-238 (p. 236).

homoerotic'.³⁹ The signifier of homosexual desire identified by Nunokawa is Tennyson's reference to Shakespeare's Sonnets, which were also addressed to and extolled the virtues of a male friend. This intertextual signification therefore implies that Shakespeare's elegant sonnets themselves cannot express 'love [for Hallam] more' than Tennyson's persona himself can, given the subjectively experienced affective union the two of them had shared.⁴⁰ The ABBA rhyme scheme of the poem is revealing in itself: its intrinsic circularity, created by the return of the fourth line to the rhyme of the first, after an ephemeral development, mirrors the speaker's state of mind by emulating the recurrence of grief in the process of mourning. As is further demonstrated in the poem, the speaker's mentality is largely characterised by an overpowering inability to experience anything related to life; his description of the 'long unlovely street' is an ominous portent of future time, days of grief and emotional numbness yet to come.⁴¹ Though he can marginally experience the external world, he notices only the 'drizzling rain' and the 'bald street' and ascribes it another 'blank day', one which contains no saving graces without Hallam alive to share it with him.⁴² Although he is able to perceive his surroundings, the speaker still feels irrevocably separated from them: 'He is not here; but far away | The noise of life begins again'.⁴³ He remains as detached from reengagement with his physical environment as he is from Hallam himself. The enjambment ending the first line allows 'but far away' to function doubly; not only with the line it lies in, but also by becoming a component of the following line too. This linkage firmly situates the speaker's present lethargy and his grief for Hallam in inexorable union. Though 'He wishes not to be in pain, [...] it is his pain which is', dreadfully, now the only 'living witness to his love', the only feeling for Hallam he has left to hold onto.⁴⁴

³⁹ Jeff Nunokawa, 'In Memoriam and the Extinction of the Homosexual', in *In Memoriam*, ed. by Erik Gray (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), pp. 208-218 (p. 214).

⁴⁰ Tennyson, LXI. 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, VII. 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, VII. 11, 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, VII. -10.

⁴⁴ Christopher Ricks, 'In Memoriam, 1850', in *In Memoriam*, ed. by Erik Gray (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), pp. 172-188 (p. 185).

As demonstrated, the early part of the poem's queer agenda is, if a secret at all, a poorly rendered secret at best. Henceforth, the latter part of the poem employs an explicit technique of deception to suggest that the speaker's homosexual passion has been usurped, that the speaker has outgrown the species of desire he displayed earlier. While Nunokawa is correct to determine that 'the place in *In Memoriam* where the homoerotic is extinguished, the place where Tennyson's love for Hallam is matured [...] permanently arrested at the stage of schoolboy love' occurs in section LXXXI – when 'Death declares that through its intervention, Tennyson's devotion to Hallam was fully ripened' – he is mistaken in his conclusion that the subsequent sections of the poem actively repudiate the earlier queer agenda entirely.⁴⁵ Certainly, the section does function as a 'funeral [...] for [Tennyson's] own puerile homoerotic desire', but crucially it only does so deceptively.⁴⁶ By renouncing the instances of homoerotic desire in the poem as merely the 'Confusions of a wasted youth', Tennyson ensures his poem ostensibly appears sufficiently heteronormative, presumably in order to achieve its publication.⁴⁷ It is clear, however, that the potent homosexual love already represented in the poem cannot simply be outgrown as if it were a passing teenage fad and, correspondingly, Tennyson's love for Hallam – his queer affect – continues to be detectable, though to a greatly lessened extent, far further into the poem. As is evident in his continued lament at the wasted hopes he had of 'some strong bond which [was] to be' with Hallam, the speaker's earlier desire for his companion has not diminished whatsoever, as the poem's continuance itself reaffirms.⁴⁸

The notion of Knabenliebe, paederasty, or 'greek love' bears relevance here. This term, used frequently in the Victorian period to describe and sanction male-male sexual relationships, is premised on the notions that such 'relationships, once begun, never extend beyond the youth of the junior partner' and that 'the younger partner does not share in his older lover's sexual desire but [...] surrenders out of a mixed

⁴⁵ Nunokawa, p. 216.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁴⁷ Tennyson, [Prologue] 42.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, CXVI. 16.

feeling of gratitude, esteem, and affection'.⁴⁹ As Hallam was two years Tennyson's elder, it would be expected that, if their relationship was merely that of Greek love, Tennyson would have grown out of his feelings of romantic affect for Hallam in adulthood, and even that he should never have had such feelings in the first instance. Therefore, by emphasising that his love for Hallam continues years after his lover's death, Tennyson specifically queers common notions of the time that such male-male relationships were a whim of adolescence, surrendered at the age of adulthood, and hints towards a far more expansive and less rigidly defined conception of queer sexuality and love. His love is not normatively transgressive, but rather excessively transgressive, in a manner that also consequently problematises the foundation of many contemporary heteronormative prejudices against 'homosexuals'. The great deception of *In Memoriam* thus works to render its text orthodox, or heteronarrative, and to normalise its persona's sexual identity, a subversion that appears less than convincing when closely examined.

***Goblin Market* (1862)**

Rossetti's *Goblin Market* is more broadly taciturn in expressing its queer agenda, the queer identities of its personae resembling only a constituent element of the text, rather than its central focus. Like the term 'homosexual' in Tennyson's time, the term 'lesbian' was not in common usage when Rossetti wrote *Goblin Market*. However, there are documented accounts which record the existence of female-female affect even earlier in history than the time at which she wrote the poem. For example, Anne 'Lister's journals for the period 1817-26 [...] record that she had sexual affairs with a number of women including Isabella Norcliffe, Anne Belcombe, Mariana Belcombe, Maria Barlow, Madame de Rosny and Ann Walker'.⁵⁰ Lister nonetheless had to remain secretive about her queer desires, regularly having to deny 'any knowledge of

⁴⁹ David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 55.

⁵⁰ Stephen Colclough, "'Do you not know the quotation?': Reading Anne Lister, Anne Lister Reading", in *Lesbian Dames: Sapphism in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by John C. Beynon and Caroline Gonda (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 159-172 (p. 159).

sexual activity between women', just as Tennyson and Rossetti made their poems' queer agendas clandestine.⁵¹

In Lister and Rossetti's time, the practice of female-female relationships was referred to by the term sapphism but, whilst this nomenclature suggests an alternate form of sexuality to modern female-female union, the affective desire which is signified by the phrases 'sapphism' and 'lesbianism' is a common one. Both terms construe female-female desire as being transgressional, figure the euphoria born of the pursuit of individual sexual desires as being of superlative importance to politically inscribed social conventions, and thus work to overturn such conventions. Likewise, Bernadette J. Brooten identifies a number of terms such as hetairistria (roughly translated as 'companion') which predate the term lesbian, and which were used to refer to women who had sexual relations with other women in ancient Greek society, which she concludes 'demonstrates the existence of a cultural category of homoerotic women (and not just of female homoerotic acts)'.⁵² Queer affect then, has a firm precedent in history, yet hegemonic ideologies such as heteronormativity and homonormativity work to obscure these queer histories. This once more proves just how necessary it is to investigate the central cultural artefacts of our human past in addition to our present, in order to continue to foreground the existence of these historical queer identities.

Regardless of the exact term by which female-female relationships are signified, as Adrienne Rich states, there is actually an increased need to be secretive for Rossetti in attempting to escape censorship than there was for Tennyson, as 'in its patriarchal definition, female friendship and comradeship have been set apart from the erotic, thus limiting the erotic itself'.⁵³ Thus, *Goblin Market* being secretive about its queer agenda is not merely a method of escaping censorship, but also of expressing its agenda in a way that is free of linguistic enslavement to patriarchy. Being secretively rather than openly queer, the poem escapes the patriarchal assumptions and prejudices it would

⁵¹ Colclough, p. 171.

⁵² Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 4, 337.

⁵³ Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', in *Signs*, 5.4 (1980), pp. 631-660 (p. 650).

usually face and, accordingly, the secretive nature of the text becomes a queer language in itself, which therefore affords a freedom of queer expression. Most noticeably, perhaps, the text's ostensible form as a children's poem becomes an important factor in this secretive design, its opening establishing a tone of childishness through its nursery rhyme qualities; as is exemplified by the simplistic language and rhythm of the calls of 'Come buy, come buy' which form a repetitive refrain at the outset.⁵⁴ The main content of the poem, however, engages with far more mature themes than this early sample taken alone would suggest.

Interestingly, the poem's title is itself a means of queer secrecy, its exclusive fixation on the goblins thematically marginalising the importance of the sisters' relationship within the overall text, even though they are its central protagonists.⁵⁵ In their relation toward each other, Laura and Lizzie appear to be extraordinarily intimate for sisters, 'Crouching close together' in 'Among the brookside rushes', and spending copious amounts of time together 'Evening by evening'.⁵⁶ Descriptions of 'clasping arms and cautioning lips [...] tingling cheeks and finger tips' convey that there is a definite sensuality inherent in their intimacy, an impression further evoked by the natural imagery used to describe them 'Folded in each other's wings', lying in loving embrace in the bed they share.⁵⁷ Laura and Lizzie's bodies, when joined in female-female union like this, are open to a plurality of interpretations, being variously described as being 'Like two blossoms on one stem', 'Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow' and 'Like two wands of ivory'.⁵⁸ The configuration of their conjoined bodies is hence shown to be queer and resistant to definition in simplistic terms, as it evades and exceeds any attempt at discerning and hence colonising its meaning. Intriguingly, although Edelman asserts that any queer identity 'is always oppositionally defined',⁵⁹ when lying 'Golden head by golden head'⁶⁰ Laura and Lizzie are, in praxis, palpably indistinguishable, each of their

⁵⁴ Rossetti, 4, 19, 31.

⁵⁵ I refer to Laura and Lizzie as sisters throughout this paper both for ease of reference, and because the text refers to them as such.

⁵⁶ Rossetti, 36, 33, 32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 38-39, 186.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 188-190.

⁵⁹ Edelman, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Rossetti, 184.

identities being defined by its instinctive role as the corresponding half of the other's.

Given this wealth of indicative evidence, it seems reasonable to question whether the purported sister-sister relationship between the two women is not in fact another method of deception. Rich suggests the use of the term 'lesbian continuum to include a range [...] of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman', and by the application of this redefinition to the text it becomes unnecessary to see evidence of direct sexual activity in the sisters' close bond in order to confidently assert it to lie within this continuum of female-female affect, and thus to be fundamentally queer in character.⁶¹ Therefore, although it is imperative to read, through the sisters' 'sharing of a rich inner life[,] breadths of female history and psychology which have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited [...] definitions of "lesbianism"', it is equally noteworthy that it is their queer identities themselves which are threatened within the text.⁶²

Specifically, the sisters' 'lesbian' existence in *Goblin Market* is one that is problematised by its interaction with the goblins and the heterosexual culture they embody. The goblins, explicitly specified to be 'little men' and 'brothers', figure as the representatives of male desire in the text and, though '[t]heir [heterosexual] offers should not charm' the lesbian sisters, they most undoubtedly do.⁶³ As Luce Irigaray suggests, female-female 'desire [...] may be recovered only in secret, in hiding', and the goblins' interference in the sisters' interdependent relationship represents a destruction of this necessary privacy.⁶⁴ Laura's vulnerability is further emphasised by the description of her being 'Like a vessel at the launch | When its last restraint is gone', as she becomes transfixed by a male desire, alien to her, which she cannot begin to comprehend.⁶⁵ Although the sisters are capable of empowering and enriching each other's lives when they are 'Locked together in one nest' in private spaces, the degree to which patriarchal culture refutes queer

⁶¹ Rich, p. 648.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 648-649.

⁶³ Rossetti, 55, 65.

⁶⁴ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 30.

⁶⁵ Rossetti, 85-86.

relationships is patent whenever they are elsewhere.⁶⁶ Outside their home, whilst the sisters endeavour to remain 'Covered close lest they should look' at their tempters, the goblins' song nonetheless proves too compelling to resist.⁶⁷ Evidently, merely for them to enter a public place is to surrender their queer mode of affect by opening themselves to the influence of the antagonistic male desire the goblins stand as a metonym for.

As the goblins' hostile presence thereby demonstrates, there remains 'the competition of heterosexual compulsion for women's attention' even for those whose sexual desires are located on the 'lesbian' continuum.⁶⁸ Though the cautionary tale of Jeanie's tragic fate forewarns them that a woman has already 'dwindled and gr[own] grey' and died after interacting with the goblins, the sisters are nevertheless drawn to their fruit and calls, '[Laura's] mouth water[ing] still' at their alien offerings despite herself.⁶⁹ While the goblins' 'grapes are so luscious' and outwardly radiant - purportedly ideal to satisfy Laura's desire - their intake turns her 'To swift decay and burn' before long, just as compulsory heterosexual culture is fundamentally unnatural and often even harmful to people with variant sexual desires.⁷⁰ There is evidently a necessity for female-female relationships and desire to survive, if they are to at all, through the 'rejection of [this otherwise] compulsory way of life'.⁷¹

In a reading that draws an interesting parallel to my own queer interpretation of the associations between the sisters and the goblins, Michael Tosin Gbogi makes a convincing argument that the presence of the goblins within the poem provides a means by which it 'tackles capitalism'.⁷² He asserts that the 'sexist imagery of the market-place [...] a place where men are hyper-active sellers', provokes a dichotomic relationship between the market and the sisters' home, the latter of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 198.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁸ Rich, p. 656.

⁶⁹ Rossetti, 156, 166.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 61, 279.

⁷¹ Rich, p. 649.

⁷² Michael Tosin Gbogi, 'Refiguring the subversive in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market"', in *Neohelicon*, 41.2 (2014), pp. 503-516 (p. 510).

which provides them with a refuge from androcentric culture.⁷³ Despite the fact that my reading principally differs by construing the goblins' agenda as heteronormative rather than androcentric, I believe Gbogi is mistaken in his claim that the 'final picture Rossetti paints of the patriarchal market is one of total destruction where no root or stone or shoot of (goblin) men's oppression remains' and thus that the poem is a 'radical vision of a complete annihilation of patriarchal oppression'.⁷⁴ In fact, the resolution of the poem is far less simplistic than Gbogi's reading would suggest.

Importantly then, at the end of *Goblin Market*, the goblins are only marginally deposed, 'vanished', presumably to promulgate the compulsory heterosexual culture they represent elsewhere and, though no husbands are visible, 'both [sisters have become] wives' – presumably to men – and mothers.⁷⁵ Although it is manifestly disconcerting that the sisters have seemingly surrendered their queer identities, the poem's dénouement adroitly emphasises the extent to which 'pregnancy, childbirth and parenting are unavoidable side effects of' patriarchal societies, and the unremitting insuperability of heteronormative ideologies'.⁷⁶ It is therefore rather poignant that even after submitting to heterosexual union, Laura nonetheless fondly recalls 'Those pleasant days long gone', which have become locked away in 'not-returning time'.⁷⁷ Now merely a memory, the sisters' generative affect has become locked away in a past as irretrievable as it is queer.

Conclusion

Through the production of queer re-readings of canonical texts, queer affect in the past can be rescued, enabled, and come to be affective anew. *Goblin Market* concludes with the sisters' close bond having been surrendered in the pursuit of reproductive futurity, a paradigm shift

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Gbogi, p. 511.

⁷⁵ Rossetti, 446, 544.

⁷⁶ Louisa Yates, 'The Figure of the Child in Neo-Victorian Queer Families' in *The Figure of the Child in Neo-Victorian Families: Gender, Sexual and Cultural Politics*, ed. by Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 93-117 (p. 114).

⁷⁷ Rossetti, 550, 551.

ratified by two heteronormative marriages. Equally, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* only succeeds in espousing its queer agenda by a debasing self-ridicule of its earlier sections and its persona's queer identity, culminating in a heterosexual marriage. Thus, although a level of secrecy and deception apropos their queer agendas secured the possibility of their publication within a culture of compulsory heterosexuality, the queer agendas of both texts ultimately remain partially confined by the limitations entailed by their adherence to those same social strictures.

By continuing to produce new queer readings of such responsive canonical texts, however, we can succeed in (re)enabling their radical potential in a truly incendiary fashion. This study has attempted to form a contribution towards the wider ongoing historicisation of queer countercultures, a contribution which in turn provokes a number of corollary concerns. In addition to there being a need to reappraise the queer capacity of other works by Tennyson and Rossetti, I propose that there is also a need to investigate the prospective queerness of other mid-Victorian period texts contiguous to the poems of this study.

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Tracking the Intersectional Oppression of the Black Woman in the United States

Shannen Grant

African-American women inhabit a unique position in the United States due to their race and sex. In this article, I will be unpicking the ways in which white and black men and white women have used these attributes to oppress black women. I will also be exploring how certain stereotypes concerning the sexual immorality and increased masculinity of the black woman were established. I will argue that the black woman has been neglected by the two movements founded to liberate her: The Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement. Lastly, I will take present case studies to reveal the ways that the intersectional oppression of the black woman has failed to shift.

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberly Crenshaw in her 1989 essay 'Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex'.¹ The term refers to those who are discriminated against in society due to multiple aspects of their identity. To elaborate, whereas a black man may be discriminated against due to his race but not gender and a white woman, because of her gender but not race, the black woman is discriminated against for both her race and gender. Indeed, a working-class, homosexual, woman of colour would be experiencing many forms of oppression that would not necessarily relate to the oppression experienced by that of the white woman or her male counterpart. Crenshaw utilises a helpful analogy to explain the term:

[i]magine a basement which contains all people who are disadvantaged on the basis of race, sex, class, sexual preference, age and/or physical ability. These people are stacked-feet standing on shoulders-with those on the bottom

¹ Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1. 8 (1989), pp. 139-167. <h5p://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8> [accessed 29/04/2018]

being disadvantaged by the full array of factors, up to the very top, where the heads of all those disadvantaged by a singular factor brush up against the ceiling. Their ceiling is actually the floor above which only those who are not disadvantaged in any way reside.²

Undoubtedly, there is an expansive pool of oppression. However, those that experience intersectional oppression suffer the unique burden of experiencing not only the disadvantages that each unprivileged aspect of their person is subjected to (i.e. sexism and racism) but also an oppression that is unique to them: exclusion and obscurity. I will go to illuminate the ways black women have experienced this burden.

During the journey from Africa to America captives were treated horrendously so that they would be transformed from the humans they were when they were forced onto the ship into the dehumanised slaves they became upon arrival. bell hooks describes the setting: '[at times] the slaver would slaughter a slave so as to inspire terror' and insist upon 'the removal of names and status, the dispersement of groups so that there would exist no common language, and removal of any overt sign of an African heritage'.³ These acts were done intentionally as a way of 'breaking' and 'taming' the African.⁴ hooks remarks that it was the slavers' job to make 'the prideful, arrogant, and independent spirit of the African people...broken [so that they could] conform to the white coloniser's notion of the proper slave demeanour'.⁵ The African person, during this journey was made into a slave and this is one of the ways the African woman, as well the man was oppressed by the white man.

However, the African woman experienced a cruelty that could not be transferred to the African male. Many African women were raped during this journey; one observer recalls, 'many a negress was landed upon our shore already impregnated by someone of the demonic crew'.⁶ Not only were the women raped but if pregnant, they would be forced into 'a compartment of 16 by 18 feet' with 250 other women'

² Ibid., p. 151.

³ bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (London: Pluto Press, 1982), p. 18.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

and would have to give birth 'with their bodies exposed to either the scorching sun or freezing cold'.⁷ In addition to this, if their children were to survive (and many did not), they were often used by slavers as a tool to torture women. There is a recorded instance where a captain ordered a 'child be placed feet first into boiling water [...] [he then] dropped the child and caused its death [...] [and] commanded the mother to throw the body of the child overboard. The mother refused but was beaten until she submitted'.⁸ This kind of oppression by the white man is unique to the black woman, as it was she who was preyed upon because of her sex. She experienced rape and pregnancy, and her children were used to brutalise her. It was a cruelty specifically aimed at the black woman by the white man in order to break her.

Upon arrival in America, the African-American woman was subjected to the identity of the Jezebel. During American colonial society, fundamentalist Christian teaching dictated that women were 'evil sexual temptress[es], the bringer[s] of sin into the world. Sexual lust originated with her and men were merely the victims of her wanton power'.⁹ As the grip of fundamentalist Christian doctrine was loosened, the perception of women also shifted. While the nineteenth century white woman began to be perceived as 'the nobler half of humanity' whose duty was to elevate men's sentiments and inspire their higher impulses', the displaced African was 'eagerly labelled...sexual heathen' and was 'accused of leading white men away from spatial purity into sin'.¹⁰ In this way, white and black women were marked as binary opposites, the former embodying the virtuous and the latter, the sin.

White slave masters notoriously raped countless black women and girls and used the notion of the Jezebel to validate this act. Page Smith explores the perspective for the white man:

there was undoubtedly the attraction of the perverse, of the taboo, the association of darkness with pleasantly wickedness, the absence of any danger to the sexual exploiter however unwelcome his attentions may have been. [...] Since there seems to be in masculine sexuality a measure of aggressiveness

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 31-33.

and even sadism, passivity and defencelessness seem often to enhance the desirability of the sexual object which was what the Negro woman was for her white masters.¹¹

The identity of the Jezebel worked for the white man in several different ways: from it exuded the idea of the decadent sexual partner. However, it also meant that as a master, they could exercise and satisfy their sadistic and perverse desires without any fear of repercussion. In fact, they could deny responsibility for their acts, instead blaming the black woman, the sexual temptress, for seducing them.

Lastly, there is the issue that there was no protection for the black woman, the supposed Jezebel. As I have established, they were attacked by white men. However, there was also the risk of rape by the black man and if this occurred, the man would not receive any lawful punishment, only possible reprimand by their master. Indeed, during this time 'Rape meant, by definition, rape of white women, for no such crime as rape of a black woman existed at law'.¹² Black women were also punished by white women due to their identity as Jezebels. Stanley Feldstein recounts a moment when 'a white mistress returned home unexpectedly from an outing, opened the doors of her dressing room, and discovered her husband raping a thirteen year old slave girl. She responded by beating the girl and locking her in a smokehouse. The girl was whipped daily for several weeks'.¹³ It was also common for white women to 'use disfigurement to punish a lusted-after black female slave. The female might cut off her breast, blind an eye, or cut off another body part'.¹⁴ Black women were treated horrendously and punished severely for their sexual identity, an identity they had no hand in creating and no power to impede. The black woman, being preyed upon by these members of society, without any formal protection socially or lawfully, was vulnerable and mercilessly oppressed.

Another identity prescribed to the black woman was the notion that they were inherently manlier than other women. It was prescribed because to have women labouring in the fields alongside (and

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹² Ibid., p. 35.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 154.

sometimes surpassing) men undermined the patriarchal notion that women are inherently weaker and incapable of working, hooks argues:

by forcing black female slaves to perform the same work tasks as black male slaves, white male patriarchs were contradicting their own sexist order that claimed women to be inferior because she lacked physical prowess. [...] To explain the black female's ability to survive [...] white males argued that black slave women were not 'real' women but were masculinised sub-human creatures.¹⁵

In order to uphold the assertion of female inferiority, it was necessary to establish black women as outliers. Black women could work because they were not truly women. In this way, the white man had his cake and ate it too: he could sustain his profits and keep intact the idea that women are innately inferior. However, robbing black women of the title 'woman' had devastating effects on the ways they perceived themselves.

The effect was that black women felt shame in enacting male roles. hooks points out that the black woman understood that a woman was 'supposed' to be 'physically weak, and 'formed for the less laborious occupation'; she should be 'timid and modest, beautiful and graceful'.¹⁶ The black woman was established as the opposite of this identity and needed to compensate in attempt to make herself appear more effeminate. Slave-owners and overseers found that 'slave women could best be manipulated by promises of a new dress, a hair ribbon, or a parasol- anything that emphasised their femininity'.¹⁷ Some slave women even wore dresses while they worked even though it was less practical. The black woman is placed in the inescapable position of a slave; this position dictates that she cannot therefore be a woman. As a result, regardless of what she may try to do to compensate or prove herself, the title, that is her birth right, is withheld. By denying the black woman the identity of 'woman', white men destabilised her sense of self and established them as inadequate.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.47-48.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The last aspect of oppression that I will explore is the issue of colourism which led black women to resent their natural attributes. As I have established, the black woman (to her horror) was masculinised while the white woman was established as the ideal: 'modest, beautiful and graceful' and working was below her. However, there was another component. If a black woman had lighter skin it was probable that she was a house-slave and avoided the back-breaking labour of the fields. Indeed, those with 'darker-skin hues, kinky hair, and broader facial features' were generally the field slaves whereas if one had lighter skin there was the potential for 'better access to clothes, education food, and the promise of freedom upon the master's death'.¹⁸ The lighter-skinned woman, by not being subjected to the same kind of work as the darker-skinned woman, became more of a woman. By making the darkest women with the most pronounced features the most undesirable (not even worthy of the title) women, white women the ideal, and easing the suffering of the light-skinned, colourism came into play. It led to the resentment of black attributes as a woman's darkness, kinky hair and nose deemed her a sub-human, while a lighter woman could enjoy a comparatively better situation.

Black women experienced oppression during abolitionism due to their gender. In some instances, black men imposed subordination and conservatism onto the black woman, thereby restricting her liberty. To regard a statement by Martin Delany, founder of *The Mystery* (a newspaper that revealed details of the anti-slavery movement) and one who lead the Vigilance Committee, who helped relocate fugitive slaves:

[o]ur females must be qualified, because they are to be the mothers of our children. [...] Raise the mothers above the level of degradation, and the offspring is elevated with them.¹⁹

¹⁸ Tracey Owens Patton, 'Hey Girl, Am I More than My Hair?: African American Women and Their Struggles with Beauty, Body Image and Hair', *NWSA Journal*, 18 (2006), pp. 24-51 (pp. 26; 26-28).

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4317206?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents> [accessed 6 December 2017]

¹⁹ Martin Delaney, 'The Black Nationalist Manifesto', in *Let Nobody Turn Around Voices of Resistance Reform and Renewal, An African Anthology*, ed. by Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, 2nd edn (Maryland: Rowman & LittleField Publishers Inc., 2009), pp. 69-86 (p. 79).

In this statement, the importance of elevating women out of degradation is asserted but not because of their innate value, but because of their value as mothers. The value of the black woman is only derived from motherhood, suggesting that every other facet of the black woman's existence is worthless. The role of the mother and how her child perceives her is, of course, important; however, when the value of a woman is based solely on her role as a mother, then it is oppressive.

More recently, black women were also subjected to oppression by notable figures in The Civil Rights Movement such as Amiri Baraka the activist, scholar and poet:

we talk about the Black woman and the Black man, like we were separate, because we have been separated, our hands reach out for each other [...]. We were separated by the deed and process of slavery [...] But we must erase the separateness [...] by embracing a value system that knows of no separation but only the Divine complement the black woman is for her man. For instance we do not believe in the 'equality' of men and women, we cannot understand what the [...] devilishly influenced mean when they say equality for women. We could never be equals [...]. Let a woman be wo-man [...] and let a man be a ma-an.²⁰

Here, it is implied that in order to dismantle the network of oppression imposed on African Americans, black people must assume their gender roles. Using romantic language, the black woman is offered her traditional role, one where equality is out of the question and her purpose, she is told, is to assist her man. The implication is that, while the men of The Civil Rights Movement strive for equality and freedom, the goal for the woman is to be a woman, and therefore still oppressed. The black woman in The Civil Rights Movement was in some cases not encouraged to strive for freedom, but to be a subordinate because of her gender instead of her race.

This imposed subordination meant that black women were still oppressed, but simply by different men who had a slightly different set

²⁰ Imanu Amiri Baraka 'Black Woman' in *Black World* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 7-11 (pp. 7-8).

of rules. Michele Wallace's experience within The Civil Rights Movement gives a valuable insight:

[i]t took me three years to fully understand that the countless speeches that all began "the Black men"[...] did not include me. [...] I pieced together the ideal that was being presented for me to emulate [...]. No I wasn't to wear makeup but yes I had to wear long skirts that I could barely walk in. No I wasn't to go to the beauty parlour but yes I was to spend hours controlling my hair. No I wasn't to flirt with or take any shit off white men but yes I was to sleep with and take unending shit off Black men [...]. I would still have to iron, sew, cook, and have babies'.²¹

Moreover, she recalls '[y]oung Black female friends of mine were dropping out of school because their boyfriends had convinced them that it was "not correct" and "counterrevolutionary" to strive to do anything but have babies and clean house. "Help the brother get his thing together', they were told'.²²

Wallace's experience reveals that the calls to freedom were addressing men, while the women were not free, they still had to follow the role of the woman along with a new set of rules catered to her new masters. One can observe patriarchy at work as the black woman is not only prescribed her identity in the midst of her so-called liberation, but her best interests are sacrificed for the sake of the man. There is the disturbing suggestion that the movement was utilised to keep black women subservient, as liberation is shown only to be attainable if the woman knows and remains in her place. It seems that African Americans were trying to gain access into society and be recognised as people. Unfortunately for the woman, 'access' in society as a woman still means restricted access. Within the movement was a pressure for black women to fulfil their traditional roles, signalling gender oppression.

²¹ Michele Wallace, 'A Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood', in *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But some of us are Brave*, ed by. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982), pp. 5-12 (p. 6).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is valuable in developing the way the black community has negated the interests of the black woman.²³ The novel explores this by exposing some of the ways African American women have been silenced by the black community. As a fourteen-year-old, Celie is sexually abused by her father and told she 'better get used to it'.²⁴ Once married, she describes sex with her husband as, '[m]ost times I pretend I ain't there. He never know the difference. Never ast me how I feel, nothing. Just do his business, get off, go to sleep'.²⁵ She is made to raise her husband's children with little help, she is beaten and must work 'out in the field all day [...] sweat[ing]', while Mr... sits on the porch.²⁶

The Color Purple is important because there are very few notable white characters, meaning it carefully focuses on the inner workings of the black community. Celie endures brutal treatment at the hands of black men. She is perpetually treated as a means to an end: she is the carer, servant, worker, body for sexual gratification, but never, as Celie relays, are her own feelings valued or considered. The fact that Celie parallels sex with her husband as he is urinating on her vividly shows how entirely worthless the black woman has been made to feel. Her wish to pretend that she 'ain't there' reveals that enduring such abuse has had a devastating effect on Celie: it has depressed her into silence. Celie is the epitome of the oppressed black woman, her story outlines some of the ways black women may have experienced oppression at the hands of black men.

The Color Purple also reveals the way black women are silenced by the black community as their writings are viewed as a betrayal of the black community for perpetuating harmful stereotypes. I will first highlight a review from *The New York Times* for Ellison's *Invisible Man*, first published in 1952. Orville Prescott writes, '[in]o one interested in books by or about American Negroes should miss it'.²⁷ Ellison's novel is perceived as an important insight into the experiences of black men.

²³ Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (London: The Women's Press Limited, 1983).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁷ Orville Prescott, 'Books of the Times', *The New York Times*, 16 April 1952, n. pag. <<http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/06/20/specials/ellison-invisible2.html>> [accessed 3 January 2018].

Walker's novel however, in *The New York Times* is criticised by a black man, Nate Clay who states that the work is, 'a statement made out of context used as a pretext to take one more lick at society's rejects'.²⁸ The black community criticised Walker for portraying a black female experience, her work was overwhelmingly perceived as complicitous to the perpetuation of racist stereotypes. Complaints such as these pressure black women into not relaying their experiences because it is harmful to the way society views the black community. Crenshaw adds, 'The struggle against racism seemed to compel the subordination of certain aspects of the Black female experience in order to ensure the security of the larger Black community'.²⁹ Black women are silenced because the collective struggle against racism outweighs the importance of their struggle against sexism. They are oppressed further by the fact that men are not constrained by this issue.

The final form of oppression against African-American women that I will be exploring is within the Women's Liberation Movement. Some white middle-class women were not interested in the equality of the genders. They were interested in participating in the system of power that white men had access to. hooks argues, 'Although white feminists denounced the white male, calling him an imperialist, capitalist, sexist racist pig, they made women's liberation synonymous with women obtaining the right to fully participate in the very system they identified as oppressive'.³⁰ The issue is that this goal is catered to the interests of the white middle-class woman; other women who experience intersectional oppression or who are oppressed in different ways will have their issues ignored. There is also the implication that these women are not truly trying to dismantle sexism, they are trying to establish privileges for themselves while keeping other systems of oppression intact. This point resembles the oppression within The Civil Rights Movement as freedom was fought for black men while keeping sexism intact. I return to this point to illuminate the ways white women

²⁸ E.R. Shipp, 'Blacks in Heated Debate Over 'The Color Purple'', *The New York Times*, 27 Jan. 1986, n. pag. <<http://www.nytimes.com/1986/01/27/us/blacks-in-heated-debate-over-the-color-purple.html>> [accessed 3 January 2018].

²⁹ Crenshaw, p. 163.

³⁰ hooks, pp. 88-89.

have secured their own liberties while excluding black women by referencing the conditions of women in the work place.

The Women's Liberation Movement was also oppressive because some white middle-class white women gave the impression that all women share the same plight. hooks writes:

for them to have acknowledged women's active complicity in the perpetuation of imperialism, colonialism, racism or sexism would have made the issue of women's liberation far more complex. To those who saw feminism solely as a way to demand entrance into the white male power structure, it simplified matters to make all men oppressors and all women victims.³¹

By simplifying the goal of the woman's movement (the attainment of men's rights), as well as the identity of women (all women have the same problem), some middle-class white women were able to strengthen their attempt to achieve their privileges. They were also able to ignore their complicity in racist and other oppressive systems. They could make the white man the ultimate villain while doing nothing to dismantle their own racist ideas that oppressed their fellow feminists. I will go on to illuminate the ways white women have secured their own liberties while excluding black women by referencing the conditions of women in the work place.

It is important to acknowledge that, historically, black and white women suffered oppression very differently. The white woman was undoubtedly oppressed due to her gender; indeed, she was considered her husband's legal property, her assets were not her own, she could not work or vote, and she too was at the mercy of her husband's whims.³² In this respect, her fight for liberation was certainly warranted. However, she was not subjected to the brutal, dehumanisation that was the lot of the slave. She did not have to work from the moment the sun

³¹ Ibid., p. 150.

³² Eileen Stetson, 'Studying Slavery: Some Literary and Pedagogical Considerations on the Black Female Slave', in *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But some of us are Brave*, ed. by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982), pp. 61-84, (pp. 75-76).

went up to the time it set, even during pregnancy. The taking and separation of her children was not a common practice. She would not be stripped and beaten with a club with little or no provocation or mutilated lightly. When white feminists make the plight of women synonymous, it is insensitive, insulting and carries the implication that they are 'appropriating the horror of the slave experience to enhance their own cause'.³³ It is for this reason that to argue that all women share the same plight is, itself, a form of oppression.

Historically, the Women's Liberation Movement has actively worked to exclude and oppress black women. During the Second World War there was such a severe labour shortage that semi-skilled white workers were needed to be put into skilled work and cheap labour needed to be provided.³⁴ It became necessary for the black woman to join this work-force, but

white women did not respond well to the black women workers, [they] did not want to compete with black women for jobs nor did they want to work alongside black women. To prevent white employers from hiring black females, white female workers threatened to cease work. [...] White women employed by the federal government insisted that they be segregated from black women. In many work situations separate work rooms, washrooms, and showers were installed so that white women would not have to work or wash alongside black women.³⁵

This meant black women often had to go without these facilities. White women insisted on putting obstacles in the way of black women. Consider the Kingsbury Ordnance Plant in Indiana during WWII. On the relationship between white and black women, Katherine Turk relays:

white women held all the positions of authority over their African American counter-parts...[w]orkers who overstepped the racial boundaries that kept this hierarchy in place could

³³ hooks., p. 126.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 132-133.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 133.

expect immediate punishment...white women insisted upon distance, fearful that proximity could cause disease and contamination... At white women's insistence, separate bathrooms were designated for women of each race...white women supervisors talked of having to herd the operators...the majority of the supervisors have the feeling and idea that the coloured people are animals... Once when the [black] girls struck for better working conditions [a white overseer] said in a speech: [...] [since they] were making more money than [they] ever made in [their] lives...then why not be satisfied.³⁶

The white woman sought her right to work while thwarting other women who pursued same goals: this clearly demonstrates that racism in the women's movement was endemic. Their insistence on segregated facilities and the upholding of racial hierarchy also signals that different women are not equally oppressed: white women were holding steadfastly onto their racial privileges. Clearly, the black woman was oppressed within the Women's Liberation Movement due to her race.

There are also the works written by different women in the liberation movement that exclude women of colour or that have racist sentiments. Consider Simone De Beauvoir's famous work: *The Second Sex*. De Beauvoir writes that women have been forced to remain in their subordinate position by imposing the notion of 'separate but equal'. She unpicks the history stating: '[t]hat winning formula is most significant: it is exactly that formula the Jim Crow laws put into practice with regard to black Americans; this so-called egalitarian segregation served only to introduce the most extreme forms of discrimination'.³⁷ She parallels the position of black people and women arguing:

[t]his convergence is in no way pure chance: whether it is race, caste, class, or sex reduced to an inferior condition, the justification process is the same. "The eternal feminine" corresponds to "the black soul"...there are deep analogies

³⁶ Katherine Turk, "'A Fair Chance To Do My Part of Work': Black Women, War, Work, and Rights Claims at the Kingsbury Ordnance Plant", *Indiana Magazine of History*, 108. 3 (2012), pp. 209-244 (pp. 226-228).

³⁷ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Random House, 2010), p. 32.

between the situations of women and blacks: both are liberated today from the same paternalism, and the former master caste wants to keep them “in their place,” that is, the place chosen for them; in both cases, they praise, more or less sincerely, the virtues of the “good black,” the carefree, childlike, merry soul of the resigned black, and the woman who is a “true woman” – frivolous, infantile, irresponsible, the woman subjugated to man.³⁸

In this theory blacks equate to men and women equate to white. The black woman, who technically belongs to both groups, is excluded from both. While explaining the shared plight of blacks and women (which I have already argued is insensitive), the issues that black women face are conspicuously ignored.

More recent examples can be drawn upon to reflect the ways white women have failed to understand the oppression of black women. The writings of Shulamith Firestone are feminist works based on racist sentiments. In her work, *The Dialect of Sex* she compares race relations in America to that of a nuclear family:

[t]he white man is father, the white woman wife-and-mother, her status dependent on his; the blacks, like children, are his property, their physical differentiation branding them the subservient class'. She expands on the identity of the black woman as the daughter, stating: ‘When she discovers that the white male owns that “world of travel and adventure”, she, in the subservient position of child, attempts to identify with him, to reject the female in herself. (This may be the cause of the greater aggressiveness of the black woman compared with the docility of her white sisters). In the effort to reject the womanly (powerless) element in herself she develops contempt for the Mother (white woman). Like the young girl [...] she may attempt to gain power indirectly by seducing the Father (voila the black sexpot), thus putting herself in sexual competition

³⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

with the white woman for the Father's favour-causing her hate and be jealous of white woman.³⁹

The notions Firestone dispensed are founded on racist identities imposed on the black women (recall the origins of the masculinised black woman and the Jezebel). She used her power in the movement to perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Her writing alludes to the idea that white women are the innocent and virtuous, while the black woman is manly and aggressive. She supports the idea that black women are sexually loose and necessarily invite sexual acts with white men. Lastly, she oversimplifies the reasoning behind black women's hostility towards white women. Though resentment in having to emulate something one cannot attain is a reasonable factor, Firestone's own misrepresentation of the black woman succeeds in further oppressing a proportion of women that she is supposedly trying to liberate.

I will now reveal the ways in which the intersectional oppression of black women remains prevalent in current society using modern cases. First, is consideration of the blog post by Dr. Satoshi Kanazawa for *Psychology Today* entitled 'A Look at the Hard Truths About Human Nature'. In this post he asserts:

[t]he only thing I can think of that might potentially explain the lower average level of physical attractiveness among black women is testosterone. Africans on average have higher levels of testosterone than other races, and testosterone, being an androgen (male hormone), affects the physical attractiveness of men and women differently. [...] women with higher levels of testosterone [...] have more masculine features and are therefore less physically attractive. The [...] difference in the level of testosterone can therefore potentially explain why black women are less physically attractive than women of other races.⁴⁰

³⁹ Shulmaith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex The case for Feminist Revolution*, (New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1970), p. 112.

⁴⁰ Hilary Moss, 'Satoshi Kanazawa Causes Firestorm After Claiming Black Women are Less Attractive', *Huffington Post*, 17 Nov. 2011, n. pag. <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/satoshi-kanazawa-black-women-less-attractive_n_863327> [accessed 3 January 2018].

This article was published in 2011 by a notable academic who teaches at one of the top ten universities in the world. In his work he is arguing that black women are objectively the ugliest women because they are the most masculine. His theory is derivative of the old notion that black women are manly creatures and this distinguishes them from other women. It would seem then, that the oppressive assertions of black women have not shifted; they remain very present in society.

The next case is the 'Formation' video and performance by Beyoncé. Notably within the video there are only black women; they are an array of different shades and are wearing their hair naturally. This is significant because it exhibits black beauty: no partiality has been given to lighter-skinned black girls or to those who have striven to make their appearance more Eurocentric. With lyrics such as 'I like my baby hair with baby hair afros/I like my negro nose with Jackson Five Nostrils', there is evident pride in the features that have historically been deemed ugly.⁴¹ It is an empowering message that insists that black women quite simply can be beautiful and that once they embrace their natural beauty, they can 'slay'.⁴² Beyoncé's song can be perceived as a successful modern-day resistance to the notions that have always oppressed the black woman, as a song that was No. 1 on the Billboard chart, and by a notable celebrity, was an undeniable appreciation of black beauty.

There is also the celebration of strength which has so often been deemed manly and undesirable. Her lyrics follow: 'I'm so possessive so I rock his Roc necklaces', and later '[w]hen he fuck me good, I take his ass to/ Red Lobster, cause I slay.../If he get it right, I might take him on a/[f]light on my chopper, I slay/[d]rop him off at the mall, let him buy some J's, let him shop up'.⁴³ Kris Ex remarks, '[t]here's also no small amount of role reversal. She says that she wears her husband's necklaces (but not a wedding band) as a symbol of her ownership of him, not the other way around. If he pleases her sexually, she'll take

⁴¹ Beyoncé Knowles Carter, 'Formation', *Lemonade* (Parkwood Entertainment, 889853368228, 2016) [on CD/DVD album].

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

him to a mid-brow seafood chain, drop him off at the mall to buy overpriced sneakers and take him on a helicopter ride'.⁴⁴

These lyrics refer to a woman having possession, control over her own sexuality and power. To talk about these things unapologetically as a woman is significant because they have previously been held out of women's grasp. By declaring it so clearly, she takes what has been denied her. At this moment Beyoncé is exhibiting her strength and control as a feminist move, undermining the necessity for women to be timid and modest in order to be considered legitimate women. That anachronistic notion is subverted as the 'so-called' manliness that has burdened the black woman, is precisely what is used to assert her womanhood. Formation is a powerful feminist statement by a black woman; in this instance she is not ignored.

The song can also be considered as a call to address some of the issues facing African Americans. This is most evident at the end of the video when a young black child dances in front of armed guards alongside the slogan, 'stop shooting us'.⁴⁵ It is a clear allusion to the Black Lives Matter Movement, and a call for black people to organise themselves and confront the assault on their liberty. Zandria Robinson writes that:

formation is the alignment, the stillness, the readying, [...] To be successful, there must be coordination, the kind that choreographers and movement leaders do, the kind that black women organizers do in neighborhoods and organizations. To slay the violence of white supremacist heteropatriarchy, we must start, Beyoncé argues, with the proper formation.⁴⁶

Further evidence of the song's call for black rights is provided by the song's debut performance. Beyoncé's dancers were dressed in a

⁴⁴ Kris Ex, 'Why Are People Suddenly Afraid of Beyoncé's Black Pride?', *Billboard*, 2 Oct. 2016, n. pag. <<https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/pop/6873899/beyonce-formation-essay>> [accessed 3 January 2018].

⁴⁵ Knowles-Carter, 'Formation'.

⁴⁶ Zandria F. Robinson, 'We Slay, Part I', *New South Negress*, Feb. 2016, n. pag. <<http://newsouthnegress.com/southernslayings/>> [accessed 3 January 2018].

reworked version of the Black Panther's uniforms to commemorate their fiftieth anniversary. She sings, 'you might just be a black Bill Gates in the making' while the black fist is raised in the black power salute.⁴⁷ The song and performance argue for respect of the black people in America. They also reveal the black woman's position in The Civil Rights Movement; this time they will not be silenced, this time they are at the helm.

Some of the reactions to the Beyoncé performance however, were not so enthusiastic. Rudolph Giuliani while on Fox and Friends stated that Beyoncé used the Super Bowl as a 'platform to attack police officers who protect her and protect us ...what we should be doing in the African American community...is build up respect for police officers and focus on the fact that if a thing does go wrong okay, we'll work on that, but the vast majority of police officers risk their lives to keep us safe'.⁴⁸ Giuliani treats the police officers as attacked victims while alluding to the victims of the police with a flippancy that is uncomfortable. He does not explore the complex reasons surrounding why black people are reluctant to respect police officers and instead blames Beyoncé for why they do not. Fox and Friends attempt to undermine Beyoncé's statement by insisting that they 'couldn't make out what [she] was saying'⁴⁹ which suggests 'that they could not understand the upending of Eurocentric beauty standards and the reversal of patriarchal pastimes'.⁵⁰ It is clear that racism and sexism remain prevalent in society, and this leaves the black woman vulnerable to oppression. However, there are new statements circulating that have eased her oppression and assured that she is no longer wholly ignored.

⁴⁷ Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, 'Beyoncé and Bruno Mars Crash the Pepsi Superbowl 50 Halftime Show', uploaded by NFL, 11 Feb. 2016 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDPITj1wlkg>> [accessed 4 January 2018].

⁴⁸ Luke Kerr-Dineen, 'Fox News Slams Beyoncé's "outrageous" Super Bowl performance USA Today', *USA today*, 9 Feb. 2016, n. pag. <<http://ftw.usatoday.com/2016/02/fox-news-slams-beyonce-super-bowl-performance-formation-music-video-black-panther>> [accessed 4 January 2018].

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ex, n. pag.

In conclusion, I have explored the ways the black woman experiences intersectional oppression because of her race and gender. The white man dehumanised black women on slave ships in order to transform them into slaves. He later utilised the identity of the Jezebel and the sub-human man so that she could be used to suit his whims. The Civil Rights Movement was in some ways sexist, insisting that black women continue their role as subordinate and adjust themselves to fit the black man's requirements. The woman's liberation movement has also at times been insensitive to the issues black women face by simply ignoring them or making their plight synonymous to that of the middle-class white woman. In addition, there was explicit racism where black women were actively excluded from sharing the same benefits as white women and the works of some white feminists perpetuated stereotypes. Both the Civil rights and Women's Liberation Movements have failed in their own ways to represent the interests of the black woman. In this way, she is oppressed by and excluded from the very movements established to liberate her. Though there is evidence of black women paving their own way to liberation by relaying their own experiences, such as Alice Walker, Beyoncé and countless others, the criticism that awaits them for doing so, combined with the resonance and perpetuation of racist and sexist stereotypes, reveals that black women remain intersectionally oppressed in society.

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Discontinuity and the Tramp: Understanding Discontinuity as a Constitutive Element of Charles Chaplin's 'Charlie' Identity

Chris Grosvenor

Charlie is a mythical figure who rises above every adventure in which he becomes involved. For the general public, Charlie exists as a person before and after *Easy Street* and *The Pilgrims*.¹

Published in 1967, André Bazin's essay on the eponymous silent era comedian Charles Chaplin begins with the assertion cited above which describes Charlie as something of an autonomous entity, existing in some form beyond the boundaries of the films in which he appears.² Whilst Bazin's essay goes on to examine various aspects of Charlie's comedy, most prominently his routines and gags, it is this initial observation which warrants closer attention and discussion, because it touches upon, as this essay will argue, one of the fundamental configurations of how the Charlie character functioned within, and was appropriated by, popular culture.

Due in part to the visual iconography associated with Charlie (his hat, moustache, baggy trousers and floppy shoes), as well as the repetitious nature of slapstick comedy and its 'endless recycling of gags and scenarios', many scholars have grounded their analysis of the character upon its elements of continuity.³ Charlie's personality is often cited as another marker of continuity, as Bazin notes that aside from the 'physical "markings"' of the Tramp, it is the 'inter constants that are the

¹ André Bazin, 'Charlie Chaplin', in *What is Cinema?*, 1, trans. by Hugh Gray (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 144- 153 (p. 144).

² It should be noted that a distinction should and will be made between 'Charlie' the character (also referred to elsewhere as the Tramp or Little Fellow) and 'Chaplin' the man/actor/director.

³ Jennifer Bean, 'The Art of Imitation: The Originality of Charlie Chaplin and Other Moving Image Myths', in *Slapstick Comedy*, ed. by Tom Paulus and Rob King (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 236-261 (p.237).

true constituents of the character'.⁴ However, I would argue that more attention should be allocated to the importance of discontinuity as a constitutive element of the character and one that arguably enabled the image of Charlie to become as widespread as it did during Chaplin's meteoric rise to fame. Indeed, the significance of the character's fundamental trait of discontinuity is a notion which has arguably only ever been engaged with implicitly or in passing by Chaplin scholarship, and never fully articulated or realised critically.

To clarify exactly what is meant by 'discontinuity' in relation to the Tramp figure, let us first consult a dictionary definition of the term. 'Discontinuity' is defined as 'the quality, fact, or condition of being discontinuous in time or space; lack or failure of continuity; interrupted sequence or connection'.⁵ The notion of Charlie '[rising] above every adventure', as Bazin notes, becomes significant when considering that each film in which Charlie appears can be considered a closed autonomous text. Indeed, Chaplin's filmography dismisses any sense of narrative continuity between the individual films in which the character appeared.⁶ Whilst certain iconographic elements of the Tramp character often remain (his hat, moustache, certain gestures or mannerisms, etc.) his identity and persona are in a continual state of flux. Charlie may win his sweetheart at the end of any number of films but begins the next as if such events had never occurred, ready to win the girl all over again (for example, showcasing a 'lack or failure of continuity'). Equally, in some films Charlie may appear to have accumulated some wealth (*The Cure*, 1917), a wife and child (*His Trysting Place*, 1914) or live in another historical period (*His Prehistoric Past*, 1914; *The Gold Rush*, 1925), only for such a narrative conceit to be played out and then forgotten (for example, being 'discontinuous in time or space').⁷ Other film comedians working immediately prior to

⁴ Bazin, p. 86.

⁵ "Discontinuity, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, Dec. 2013 [cited 17 January 2018]
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/53928?redirectedFrom=Discontinuity&#eid6705994>> [accessed 17 Jan. 2018].

⁶ Bazin, p. 85.

⁷ For the sake of brevity, it should be noted that any film cited within the body of this essay was directed by Charles Chaplin unless otherwise specified. See Filmography for detailed information.

Chaplin, such as the British star Fred 'Pimple' Evans or Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle, similarly embodied this sense of discontinuity, foregrounding a set visual iconography over biographical stability. Of course, this function is also as much a part of the practical need for short comedy filmmakers of the period to be able to invent and offer different situations and gags for their audiences with each new film release. However, Chaplin's comparatively unprecedented level of fame singles out the Charlie character as the first globally successful iteration of this type of comedic formula/construction, with the only real point of comparison in terms of 'global superstardom' in the mid-1910s, as Jennifer M. Bean argues, being dramatic stars Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks.⁸

Chaplin himself acknowledged the significance of the character's discontinuous construction, claiming in his autobiography that Charlie is 'many-sided, a Tramp, a gentleman, a poet, a dreamer, a lonely fellow [...] He would have you believe he is a scientist, a musician, a duke, a polo-player'.⁹ Certainly, during the Keystone period (February-December 1914: 36 films) in which the Chaplin had not yet fully realised the 'Charlie' character, discontinuities such as these were prevalent, even expected, as the artist and character found their feet. However, whilst the iconography of the character became firmly established by the latter part of 1914, his identity was still constantly adaptable and unstable. One need only consider the variety of roles or professions in which Charlie was depicted in the twelve films produced for the Mutual company between 1916-1917 (fireman, policeman, waiter, pawn-broker's assistant), to comprehend the character's ever-fluctuating identity. In a sense, what the character's filmography established, or rather dismissed, is any sense of (what we would today refer to as) a canon. Without a fixed canonical identity or biography, Charlie, as we shall see, was free to be appropriated by anyone.

Whereas Jennifer M. Bean, informed by Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt School, argues in her essay 'The Art of Imitation' that the contested identity present within Charlie is a by-product of a

⁸ Jennifer M. Bean, 'Introduction: Stardom in the 1910s', in *Flickers of Desire: Movie Stars of the 1910s*, ed. by Jennifer M. Bean (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011), pp. 1-21 (p. 17).

⁹ Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2003), p. 146.

modernised society geared towards mechanical reproduction, it is my aim here to examine, not the cause of Charlie's contested, discontinuous identity, but rather its effect. As Bean notes, 'any attempt to pinpoint the Tramp's identity' becomes problematic 'once we grasp the fact that the Tramp switches constantly, imitating the action that any given situation invited him to imagine'.¹⁰ Central to both Bean's reading of the Charlie identity and by extension my own concern here, is her assertion that to be "Chaplinesque" means to adopt a "persona" - a Latinate derivative meaning "mask" or "character" - which is not a proper identity at all, but rather a performance. Hence the tramp's persona travels; its semiotic power is transitive'.¹¹ What effect then does this ever-changing, chameleon-like construction have on the identity of the Tramp? If the Charlie identity is a site of fundamental contestation and flux, what effect did this have on the perception of the character within the discourses of audience engagement and character identification?

This essay will focus on the period between the beginning of 1915 and the end of 1917, during which Chaplin was under contract to the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company and then the Mutual Film Corporation. In order to understand what effect the discontinuous construction of the Charlie character had (which takes into account, as Bazin would have us acknowledge, the life of the character beyond the frames of the films themselves) focus shall be given to the presence of the Charlie character in extra-textual materials produced within the same period. These materials include books, comic-strips and postcards, all of which feature some iteration of Charlie, and demonstrate how the discontinuous element within the character can be taken to its limit, as many of these items place him within situations and/or contexts in which he is not normally found.¹² By examining these ephemeral products of film culture rather than Chaplin's filmography itself, we can form a greater understanding of how the Charlie identity was shaped, disseminated and given meaning through the

¹⁰ Bean, 'The Art of Imitation', p. 244.

¹¹ *Ibid.* My italics.

¹² I would like here to acknowledge the assistance and support of the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum in accessing the various Chaplin related materials presented within the essay. Without their kind help this essay would not have been possible.

fundamentally discontinuous elements of his character, allowing Charlie to become an almost completely autonomous figure outside of time, space and biographical limitations.



Fig. 1: 'If you want to look like Charlie Chaplin' Postcard. Courtesy of the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, Exeter – EXEBD 86109

'Chaplinitis'

To begin, it should be first explained why focus is given here to the period between 1915 and 1917. *His New Job* (1915), Chaplin's first film for Essanay, with whom he signed in November 1914, was in fact his thirty-seventh film to date and one of fourteen he would complete for the company. The Charlie character, however, dates as far back as Chaplin's second short, *Kid Auto Races at Venice* (Lehrman, 1914), although during the Keystone period the character is best described as a primitive iteration, 'a ruffian, who was especially forceful when kicking people with his oversized shoes or jabbing them with the ever-present cane', and not the more sympathetic character Charlie would become.¹³ Even in *His New Job*, Chaplin biographer David Robinson correctly observes:

Chaplin is still the incorrigible Keystone Charlie, cheerfully causing chaos by his insouciant incompetence, tittering gleefully behind his hand at the spectacle of the destruction he has provoked, ever ready to apply the boot to the behind or a hammer to the head of anyone who presumes to protest.¹⁴

¹³ Wes D. Gehring, *Charlie Chaplin: A Bio-Bibliography* (London: Greenwood Press, 1983), p 13.

¹⁴ David Robinson, *Chaplin: His Life and Art* (London: Collins, 1985), p. 137.



Fig. 2: 'Pity Charlie Chaplin' Postcard. Courtesy of the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, Exeter, EXEBD 86100

But it is in the next short, *A Jitney Elopement* (1915), in which a 'genuine romance begins to emerge in the love scenes. At our first sight of Charlie he is caressing a flower, as tenderly as the romantic vagabond of *City Lights*'.¹⁵ It is here Robinson argues, and I am inclined to agree, that the character's emotional and psychological characteristics begin to become apparent, and his conception as a 'gentleman, a poet, a dreamer' takes hold.¹⁶

If at this point the emotional and psychological traits of the character begin to take hold, it is significant that the beginning of 1915 is also marked by many commentators on Chaplin as the beginning of his unprecedented fame and popularity, or as it has often been described, 'Chaplinitis'. Indeed, 'Chaplin can be said to have enjoyed his greatest cultural and commercial pre-eminence from 1915 to 1925' and it is at

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁶ Chaplin, p. 146.

the beginning of this period to which we must turn our attention.¹⁷ As Robinson notes, '1915 had seen the great Chaplin explosion. Every newspaper carried cartoons and poems about him'.¹⁸ There were 'Charlie Chaplin lapel pins, hats, socks, ties, complete costumes, spoons, Christmas decorations, statuettes, buttons, paper dolls, games, playing cards, squirt rings, comics, dolls, and anything else on which his likeness could be reproduced'.¹⁹ Chaplin himself claimed in his autobiography that he was largely unaware of his popularity until, discussing a trip to New York in early 1915, he observed that:

[t]oys and statuettes of my character were being sold in all the department stores and drugstores. Ziegfeld Follies Girls were doing Chaplin numbers, marring their beauty with moustaches, derby hats, big shoes and baggy trousers, singing a song called Those Charlie Chaplin Feet.²⁰

The image of Charlie was at this time becoming increasingly more prominent outside of the films themselves, establishing a level of autonomy distinct from Chaplin's portrayal of the character hitherto. However, it is vital to note that at this early juncture it is not the romantic conception of Charlie being sold to an adoring public, but the visual iconography of the character: his hat, his shoes, his moustache.

Indeed, to understand how the iconographic Charlie image was becoming increasingly separated from the character portrayed by Chaplin himself on screen, one need only look at how contemporaneous, mostly unofficial Charlie-related merchandise began to appropriate the character and disseminate his image. For example, in 1916 a series of unofficial postcards were produced which all depicted the Charlie character, but depicted him outside of the narratives of the film texts or even discourses surrounding the medium of film itself. Instead the character is represented as a series of iconographic images and cues. One postcard (Fig. 1), for example,

¹⁷ Andrew Sarris, 'The Most Harmonious Comedian', in *The Essential Charlie Chaplin: Perspectives on the Life and Art of the Great Comedian*, ed. by Richard Schickel (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), pp. 45-58 (p. 49).

¹⁸ Robinson, p. 152.

¹⁹ Gehring, p. 61.

²⁰ Chaplin, p. 172.

breaks down the Tramp persona into its constitutive visual elements by inviting its consumer to learn how to 'look like Charlie Chaplin'. Signifying the importance of the curly hair, the moustache and 'a pair of old boots, too big for you', the postcard underlines how easily the image of Charlie could be constructed by anyone wanting to appropriate it. By deconstructing the character as it does, this particular postcard readily supports Bean's conception of the character as a performative persona, although it does go on to claim that even if you were to acquire such items 'you'll look like Chaplin, only you won't be him'.

The notion of the character being predicated upon a set of visual signifiers, as well as the aforementioned performative quality of the identity, is similarly alluded to in another postcard from the series (Fig. 2). Bearing the caption 'Pity Charlie Chaplin the king of film creators, he's nearly driven balmy by his would be imitators', the contested identity of the character begins to take on almost schizophrenic proportions, being constantly imitated by others both on and off-screen, blurring the lines between authenticity and imitation.

What these postcards and countless other examples of Charlie-related memorabilia released during this period reveal is the extent to which the visual iconography of the character was being adopted into ephemeral materials, often stripping away any pretence of the narratives the films depicted, instead focusing on the character's visual iconography. Such examples, treating the character in isolation from narrative, serve to underline the character's fundamental markers of continuity. However, when we examine materials which do place the character within an extended narrative or sketch, it is not only the character's continuous visual iconography which is transposed, but also his discontinuous identity, free from any definite biographical constraints or characteristics.

Charlie Off-screen

To understand how the element of discontinuity informed the representation of the increasingly autonomous Charlie character during this period, let us turn our attention to materials such as short stories and comic strips. Published in 1915, *The Charlie Chaplin Scream Book* presents a collection of Charlie related stories, poems and other written

material, paired with drawn images of the character.²¹ The opening article 'I Discover Charlie' reflects the light-hearted tone of this small paperback volume, claiming to be an interview with the man himself (although clearly fabricated) in which we are introduced, not to Chaplin the director, but Charlie the tramp. The unnamed interviewer, having been tasked with interviewing Charlie, recalls how he at first feared for his life:

visions of flying brickbats and the sharp prongs of a hay fork came to my tortured eyes. I felt sure I should find Charlie hedged about by barbed wire entanglements, and, at the end of his expressive feet, little needle-points that somehow or other I knew would find my most vulnerable point and puncture my romance!²²

He continues:

[n]evertheless, I determined to interview Charlie, for I knew that fame would follow success, so having made my will, having kissed my wife for the last time, picked up a Remington repeater, grabbed my little typewriter case and a bottle of arsenic, I sallied from home in search of the headquarters of the Essanay Film Company.²³

By the end of the short piece, the writer has fallen victim to Charlie's boot but has survived the ordeal in order to tell the tale. Recalling Charlie's more mischievous antics, 'I Discover Charlie' echoes the figure seen on-screen, but more significantly, is a clear example of the identity of Charlie blending with Chaplin the man, extending the fictional character into an off-screen reality.

²¹ Draycot M. Dell, *The Charlie Chaplin Scream Book* (London: Fleetway House, 1915).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²³ *Ibid.*



Fig. 3: Comic strip panel from *Charlie Chaplin's Funny Stunts*. Courtesy of the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, Exeter, EXEBD42889

Throughout the *Scream Book*, stories about Charlie venturing to Algiers, becoming a detective and various other short comic episodes are all presented, but none of the narratives in which Charlie is depicted can be said to resemble those of his films. However, the manner in which the book is constructed is significant due to the fact that its series of unconnected stories mirrors the manner in which the film texts themselves were released as autonomous, standalone texts. Whilst the stories themselves may echo or reference familiar gags or routines, such as the kicking gag in 'I Discover Charlie', the contexts in which Charlie finds himself are wholly original.

This mode of construction is continued in a companion production to the *Scream Book*, *The Charlie Chaplin Fun Book*, which was released by the same company shortly after the former, but primarily consisted of comic strips rather than short stories.²⁴ The comic strip medium, it appears, was well suited to the increasingly ubiquitous Charlie. As

²⁴ Bertie Brown, *The Charlie Chaplin Fun Book* (London: Fleetway House, 1915).

Chaplin biographer Simon Louvish notes, 'there began to appear endless cartoons of Charlie, all over the United States – and abroad – marking the iconic figure of the Tramp with his signature moustache, bowler, cane, baggy pants and huge shoes'.²⁵ Like the *Scream Book*, the *Fun Book* is constructed from a multitude of unconnected stories or sketches, but due to the nature of the comic strip, relies more heavily on visual images and jokes rather than literary narrative. Sketches within this edition include Charlie and the Chimpanzee, Charlie the Jockey, Charlie the Juggler and perhaps of most interest, Prehistoric Charlie.

Evidently inspired by *His Prehistoric Past* (1914), Chaplin's last film for Keystone (although sharing little more than its mise-en-scène and not its narrative), Prehistoric Charlie features the Tramp character co-opted into the costume and surroundings of an archetypal caveman. However, whereas *His Prehistoric Past* initiated Charlie's prehistoric misadventure with a sequence of the contemporary Charlie falling asleep on a park bench (marking the prehistoric section of the short as a dream), Prehistoric Charlie includes no such framing device. Instead, the Tramp character, complete with his anachronistic bowler hat, becomes as much a part of its prehistoric narrative, in which he is harassed by a fellow caveman throwing rocks from above, as he is with its mise-en-scène. The time-travelling Charlie, present within both *His Prehistoric Past* and Prehistoric Charlie represents the logical end point to which the persona's transitive 'semiotic power' was exploited.²⁶

As long as the character's continuous iconographic markers are present, the character can be introduced into any environment or context without issue. However, such sources simultaneously underline the necessity for the character's official filmography to establish and continue to reinforce the character's biographically discontinuous identity (unbound to time or place) in order for a narrative like Prehistoric Charlie to function. We as spectators/readers/consumers are not surprised to see Charlie in such an environment because we lack any fixed concept of his biographical identity. Consequently, the character's biographically discontinuous identity prompts a spectatorial mode of identification and engagement with the character in which

²⁵ Simon Louvish, *Chaplin: The Tramp's Odyssey* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 78.

²⁶ Bean, 'The Art of Imitation', p. 244.

expectation is constantly shifting, the expectation of exactly when and where the character will be found. By placing Charlie within the multitude of different contexts and situations they present, both the *Scream Book* and the *Fun Book* reflect the growing ubiquity of the character outside of the film texts, but importantly, also reflect the fundamental element of discontinuity within the construction of the character's identity, allowing him to be adapted into any number of situations (officially or unofficially). Echoing this concept precisely, a small commentary piece from the 10 July 1915 edition of *Moving Picture World* reiterates how the 'charm of [Chaplin's] art is its infinite variety. You can never be quite sure what he will do next and it is this wayward unexpectedness of his actions which has been the real secret of his popularity'.²⁷

Examples such as Prehistoric Charlie, also demonstrate that the creators of the comic strips were directly inspired by events or imagery depicted in the film texts themselves, reflecting the dialogic intertextuality of Charlie ephemera during this period. Indeed, this element of intertextual dialogism is present within many of the comic strips produced. For example, in a later collection of ten 'Charlie Chaplin's Comic Capers' comic strips titled Charlie Chaplin's Funny Stunts, released in 1917, it is evident that the artists behind the production sought to emulate certain gags and routines present within Chaplin's films.²⁸ In one strip, Charlie attempts to train a prize fighting boxer in order to earn some easy money, but upon entering the ring, comedy ensues when Charlie's mentee proceeds to accidentally hit him instead (Fig. 3). Such an image is a clear echo, not only of films such as *The Champion* (1915) in which the Tramp entered the ring himself, but of the slapstick fistfights which dated back to Chaplin's first film *Making a Living* (Lehrman, 1914) which were then repeated throughout his career. In such fights punches would be thrown only to miss their target, or accidentally connect with another unsuspecting victim. Elsewhere in the collection Charlie comes face to face with a policeman, attempts to get various jobs and interacts with many archetypal characters such as the damsel and the drunk, all staple images from Chaplin's films. Significantly, however, Charlie's ability to be introduced into new

²⁷ J.B. Sutcliffe, 'British Notes', *Moving Picture World*, 10 July 1915, p. 298.

²⁸ Anon. *Charlie Chaplin's Funny Stunts* (Chicago and New York: M.A. Donohue & Co., 1917).

situations and contexts evidently works in parallel with the autonomous construction of these closed-texts. Whilst one strip may end with Charlie being thrown into prison for stealing a chicken, the precedent set by the films (which allowed such a biographical trajectory for the character to be dismissed) is again present here when in the next strip Charlie is free to embark on another adventure.

Charlie Goes to School

The effect of such discontinuity may seem incidental when considering texts such as comic-strips, which were undoubtedly targeted towards a younger demographic who are less concerned with narrative or character continuity. However, the effect of the precedent set by the discontinuous construction of the Charlie character within his filmography, and elaborated upon and exploited by comic strips and books such as those examined thus far, becomes perhaps more apparent when considering how the image of the character was appropriated by further materials.

Whereas the aforementioned publications (*Scream Book*, *Fun Book*, *Funny Stunts*) were published by 'Special Arrangement with Essanay Film Manufacturing Company', one example of note, Charlie Chaplin's *Schooldays* written by Sidney Drew, was produced seemingly without any formal authorisation.²⁹ A short novella released in May 1916 as part of The Boy's Friend Complete Library series, *Charlie Chaplin's Schooldays* gives an account of the eponymous comedian's childhood. The story, however, is completely fictional, at least in relation to Chaplin the man and not the character, but like much of the material produced at this time, the lines between the actor and his character are blurred. Although it is unclear if the text is primarily concerned with providing an account of the character's upbringing rather than Chaplin's, the character's lack of continuity in regard to its own history allows the writer of the novella to construct a past for Charlie with relative ease.

Placing him within the milieu of an English public school called Calcroft, we are introduced to the young Charlie, depicted as a precocious new student immediately irritating and harassing his fellow

²⁹ Sidney Drew, *Charlie Chaplin's Schooldays* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1916).

classmates and housemaster. Initially introduced from the perspective of the housemaster Mr Pycroft, who upon entering his quarters, hears a loud noise emanating from his office, Charlie is first depicted through Pycroft's declaration: 'I've never seen a boy with such extra-ordinary feet, such abnormally large ones!'.³⁰ In keeping with the sources examined above, the novella is quick to anchor the character through his established visual iconography, in this case Charlie's large feet. What then follows over some 120 pages, however, is a narrative markedly different from anything normally associated with the Charlie character. Depicting a large cast of characters (schoolboys, teachers, staff) *Charlie Chaplin's Schooldays* actually gives comparatively little focus to the title character, instead depicting him within a remarkably realistic environment and not the cartoonish, slapstick-driven environments of the character's filmography. Any comedy appears only to arise from the character's (comparatively tame) rebellious spark, depicted for example in one chapter tediously titled, 'Charlie and Bindley are sent to bed but soon get up again' (Bindley being another classmate). For the most part, it would be easy to forget that the character being discussed is actually Charlie, if it weren't for the constant, seemingly obligatory allusions to his visual appearance, as emphasised by one instance in which Charlie, late for class, 'came down the steps with his queer little hat on his head and his cane in his hand'.³¹

In *Charlie Chaplin's Schooldays*, Charlie is introduced into a series of books aimed generally towards a young male demographic with an interest in adventure fiction, rather than straightforward comedy. Tellingly, this was not the first or last novella written by Drew for The Boy's Friend Library about the day to day life of pupils at Claycroft School, but it was the only one to feature Charlie, seemingly betraying its intention to capitalise on the increasingly profitable image of the character. Its standing as an unauthorised text claiming to present Charlie's upbringing illustrates the growing autonomy of the character, cast free from the control of its creator. Above all, Charlie Chaplin's *Schooldays* readily embodies one of many textual examples of the Charlie character being introduced into another, seemingly incompatible cultural context. Indeed, this was not the first instance of

³⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

³¹ Ibid., p. 29.

the character's assimilation into a remote cultural context – take, for example, the character's specific cultural meaning and value within the culture and environment of the British military during the First World War, of which I have commented upon elsewhere – and it wouldn't be the last.³²

Ultimately, whilst providing an account of the fictional character, as opposed to the man, *Charlie Chaplin's Schooldays* is perhaps emblematic of Chaplin's larger issue concerning his filmic creation and identity being appropriated without formal consent. During the same period (early 1916) in which *Schooldays* was released, Chaplin was relentlessly attempting to suppress an unofficial biography called *Charlie Chaplin's Own Story*, which amongst other inaccuracies, claimed that the actor was born in France. Whilst *Schooldays* was of less concern to the increasingly controlling Chaplin (if he was even aware of it), the character's presence within its narrative marks another autonomous iteration of Charlie, contributing towards the ever-growing intertextual tapestry through which Charlie was shaped and defined. Such publications would have undoubtedly shaped perception of the character's identity for those who read it, beyond that which was presented in the films and controlled or authorised by Chaplin himself. Authorised or unauthorised, Chaplin/Charlie's fans were being presented with multitudes of differing accounts, depictions and representations of their object of fandom.

Conclusion

The identity of the Charlie character, as demonstrated, is one which was constantly shifting, introduced to new situations and environments, not just by Chaplin as writer/director in the films themselves, but off-screen in the various extra-textual materials in which Charlie was depicted, both formally and informally, authorised and unauthorised. Due to the precedent set by Charlie's filmography, in which the character was largely unbound by the constraints of time and space, social ranking or employment, we can only conceive of the character's identity as something of a *tabula rasa*; a blank slate continually redefined and repurposed, manipulated and exploited, albeit a blank slate anchored

³² Chris Grosvenor, "'At the Front'" postcard series c.1916, the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum collection', *Early Popular Visual Culture* (2017), pp. 1-8.

by the visual iconography that would become so easily recognisable. This precedent would be similarly emulated, to varying degrees of success, by the variety of comedians who followed in Chaplin's footsteps, stars which established a set visual iconography for their characters – be they Buster Keaton ('The Great Stone Face'), Harold Lloyd (the 'Glasses' character) or Laurel and Hardy (thin and fat) – but chose not to define any set biographical continuity.

Arguably, such an understanding of the Charlie character would make problematic an assertion that describes Charlie as a single fixed figure. Instead, as both the films and the extra-textual materials in which he is depicted confirm, Charlie is best conceptualised not as a single character, but an umbrella moniker for a series of derivative iterations or versions of an identity that is near impossible to pin down in concrete terms outside of his visual iconography, which was itself not always consistent. Consequently, it can be said that hundreds, if not thousands of Charlie identities exist within different times, places and even languages, all shaping often only slight (but sometimes radically different) variations on the character. Whilst the attention of this essay has been given to the representation of Charlie within English-language productions, it is vital to note that 'Charlot' (as he was named by the French) was an undeniably universal figure, which also took on specific meanings and values within specific national and cultural contexts. Above all, one can identify within this transitory period between 1915 and the end of 1917, that the character and his creator were becoming more and more separated from one another; by 1920 'Charlie was often penniless; Chaplin was an enterprising man making millions [...] Charlie often mixed with the down and out; Chaplin mixed with the rich and famous'.³³ The material presented within this essay accounts for only a minute percentage of Charlie-related merchandise and artefacts produced during the time examined. However, even if we have only barely scratched the surface of how Charlie was represented outside of the character's filmography, it is evident that the level of autonomy present within Charlie is the result of the character's discontinuous and ever-fluctuating identity. Consequently, and perhaps inevitably, such a construction enabled the character to enjoy a life (or

³³ Charles J. Maland, *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 51.

many lives) of his own, rising 'above any adventure in which he becomes involved'.

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[on DVD]

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His Prehistoric Past, dir. by Charles Chaplin (Keystone Studios, USA, 1914)[on DVD]

His Trysting Place, dir. by Charles Chaplin (Keystone Studios, USA, 1914)
[on DVD]

A Jitney Elopement, dir. by Charles Chaplin (Essanay Manufacturing Company, USA, 1915)[on DVD]

Kid Auto Races at Venice, dir. by Henry Lehrman (Keystone Studios, USA, 1914)[on DVD]

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Disability, Performativity, and the Able-Gaze

Ash Gannicott

The performative nature of language dictates that thou-art-which-is-said. The performative function of language produces physical and tangible shifts in the reality in which it describes.¹ The classic example is the action of being married: it is the performative aspect of the marriage officiant validating the procedure through a performative utterance which enacts the transformative shift in the production of identity: the individual exists only as married once the performative utterance has been enacted, their previous unmarried self becomes modified through the language of which they are in receipt. The power of language is such that a performative utterance has lasting significance, for it not only describes a reality, but also changes the reality itself once the language has been enacted. It is a performative utterance of a different kind however, an utterance of difference, disdain and otherness, which enacts the production of a disabled body, as this article will explore. By navigating from Lacan to Butler, this article explores how the production of the disabled body is facilitated by the existence of an able-gaze, and how Butlerian performativity has the potential to destabilise and reject the expectation of normalcy that the able-gaze demands.

Disability and the identity of the disabled is produced through the hegemonic powers of an able society. Culture produces disability through its labelling of the body which deviates from physical normalcy as Other, reducing those who are disabled to a site of spectacle and deviancy resulting in exclusion from areas of society and culture. As Lennard Davis, a disability studies (DS) theorist states, 'impairment is the physical fact of lacking an arm or leg. Disability is the social process that turns an impairment into a negative by creating barriers to access'.² The disabled individual only becomes aware of their disability as their

¹ For a full discussion on the effects of performative utterance, see J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

² Lennard Davis, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (New York: New York UP, 2002), p. 12.

identity once under the able-gaze of an able-centric society. The able-gaze, like many other dominant gazes, comes from a position of power and privilege, and these gazes act their oppression through multiple layers of expectation, belittlement and reduction. The able-gaze reveals the hierarchical power dynamic of ability and disability. Despite this, as I will explore later in this article, through Butler's work on performativity it is possible for the dominance of the able-gaze to be challenged by the minoritarian and non-hegemonic gaze of the disabled community.

As the able-gaze is the dominant, social and cultural gaze of ability, those that deviate outside of the expectation of the gaze are cast as problematic, outsiders, and deviant. There is, however, a polysemy of dominant gazes. For instance, the male gaze affects not only depictions of women in art and literature, but through its dissemination through various feminist movements, it has come to represent the patriarchal expectation of femininity. As such, women who deviate from that expectation are deemed undesirable under the male gaze.³ In terms of racial gazes, there exists, as termed by bell hooks, the oppositional gaze. As she explains, the oppositional gaze produces a depiction of blackness which is at odds with reality, and a production of dominant white hegemonic and social practices and expectations.⁴ Furthermore, as Anne Kaplan states, there also exists an imperial gaze which defines the observed through the values and moral basis of the white viewer. As Kaplan explains, 'The imperial gaze reflects the assumption that the white western subject is central much as the male gaze assumes the centrality of the male subject'.⁵ It is easy to see that there already exists a multitude of gazes which define and propagate methods and modes

³ A.W. Eaton 'Feminist philosophy of art' in *Philosophy Compass: September Edition*, (Wiley, 2008), pp. 873–893; Malgorzata Łuczyńska-Holdys, *Soft-Shed Kisses: Re-visioning the Femme Fatale in English Poetry of the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013); Laura Mulvey, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema' in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 2nd edn, ed. by Laura Mulvey (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 14–30.

⁴ bell hooks, 'The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectator' in *The Feminism and Visual Cultural Reader*, ed. by A. Jones (New York: Routledge, 1992[2003]) pp. 94–105.

⁵ Anne Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

of oppression, expectation and normalcy. It comes to stand then, as this essay will go on to explore, that in this polysemy of gazes, there exists an able-gaze. This is the controlling force that influences not only the depiction of disability within society, but also the proliferation of an Othering that a person with disabilities will consciously or subconsciously conform to. The expectations set out by the able-gaze are problematic, oppressive, anxiety-inducing, and silencing.

One of the most significant sites of anxiety in the production of identity for Jacques Lacan comes from the realisation of sight and the subsequent act of viewing. As Lacan states, 'we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world'.⁶ This anxiety manifests itself as an alienation of the subject, the gaze causing the subject to identify with itself as the *objet petit a*, and as such desiring satisfaction of the scopic drive. As Lacan argues, the *objet petit a*, the other, the loss experienced by the subject is the 'gaze' itself.⁷ As he elaborates, the gaze 'may come to symbolise this central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration'.⁸ As such the subject becomes – through the duality of viewing and being viewed – aware of the object of desire and the trauma of loss, which, as Lacan states, 'leaves the subject in ignorance as to what there is beyond the appearance'.⁹ The relationship therefore between the self and the Ideal-Self (or "I", which is the imaginary self-without loss) is crucial in understanding the relationship between disability and society in response to the able-gaze.

According to Elizabeth Grosz, the imagined body – the idea of the physical self – is based on both individual and collective fantasy, across the whole spectrum of propagated exterior ideals of identity.¹⁰ As an infant, an individual only becomes a subject with a social identity and agency when it is able to see itself as discrete, and as a whole individualized entity.¹¹ This, according to psychologists, happens by means of a series of visual identifications with images of its own body,

⁶ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. by A. Sheridan, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), p. 75.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.77.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 40.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

and other bodies, in what Lacan calls the mirror stage.¹² Lacan proposes that human infants pass through a stage in which an external image of the body (reflected in a mirror, or represented to the infant through the mother or primary caregiver) produces a psychic response that gives rise to the mental representation of an "I".¹³ The "I" which is produced is external to the subject, and arises from an interaction with the Other, rather than being an emanation of the subject. In the ah-ha experience, the revelatory moment that characterizes the mirror stage, the infant grasps the connection between the image (the imago) and its own existence. The infant therefore experiences the imago as a Gestalt, a meaningful form. The significance of the Gestalt is that the subject becomes aware of the observation that their comprehension of self is not of an assemblage of discrete elements, but as a pattern of meaningful forms.

However, this meaningful form is deceptive. As the child, the self, views itself in a mirror, the infant (mis)recognises the image of the unified body they view before them as their own self. As such this (mis)recognition occurs as Lennard Davis points out, due to a 'donning of an identity, an "armour" against the fragmentary body'.¹⁴ However, as Davis goes on to explain, the relationship between self and assumed identity is disjointed, particularly in the case of the disabled body, as 'the disabled body is a direct imago of the repressed fragmentary body'.¹⁵ It is from this, which Davis concludes, that 'the disabled body causes a kind of hallucination of the mirror phase gone wrong'.¹⁶ As such, the disruption to the imago-as-Gestalt reveals the body as its constituent parts through a 'moment of cognitive dissonance, or should we say a moment of cognitive resonance with the earlier state of fragmentation'.¹⁷ As Davis argues, a result of the disabled body viewing itself in a mirror after being informed of its difference, is that the self, in Lacanian terms, 'is threatened with a breaking-up, literally of its

¹² Ibid., p. 32.

¹³ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 77.

¹⁴ Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 139.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

structure, is threatened with a reminder of its incompleteness'.¹⁸ This is a process I will refer to as the mirror stage of disability. The fragmentation of the body into its disparate constituent parts are what categorise this world-making, revelatory moment of disability.

As a result, this temporary imago-as-Gestalt is established as an Ideal-Self toward which the disabled subject will perpetually strive. The imago-as-Gestalt, which gives the impression of a unified body as the process 'extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality', becoming symbolic and representative of a cultural and social bodily norm.¹⁹ As Lacan argues, however, the fragmentary, disrupted body is a site of repression and trauma even for those outside of the sphere of disability for it is 'images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body, in short, the imagos that I have grouped together under the apparently structural term of imagos of the fragmented body'.²⁰ It is this grouping of images, the traumatic images of the mutilated, disparate body that characterises the anxiety of the able-gaze. As Lacan explains: 'the gaze is presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as the thrust of our experience, namely, the lack that constitutes castration anxiety'.²¹ It is this disrupted body, which appears in dreams and artistic visions as Lacan argues 'in the form of disjointed limbs, or of those organs represented in exoscopy'.²² Beyond the mirror stage and the psychic developments of the infant, this phenomenon – of the bodily image reverting to its repressed, disjointed self – also has the potential to occur on a secondary level for an individual with disabilities. As such the mirror stage is not solely restricted to occurring once during the development of the infant, but also has the potential in later secondary and even tertiary instances. Indeed, the "I" and "other" relationship with the imaginary continues for everyone beyond the initial mirror stage, be it in artistic representations, magazine covers, or in airbrushed and

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by A. Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), p. 4.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 11.

²¹ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 73.

²² Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 4.

photoshopped images of unobtainable beauty.²³ However, the main difference is that as the disabled individual becomes aware of a differentiation between themselves and a culturally propagated definition of “normal” – i.e., un-impaired, physically and cognitively unburdened, physically “complete” – the individual with disabilities would then alter the representation of their “I” accordingly. A particular example of a revelatory moment of disability and difference occurs in the memoir of David Wright, a poet who after contracting scarlet fever at the age of seven lost his hearing entirely, an event that would represent an auditory castration anxiety for those who can hear, and be a traumatic instance of loss. But of his deafness, Wright says, ‘how was I to know? Nobody told me’.²⁴ We can see therefore from this example that his deafness, his disability and his otherness never manifested itself as a traumatic disruption of the imago-as-Gestalt, by virtue of the fact that he was not subject to the performative utterance of disability, nor was subject to the castration anxiety that the able-gaze produces in able-bodied onlookers.

As disability is a social construct, the subject only regards themselves as disabled once they are aware that they are not “normal”, and that they are therefore a manifestation of a social Other. This is the point at which the able-gaze enacts its reflexive vision: it produces castration anxiety in the able-bodied, and manifests as a disruption to the physical identity for those who are disabled. Following from this, identity becomes performative as the subject becomes preoccupied with the visual, outward aspects of their identity: the physical signifiers of their Otherness. Therefore, the disabled individual then attempts to – depending on context – repress and mask, or conform and internalise those physical and social signifiers of Otherness, based upon the expectations proliferated by the able-gaze either directed at them or to which they are exposed. The ah-ha experience of disability (particularly physical disabilities) arises from the fact that during this secondary mirror phase, the original imago-as-Gestalt becomes problematised. Instead of viewing the “I” as a pattern of meaningful forms, the subject becomes aware of their self as being a composite of different, separate elements, and it is the deviation between the component parts of the

²³ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 77.

²⁴ David Wright, *Deafness: A Personal Account* (Suffolk: Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 22.

self and the idealised bodily norm which lead to a realisation of disability, and the realisation that the fictionalised “complete” self is unobtainable.

These identifications are based on what Lacan calls a moment of (mis)recognition in which the infant mistakenly recognises, relates to and aspires to realise an idealised image of wholeness, at odds with its currently much more muddled, disseminated mode of being. This (mis)recognition is productive, performative and world-making.²⁵ It allows an infant to acquire a sense of what their body is, should, and should not aspire to be, and has an even more profound significance if it occurs again later, during the mirror stage of disability. Obviously, theorists like Grosz and Lacan argue that the infant’s acquisition of a body image happens in a specific social, cultural and historical field, which, in Western culture, tends to figure the able body as the norm, and the disabled body as irregular, damaged, faulty. However, the sight-based identifications that structure the mirror stage of disability mimic and are mimicked by the sight-based identifications that structure Western cultural forms like museums, medical theatres, television shows, fictional narrative, and other modes of performance in which the disabled body is produced as a spectacle. Both are characterized by performative acts of identification, interpretation and categorization that inscribe bodies and bodily characteristics with meaning, and bring them into what Emmanuel Lévinas calls the sphere of the known and knowable.²⁶ In this cultural arena the infant aspires, usually, to the integrated, individuated wholeness of the able body. Its body image is, therefore, always already structured by a sexist, racist and ableist framework that articulates and affirms the binaries between one and other, male and female, able and disabled, and that define Western cultural logics. It is this aspiration to wholeness – and the disabled person’s inability to achieve this wholeness they are taught to aspire to – that makes it difficult, both privately and publicly, for disabled people to accommodate the images by which Western culture defines bodies, and by extension, to conform to the expectation of the able-gaze.

The medical profession seeks to cure this maladaptation of Otherness through surgeries, prostheses and exercises that help

²⁵ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 77-9.

²⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings: Studies in Continental Thought* (Indiana: IUP. 1996), p. 136.

individuals adapt to their limitations, overcome their limitations, and even artificially create the illusion of bodily normality not only for themselves, but most significantly to fulfil the expectations of an able-centric society. As noted by Wilson, 'disease/disability is cast as textual irregularity, and those in the biomedical community become editors who attempt to amend, delete and correct the defective texts of disabled bodies'.²⁷ The disabled body is thus cast in the role of radical Other and presented throughout society and culture as an extreme deviation from a biological and cultural norm.

As soon as the disabled individual enacts the role of deviant individual by conforming to the processes of the able-gaze, expectations, limitations and codified practices start to form in the identity of the disabled individual. These practices, which are in themselves based upon cultural and social proliferations of an able-centric norm, have reached the point where they now exist as social practices. In other words, they have been transmuted into authoritarian, default expectations of normalcy. In response to this, the now-marked-as-disabled subject internalises the ableist and able-centric practices of Western culture and as a result, conforms to the expectations set out by the able-gaze. As Foucault argues, 'society's control over individuals was accomplished not only through consciousness or ideology but also in the body and with the body. For a capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the somatic, the corporeal, that mattered more than anything else'.²⁸ And as such, as Foucault elaborates, 'the individuals over whom power is exercised are either those from whom the knowledge they themselves form will be extracted, retranscribed, and accumulated according to new norms, or else objects of a knowledge that will also make possible new forms of control'.²⁹ The lasting impact of the able-gaze therefore produces a disabled body which is marked as outside of normalcy, an identity interwoven with politics, which 'categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he

²⁷ Wilson qtd. in G. Thomas Couser, *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004), p. 181.

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3*, ed. by J.D. Faubion (St Ives: Penguin, 2002), p. 137.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 84.

must recognise and others have to recognise in him'.³⁰ The "law of truth" as Foucault calls it is by no means absolute in relation to the disabled body, however. There exists a contradiction, because in conforming to the expectation of the able-gaze, the disabled body is at best met with half-hearted congratulations for "trying so well to fit in", or in the worst cases, the modification of the self under the expectation of an able-society is met with suspicion, interrogation and apprehension. As explained by Tobin Siebers, when someone regarded as disabled augments or adjusts their identity to conform to the expectation of an able society, the end result is far from positive for the disabled subject:

the moment that individuals are marked as disabled or diseased, however, the expectation is that they will maintain the maximum standard of physical performance at every moment, and the technologies designed to make their life easier are viewed as expensive additions, unnecessary accommodations, and a burden on society.³¹

The paradox highlighted by Siebers is a defining feature of the expectation of an able society. People with disabilities are expected to navigate society with the least offense to able-bodied people: the expectation is that the standard of physical performance must always be weighted towards the disabled in an attempt to appear as "un-disabled" as possible, but the technology and equipment to do so is regarded, by an able-centric society, as Siebers argues, excessive and unnecessary. The end product of this chain of bio/social modification produces a physical and tangible mask which the subject must superimpose onto the exterior self, in order to display the signs of a functioning, "normal" identity. Whilst it can be argued that the self is always a mask, the mask of normalcy required by those who are disabled is one of a functional human self; a mask that is rooted in physical adaptation and bio-technological modification.

Within Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach to human interaction, he argues that there exists a performative element to

³⁰ Ibid, p. 331.

³¹ Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 30.

human/social exchange, in which the subject will attempt to conform to expectations of the reciprocal party. As an individual comes in contact with other people, that individual will attempt to control or guide the impression that others might make of them by changing or fixing his or her setting, appearance and manner, dependent on expectations of performativity. At the same time, the person the individual is interacting with is trying to form and obtain information about the individual in a reciprocal manner, which is ultimately informed by the element of performance displayed to them.³² Disability however, through its oppression and barriers to access, produces a variant of Goffman's dramaturgy in relation to those who are able, but one more menacing and insidious. As Lennard Davis argues, 'even a person who is missing a limb, or is physically "different" still has to put on, assume, the disabled body and identify with it'.³³ In this modified version of a dramaturgical process, the mask adopted by the disabled individual is one of less-value, in relation to the role that the able individual finds themselves complicit in producing. The able-bodied individual will often find themselves in a position of privilege and authority over the disabled individual, further propagating disability exclusion, by casting those who are less-than-able in a role of infantilisation, in which they become, through expectation of complicity, a ward of the state.

However, Butlerian performativity has the potential to undermine and destabilise the dramaturgical relationship between the disabled individual and the able, by subverting and rejecting the expectation of normalcy. For Butler, normativity contains within itself the key to enacting such subversions because norms, by their very nature, are in a state of flux. As she states, 'the terms by which we are recognized as human are socially articulated and changeable'.³⁴ Therefore, bodies which exist outside of the categorisation of "normal" serve as potential sites of subversion that can incite and ignite the process of resignification because 'they appear only as developmental failures or

³² A. Javier Travino, *Goffman's Legacy*, (Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003), p. 35.

³³ Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, p. 140.

³⁴ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*, (New York: Routledge, 2004) p. 2.

logical impossibilities from within that domain'.³⁵ By their very existence, identities which undermine the culturally propagated notion of normalcy contradict the logic and hegemonic practices of norm-making. Although Butler's project focuses extensively on discussions of gender, I have resituated her argument within the field of disability studies and within the notion of disability as a cultural and social Otherness. As she states of physical and cultural signifiers:

their persistence and proliferation, however, provide critical opportunities to expose the limits and regulatory aims of that domain of intelligibility and, hence, to open up within the very terms of that matrix of intelligibility rival and subversive matrices of [...] disorder.³⁶

By resituating her argument within the matrices of physical disorder, which is to say disability, the chains of signification that produce the binary of normal and Other become unravelled. Turning toward those identity categories that are labelled as Other, or marked as deviant and different, Butler suggests that normative definitions of the body can be challenged and subsequently revised and altered. As she states of performativity: 'acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest but never reveal, the organising principle of identity as a cause'.³⁷ Furthermore, as Butler states, these acts of performativity 'are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means'.³⁸ The literature and arts that surround a cultural figure of disability produce a fictionalised disabled-Other which in turn emphasises and produces a shared imaginary "I", and social expectation. As Butler previously clarifies, 'the production of stable bodily contours relies on fixed sites of corporeal permeability and impermeability'.³⁹ With the expectation of disability and the performativity of disability that arise from the able-

³⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006[1990]), p. 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185 (original emphasis).

³⁸ *Ibid.* (original emphasis).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

gaze, it follows that the sites of permeability and impermeability become intrinsically mapped onto the physical signifiers that make up and produce disability in relation to a social norm.

The sites of permeability within the disabled body can, through performance, become sites of contention. Prosthetics, cochlear implants, physical and biological deviations which are either hidden or removable, and which shift between temporal and physical boundaries, are self-reflexive in their constitution of the disabled body. A prosthetic limb has the potential to out-perform its biological counterpart. Despite this, the legacy of disability and the medical model of disability is that the signifier of the prosthetic is one of impairment and correction, rather than potential and advancement. However, that is not to say the disabled community inherently reject the idea of technological equipment as augmenting their lived experiences. As Hasler states:

[t]he [disability] movement does not reject the idea of gadgets. One of the basic requirements for independent living is appropriate technological equipment. But even here, appropriate can be defined differently by a non-disabled person and a disabled one.⁴⁰

The divide that Hasler marks on the line of “appropriateness” is an important one, for it is an act which gives agency to those who may need medical or assistive technology, and casts it as within the remit of their own choice, not because of the expectations set forth by the able-gaze. As a result, this signifier of otherness, which serves very differently under the able-gaze, becomes equated to a weaponised disruption of the imago-as-Gestalt. The prosthetic becomes a signifier of a disrupted body, a permeable site, the physical space where the limb no longer exists, or never existed at all, and as a result points — under the effect of the able-gaze — to a deviant bodily form. However, through the reclamation of prosthesis as signifiers of advancement and progress, the disabled community produces a minoritarian, oppositional gaze. As such the disabled individual under the power of the able-gaze attempts to consolidate their fragmentary body with the body they see external

⁴⁰ F. Hasler, *Information Enables Improves Improving Access to Information Services for Disabled People, National Disability Information Projects* (Nottingham: Policy Studies Institute London, 1993), p. 15.

to them; the body of those that gaze, the body of societal normalcy casting judgments and expectations on them. But through this oppositional gaze and the performativity of prosthetics; the disabled body can become weaponised, and reconfigure the signification of the bodily deviance. Through this act, the disabled body becomes a radical Other, not just to the able, but to the disabled individual themselves.

The able-gaze expects a level of performativity and the disabled individual will strive towards that expectation, performing their societal expectations with as little burden as possible, but will thus strive towards a fictionalised "I" which does not exist, and cannot be obtained. This is how the able-gaze demands a performance of disability and how the expectations of disability inform the identity of the disabled individual. Yet the prostheticised body can be utilised in response to the able-gaze to subvert, challenge and disrupt traditional hegemonic processes. As Jennifer Parker-Starbuck states, the abject, deviant body is the first step to transcending the expectation of the disabled body to conform to the constructions of normalcy set forth by the able-gaze:

[a]bject bodies and technologies are the starting point for the twisting strands in a becoming-cyborg. The abject includes alternatives, resistances, bodies that don't conform to (problematic) societal norms, technologies that are without mechanical animation, or are hidden.⁴¹

The prosthetic, disability technology, and ideas of the augmented disabled subject as cyborg, are all evidence of society's aversion to that which is cast as Other. Yet, these fears and aversions have the potential to be enacted and redefined as sites of performativity and contention, and through this political weaponisation of the disabled body, a substantial challenge and reconfiguration of the able-gaze.

Although the medicalised body within Western society is one which is heavily entrenched in ableist values, disability studies argues that the identity and the disabled body should no longer be governed by the

⁴¹ J. Parker-Starbuck, 'Cyborg Returns: ALWAYS-ALREADY SUBJECT TECHNOLOGIES' in *Performance and Media: Taxonomies for a Changing Field*, ed. by S. Bay-Cheng, J. Parker-Starbuck, D. Saltz (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2015), pp. 65-92 (pp. 69-70).

ideological hangover of Victorian ethics and ideals. The human body is becoming a site of contention, and disability technology is part of that discussion. The disabled body, both augmented by prosthesis or disability technology, or without, has the potential to disrupt the able-gaze as the acts of performativity, which contribute to society's preconceptions of disability, start to unravel the ideological frameworks which create the binary of normal/different and able/disabled. Through this, the disabled community, under their collective momentum and power have the ability to restructure the labels of disability under their own minoritarian and discursive gaze: the disabled body can become produced how those with disabilities want to produce it, rather than it being a product of the expectations of an able-centric, medicalised society. Disability can occur in every walk of life, and is a global phenomenon; it is not prejudiced to race, gender, religion or creed. Since disability does not discriminate, it exists in society across every possible sphere of differentiation. Reclaiming the performativity of the disabled body is a discursive act; and one which exists in opposition to outdated modes of thought that proliferate the medical model of disability. As Butler states:

[t]he power of discourse to materialise its effects is thus consonant with the power of discourse to circumscribe the domain of intelligibility. Hence, the reading of 'performativity' as wilful and arbitrary choice misses the point that the historicity of discourse, and in particular, the historicity of norms (the 'chains' of interaction invoked and dissimulated in the imperative utterance) constitute the power of discourse to enact what it names.⁴²

The disabled body has the potential to perform outside of the scrupulous stare of the able-gaze; with prostheses and disability technology resignifying the disabled body as transgressive – this transgression has the potential to disrupt the power of the utterance. The reading of disability and prosthetics within this article is not one which misses the point of discourse, as Butler warns, but one that instead argues for the disability community to enact the power which

⁴² Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, (London: Routledge. 1993) p. 137.

they hold, to enact what they name, and how they name it, in defiance of expectation.

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The Leopard

Svetlana Yefimenko

I.

The pianist lived alone. Pots of dill and basil crowded his windowsill, their fragile stalks straining toward the sun. At the open window, white lace curtains rolled in foaming waves among luminous adagios and graceful ritardandos. Billows of Scriabin's etudes skimmed the edges of Rachmaninoff's fugues, their pale, weeping phrases tumbling into Wagnerian sonatas. The dill blossomed. The basil thronged fragrantly, and the pianist plucked its leaves for soups and pestos.

Zarina, who moved in next door, had been falling asleep to waltzes and arpeggios for six months. But she only saw the pianist once. It was the day before Thanksgiving. It was snowing. He stood beside the apartment building's security door, arms full of paper grocery bags, rummaging for his keys. Zarina, coming home from work, sprinted to unlock the door and hold it open. "Thanks," he'd said distractedly, and turned toward the stairs. She followed him up three flights, but he didn't say anything else or wait for her to catch up. When he paused beside his own door, Zarina glimpsed celery stalks and a box of cereal jutting from his bags.

He was as tragic as she'd hoped. A tangled mass of black curls fell across the wingspan of his straight, black brows. His hands were large, veined, and whiter than sculptures at the museum. She watched him kick open his door and swing it shut behind him. But she couldn't gather the color of his eyes. After that, his groceries were delivered once a week by a huffing, grumbling woman. She stacked crates of soup cans on his mat and pinned receipts beside the doorbell. The pianist did not come out again.

Across the hall, Zarina's studio apartment was full of books and cat hair. The books were hers. The hair belonged to Orlando, an enormous gray cat who took sunlight and bathing very seriously. Together, they escaped from Zarina's boyfriend's spacious house in New Jersey and nestled into this tiny, bright burrow in the East Village.

Zarina and Orlando agreed on everything. They didn't miss the Jacuzzi or the white leather sofa or even the organic cat food. They were a tiny family, very poor and very happy. Zarina couldn't cook and Orlando couldn't stand the smell of frying oil anyway, so she brought home cartons of Chinese food and the cheapest cuts of chicken. Then they sat side by side on the windowsill, half-asleep, and listened to the music.

In the mornings, Orlando lay purring in the wedge of yellow sunlight that fell across the wood floor. Hopping over him, Zarina dressed for work. She yanked open drawers and couldn't find her comb, checking her watch, skipping down three stairs at a time, always arriving at the bookstore ten minutes late.

East Village Books was cluttered and snobby. Its scuffed shelves featured only works of classical literature and volumes of philosophy whose titles nobody could understand. The owner, an over-educated man who suspected everything was beneath him, including his bookstore, hired Zarina because she quoted Melville and Villon from memory.

But their customers didn't care about Melville or Villon. They came in, wiped their feet, and asked where the science fiction section was.

Zarina shook her head. "We don't have that."

Disappointment. "Well, then where's the mystery section?"

"We don't have that, either."

Losing hope. "Detective? Thriller?"

"No, not that."

"Romance, maybe?"

"I'm sorry."

Finally, outrage. "Well, what *do* you have?"

Zarina smiled and pointed. "Ancient Greek and Roman prose is right behind you."

"Is there anything else?"

"We have eleven *David Copperfields*."

They lost business but kept the owner's principles.

Zarina sat on the counter, swinging her legs and dreaming up lines for stories. Natalie, the only other employee, had scandalously pink hair and a pierced nose which aggravated her asthma. She boiled coffee and sorted paperbacks. Their predictable, quiet days passed to the sounds of turning pages, percolating coffee, and the bookstore's regulars.

There was the young political dissident, his eyes greener than forest mist, who wore fingerless gloves and never smiled. He clanged open the door and crouched by the Marxism shelf. Plucking up *Das Kapital*, he found the page where he left off the day before, tucked his legs comfortably, and sat reading for hours. It was a hardcover and he couldn't afford it. Sometimes, he cursed and protested, "This book's been here for a year! Why doesn't anyone buy it? I'll tell you why. Capitalist propaganda. Prevents the masses from seeking truth."

Zarina glanced up from the kitten she was sketching. "If the masses get to it, how will you read it?"

"I'd buy it myself. But I don't want to support an imperialistic, oppressive market which exploits cheap labor in China."

Shrugging indefinitely, Zarina gave the kitten four whiskers. "I think that book was printed in Baltimore."

There was also the homeless old man. His beard was long, white silk, and Zarina wondered how he kept it so clean. Shuffling in wearily, his plastic bags crinkling, he dropped into the striped armchair beside the history section. Someone said he had fought in Korea, someone else suggested Vietnam. He liked to read about medieval military history, flipping to maps of Charlemagne's great campaigns. Or he sat drowsing, his creased hands limp on pages open to the Wars of the Roses. When the owner was there, he ordered the old man to get out. When he wasn't, Zarina brought him coffee. He nodded vaguely and called her missy.

Natalie was Zarina's only friend. They stood behind the counter and played Scrabble or joked about the owner's love life. Having been in New York for just half a year, Zarina wasn't yet used to its thrumming, insistent beat. The subway system confused her. The herds of slim, well-dressed men, deaf with earbuds, swift with business, stampeded past her hesitant admiration. When it rained, she threw her head all the way back, past the edges of endless buildings, just to see a sliver of yellow sky. The shouting vendors, honking taxis, booming night clubs, and raucous lights were an immense pool of melting glitter. Zarina stepped around it, peering in cautiously.

But Natalie had ideas. She wrote out lists of seafood restaurants and shoe boutiques. She circled festivals and exhibitions on the calendar. She advertised her male friends: "That's Ricky. He plays guitar and he's so available."

But Zarina was relieved when Ricky didn't call. She wanted to be alone. Her old boyfriend, whom she almost married, stood as memory's immense bulwark against men. Arrogant and difficult, Byron sped his clients through foreclosure procedures and raced motorcycles on his days off. He knew everything. Nobody could disagree with him. His sharp and sure conceit silenced all opposition. With a poised rapier of logic, he pierced Zarina's irrationalities. He didn't really love her? How ridiculous. He bought that sapphire necklace just last month. She was afraid of the dark? Superstitious, immature girl. George Eliot was a more compelling psychologist than Dostoyevskiy? That's feminine logic for you. When he was happy, he swaddled her with beautiful objects and the cleverest jokes. On those days, she laughed until her ribs ached. See, Zarina? See? It was all for her. His ability could span the most immense distances to bring her their exotic spices, while she relinquished herself.

She moved into his shimmering white house after graduating with a useless literature degree. She had never had a job. She didn't need a job, he said. As long as she had him, she didn't need anything. During one of Byron's interminable court cases, Zarina wrote her first story. Clumsy and melodramatic, the plot spiraled incoherently, and the characters talked like cartoons. Thrilled with her childish creation, she was eager to share it. But he was slouched over his desk, his head in his hands. "I'll read it later. An old client declared bankruptcy this morning, damn him."

Zarina was nervous. "I think I want to write."

He didn't raise his head. "So write."

"I mean, I want to be a writer."

"Can this riveting conversation be postponed? I'm really busy."

It was as though he'd cast a long, critical gaze over her naked body and turned away with an indifferent mouth. Zarina backed out of his office, tremulous with humiliation. After two more years of sushi dinners with lawyers and summers in Italy, Zarina burst from the elaborately carved coffin. In a sweep of falling rainbow glass, she packed a suitcase, pushed Orlando into a puppy crate, and they ran. She found an apartment. Then she found the bookstore.

Moment by moment, she rediscovered and reclaimed tiny parts of herself. She wrote constantly, frantically. When she wasn't home, she scribbled on napkins and menus and receipts. She sent her stories to literary journals and collected their rejection letters in a shoebox

beneath her bed. Her own passions and lamentations flowed from the mouths and eyes of her characters. They needed her. They *needed* her. They crowded into her studio, clamoring to be written, taking up all the space on the tiny couch. She saw their reflections in her mirrors and bumped into them in her bathtub. In the cool evenings, they whispered their confessions and paced the fire escape, anguished and waiting, waiting, waiting to exist. Without her, they weren't capable of loving and of innocence.

And there were trivial things, too. Like apple pie for breakfast. Or leaving the bathroom light on all night. She organized a little life, undemanding as a violet, placid without men.

It took Byron two months to track her new address. He sent orchids. He sent chocolate. He sent threats. But Zarina, behind her ramparts of books, the gray cat clasped to her chest, shook her head. No, she said. No.

Finally, he swaggered into the bookstore, wearing a black wool coat without a single lint ball. He stood in the doorway, his teeth bared. "Zarina. What the fuck?"

Behind the counter, she gasped and stood still. Natalie examined him approvingly.

He advanced past the reading Marxist, past the sleeping homeless man, looming above her, weapons out, eyes narrowed. "Is this the hole you left me for?"

Swallowing, blinking, Zarina swayed. She was afraid of him. "Well, no. Or yes. I don't know. I only—I only wanted to—"

"Wanted to what?"

"To—to write."

"To write! To *write*! Like I prevented you."

Bewilderment pulsed in her red face. "You did! There, with you, I couldn't think, I couldn't—"

"Zarina, you've never been able to think straight. Not then, not now. For god's sake, don't you see that this is stupid? You're being so stupid. Drop this idea. It's a hobby, not a career. Writers don't make any money."

Natalie's pink hair flamed up angrily. "Listen up, you little shit. Zee is talented. She's writing stories, good ones. She's gonna put out book after book. Her name in neon and all that. Don't you be coming around here talking like that."

Unimpressed, Byron crossed his arms. "Really? Stories? Where have they been published?"

Zarina stared at his handsome scowl and hated him helplessly. "Nowhere yet."

He slapped the counter, sweeping a stack of books to the floor. Pride and loss distorted his lips. There was nothing in this world he couldn't have. "I want you to come with me."

"I won't."

"Zarina."

"I won't!"

Then, the political dissident shut *Das Kapital* and approached the counter. His rebel's boots creaked loudly. His homeless eyes were wide in his startled face. "In 1917, six bohemians, led by Marcel Duchamp, climbed on top of the arch in Washington Square. They fired guns. They lit Chinese lanterns. They declared Greenwich Village a sovereign republic, a utopia of socialism, sex, poetry, conversation, dawn-greeting, and anything that's taboo in the Midwest."

Byron raised his eyebrows. "What is this?"

"It was a revolution."

"So what happened?"

"The—the police came. They locked the door to the top of the arch."

Byron was scornful. "Locking the door was all it took to quench the revolutionary spirit? Too bad Louis XVI didn't think of that. Might have kept his head."

But the rebel held his ground. Faced with so much nonsense, Byron strode from the bookstore into the waiting taxi, his fists in his coat pockets.

Natalie giggled, "He was hot, though." After that, she exerted herself to find Zarina a new boyfriend. But it was useless. Zarina was in love with the pianist.

The first time she heard the thin, high notes falling like transparent petals, her ribcage swelled with regret and she knew she loved whoever created that music. The concealed musician might turn out to be a man, an old woman, a young boy, or an anxious ghost. It didn't matter. Her bird's heart was too easily moved to be contained by gender or even species. She could fall in love with the sky, writing sonnets to the night, arching her yielding nakedness into the dark. She could love wind, ecstatic when powerful gusts billowed her skirt and tender breezes caressed her throat. Or she could be faithful to a wild wolf,

tired after his hunt, blood drying on his paws. Violet-eyed tigers, weary winter, or the indifferent moon. Because beauty isn't limited to human beings. And where beauty goes, desire follows. Months later, when it turned out the pianist was young, handsome, and nearly-if-not-quite human, she felt a timid gratitude.

In the hall one day, Zarina stopped the woman who delivered his groceries and asked about him. The woman put her hands on her hips. "A nutcase. That's what he is. A real nutcase. No mother, no friends, no nothing. Won't leave the house. Always orders the corn cereal."

Beside the mailboxes, the married couple who lived downstairs smiled uncomfortably at Zarina's questions. "We heard he has some sort of disorder. Like, phobias and stuff. We've lived here for two years and only saw him once. He was really rude."

The mailman sneered. "He's a sex offender."

The garbage collector whispered confidentially. "I heard he's an inside man. Knows all about the CIA involvement with the Kennedys."

Zarina gave up. If he wanted to stay hidden, let him. In her stories, he became a prince, a philosopher, a nomad. Writing quickly, her hand shaking, Zarina married him a thousand different ways. They whispered their vows in sunlit fields, or deep underwater in a green ocean, or floating amid silently revolving stars. Since she didn't know his eyes, she wrote them wet earth black or low cloud gray. She did not notice the men around her. She found no use for them.

After a year of sending stories to every literary journal that accepted submissions, Zarina received a letter. She read it over her cheese danish. The letter congratulated her. *The Pen is Mightier* had accepted her 5,000-word story about the pianist. Publication in the January issue. Two contributor's copies as payment. Please call the editor at your earliest convenience.

Orlando watched Zarina jumping and shrieking. Calmly, he stretched out a fluffy gray paw and helped himself to some danish. If people had no manners, he couldn't help it. Waving the letter, Zarina ran to the bookstore to tell Natalie. Skipping, embracing, they waltzed through the philosophy section.

Natalie was laughing. "Call them right now! I bet they want your biography. I bet they want your photo."

Breathless, still clutching the precious envelope, Zarina dialed the number she had already memorized. "Hello? May I please speak to Editor Wylie?"

After leaving Zarina on hold for ten minutes, Editor Wylie's thin, scratchy voice floated out. They were very sorry, she explained politely, but there was a mix-up with the submission manager. The story about the pianist was very nice, but not what they were looking for. They hoped Zarina would have a nice day.

"But—" Zarina stuttered into the receiver. "But I don't understand. What's wrong with my story?"

"It just isn't for us."

"But why?"

"It's a very interesting perspective. But it isn't publishable. Best of luck."

Editor Wylie hung up. Zarina bit into her lip and tasted blood.

Natalie stormed through the bookstore, violently rearranging titles. "The bastards! The goddamn bastards! Not publishable! Not publishable! What the hell do they know?"

Zarina said nothing. She couldn't understand. Empty and silent, she leaned on the counter, her chin on her hands. She'd written about the pianist. All of her recent stories were about the pianist. She was seized by the mystery of a single human being, like so many writers before her. From Beatrice to Neal Cassady, history's great muses paraded through the triumphal arch of literature. When confronted with a human miracle, the artistic consciousness is not moved to possess it, but to create a universe in its image. Zarina's other characters, neglected and hurt, slept in corners, their animal calls subsiding into whimpers. She hadn't given them words to express their terrible limbo, suspended between creation and realization. Their twittering outlines crowded beside the bookstore, translucent faces peering in to see if it was their turn yet. Dusting the shelves, Zarina ignored them. She'd just have to write a better story. If only, if only, if *only* she knew the color of his eyes!

Behind her, the old homeless man rustled the pages of a military history book. He said suddenly, "You know, missy, if it wasn't for the Bohemian Reformation, there wouldn't have been a Protestant Reformation."

He liked to tell battle stories. Speaking slowly, his white beard rippling, confusing facts with legends, he was a chanting poet of the oral tradition. But Zarina was bitter and didn't want a history lesson. "So what?"

"Not many people know that."

"So?"

"People should know."

She sighed. It wasn't his fault. Holding the dust rag, she settled on the arm of the striped armchair, leaning over his shoulder. He smelled of onions and shoe polish. Zarina squinted at the pages he held open. She pointed to a picture of a dark-haired man, frowning sternly beneath his mustache, invulnerable despite his eye patch. "Who's that?"

"Ah, that's Jan Zizka. Czech military commander. Wonder of a man."

"What did he do?"

"He led the Hussites against the Holy Roman Empire."

"Who were the Hussites?"

"A religious minority."

"What'd they have against the Holy Roman Empire?"

"The Catholics were just awful in those days. Crusaded against the Hussites. Set them on fire. Burned their religious leader at the stake."

"I guess that's a good reason."

"Certainly. Zizka destroyed their armies. One time, his force of 400 untrained peasants defeated 2,000 royalist knights."

Impressed, Zarina looked closely at the lifted, indomitable face in the portrait. "Why did he wear a patch?"

"An arrow got his eye in 1421. But he didn't lose a single battle. Eventually, both eyes were gone. The Pope still couldn't defeat him. At the Battle of Nemecky Brod, heavily outnumbered, Zizka ambushed the crusaders and destroyed them. He was completely blind."

"But how can a blind man lead an army?"

"Well, he was only blind to what most folks see. Blindness is its own vision."

That night, Zarina came home empty handed. Orlando greeted her with loud cries. She scratched his head sympathetically. They'd both be hungry. She waited for the lilt of piano music, but the night was quiet and soft. Wrapping a blanket around her shoulders, Zarina wrenched open the window and climbed onto the fire escape.

There, on the narrow iron steps, beneath the flying white sail of his lace curtains, the pianist sat smoking. Zarina paused, one leg dangling on each side of the sill. Exhaling cigarette smoke, he lifted his head.

Blue. His eyes were blue.

She started it. "Hi. I mean, hi."

His voice was boneless and dark. "Hi."

"You're not—you're not playing?"

"No."

But not blue like the colored pencil. Blue like the entire planet seen from the moon, in an inhuman solitude. Better to be killed than exiled. Without thinking, she swung the other leg over the sill and landed on the steps beside him. "Why don't you ever leave your apartment?"

He held his cigarette between his thumb and index finger, like a soldier. His other hand drooped wearily, a dying white flower. "There's nowhere to go."

"There's everywhere to go. Don't you want to see places, people, animals? There's the art museum, for instance. They have a bust of Homer. Have you read *The Odyssey*? And there's the arch in Washington Square, where six bohemians lit lanterns in 1917. They have a fountain and pigeons and chess tables."

Quietly, hesitantly, he said, "I can't see."

"You can't?"

"No."

"Because you're blind?"

"Yes."

Zarina didn't know what to say next. This wasn't poetic at all. She tried to remember the last time she saw a blind person. What did blind people *do*? They led armies. "But I saw you. Almost a year ago. You had bags with celery and cereal, remember? You couldn't find your keys."

"Oh. That. The man who brought my groceries died suddenly. It was Thanksgiving week and nobody at the delivery service answered the phone. I ran out of food. I hadn't eaten for a few days, so I had to—"

She interrupted. "Why didn't you just knock on my door?"

He shrugged. What from great distance had seemed like strength, turned out to be an unfathomable loneliness. Zarina asked questions which he answered reluctantly. He went blind when he was very young. Maybe seven or eight. It was the measles. His religious mother didn't believe in vaccinations. Along with food poisoning, he picked up the disease in China, where he was helping his mother's church distribute pamphlets about the Christian Science Reading Room.

The sharp, black tips of his lashes swept down as he remembered. "We were staying somewhere around Jilin. I was playing by a stream, pretending to be a sailor. And then I looked up and there was a leopard. Right there above me. He was walking across a fallen tree, crossing the

stream. I guess it was early autumn because he was the same color as the leaves. I must have seen other things after that. But that's the last thing I remember."

Zarina scrambled up. "Can I read something to you?"

"Okay."

"Because I've written stories. About you. They're all about you."

He was neither surprised nor flattered. "Okay."

"I just have to go do something very quickly. Then I'll – I'll climb into your window?"

He smiled shyly. "Okay."

Back in her apartment, Zarina threw the blanket from her shoulders and found her wallet. She ran to the gas station to buy a can of cat food for Orlando.

II.

At the bookstore counter the next morning, Zarina wrote. She wrote about the stark, chaste monastery next door. About the white floor tiles and empty walls: no paintings, no calendars, only the sighing lace curtains tangling in the piano's shining pedals. About the bronze bird cage in the kitchen, birdless and rusted. About the pianist's wet, enormous, gray wings drying in the corner.

He made coffee and pesto sandwiches and they sat cross-legged on the floor, facing each other, their knees touching, and talked. She told him about the treasures in the Metropolitan Museum: Sisley's landscapes like thousands of motionless butterflies, a Degas pencil sketch of a woman bathing, and a bust of Homer, that blind wandering bard. She told him about the hot dog vendor at the end of their street – his mustache was ridiculous, but the hot dogs were good – and about the tiny, violet petals a row of Eastern Redbud trees scattered across their building's doorstep. About the safety signs in the subway, the greedy squirrels in the parks, the sooty gray steam of the sewers. For the first time, she felt that New York was her city, too, his and hers, to share, to blame, to be grateful for.

He listened silently, eagerly, before rising and saying, "Now listen to me."

She sat huddled between the dill and basil on the windowsill while he played. He sat at the maple grand piano, his back straight, his hands like white lilies opening and falling. Vaster and stronger than anything

she could see, music hurtled forth, took her beneath the arms, lifted her up up up, and moved her all over the sky. With serene and barren strains, he played solitude as though he tamed it. In shaking chords, he stripped her of language and vision, leaving only the shivering essence of love. Tender sounds cloaked her defenselessness. And in this great fragility, Zarina learned to use words to leap over the limitation of words.

Did it matter if he existed? Did it matter if anything existed? The blind pianist was her best creation, written into passionate, boundless life.

She was still writing when the young Marxist arrived. He had just left an End Extinction rally. Sadly, he handed Zarina an illustrated list of endangered species. She was always too distracted to notice that he did not come to the bookstore every day just to read *Das Kapital*, which he had finished six months ago.

He put his elbows on the counter. "Look at this. The city is building a golf course. It'd kill the blue-legged frog population, which is nearly extinct. We're trying to stop it. There'll be another rally tomorrow. You'll go with me?"

"Poor frog! Of course I'll go."

After he left, she scanned the list of creatures helplessly careening toward oblivion. On the final page, an Amur leopard gazed with the eyes of every desert. He was the color of autumn leaves.

Habitat: Northeast China, Jilin province. Critically endangered. Fewer than 40 individuals left in the world.

The leopard and pianist had recognized one another. Or sight reversed itself, and the pianist became the final vision of the earth's last leopard. Because there will be a last leopard soon. Searching vainly for its own kind, poised between existence and nonexistence.

End

CONTRIBUTORS

Sarah-Jayne Ainsworth is a third-year doctoral student at the University of Exeter. Her research looks at seventeenth-century women's wills, focusing on the wills written by women in the south-west of England in the period 1625-1660. The research aims to claim wills as examples of literary endeavour and to situate them within the ideas about death and dying well that prevailed at this time, and alongside other forms of writing which were open to women. She completed an MA in English Literary Studies at the University of Exeter in 2015, and has degrees in English, Music, Education and Creative Writing.

Gemma Ballard is a first year PhD student in the School of English at the University of Sheffield, where she also earned her MA in 2016. Her current research interests include East Asian cinema (particularly Korean), urban landscapes and narratives of postmodernity. More specifically, her work examines the treatment of the city as a purely 'celluloid' space, and its influence on national cinematic identity. She prefers to do her research in the university's DVD library, where she also works as a librarian, in the company of her favourite films and directors.

Elaine Ruth Boe is pursuing an MLitt in "Women, Writing and Gender" at the University of St Andrews. An Arkansas native, she graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Davidson College in North Carolina. She has previously published in the University of Toronto's undergraduate journal on disability studies, *Knots*, and the literary magazine *Oxford American*. Her writing has received awards from King's College London, Davidson College, and Ohio State University. Her current research interests involve the intersections of gender and disability studies in women's speculative fiction.

Christina Clover is currently working towards her PhD Creative Writing, titled: *Magical Realism in Lesbian Fiction*. She completed both her BA and MA degrees in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University, both of which specialised in fiction. Christina is a LAMBDA literary fellow and has had short stories featured in several local publications. She has completed her first novel, *Seahorses*, and is now working on her second. She lives in South Devon with her fiancé and daughter.

Celine Frohn completed her BA in Culture Studies at Tilburg University and her MA in Cultural History at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. Currently she is working on her PhD research at the University of Sheffield, studying nineteenth-century popular stories including the earliest version of Sweeney Todd. She left her home town, Kerkrade, at eighteen years old, but it continues to haunt her work.

Ash Gannicott is a first year PhD/MPhil student studying English Literature at Exeter. With research interests focussed around disability studies, body/identity politics and performativity, his PhD thesis is looking at depictions of deafness and hearing impairment within literature, and acts of performativity surrounding disability. As an advocate for the use of interdisciplinary approaches in order to explore and interrogate ideas and cultures, his role of Assistant Editor in English at *Exclamation* is one in which he hopes to not only promote academic inclusivity and diversity, but to also promote *Exclamation* and the vibrant research culture of Exeter to other academics in the field of disability studies and identity politics.

Chris Grosvenor is a PhD student at the University of Exeter, UK. His thesis – ‘Cinema on the Front Line’ – examines the role of the cinema as it intersected with the lives of those who served for Britain during the First World War, shining a light on a largely unacknowledged history within the discipline of Film Studies. More broadly, his research interests include silent cinema, British film history, exhibition studies and the work of silent comedian Charlie Chaplin.

Shannen Grant is nearing the end of her MA English Literary Studies and Critical Theory course, with a heightened interest in Race and Feminism, an area which she hopes to explore further during her academic career. Her essay is the product of her two passions and is work that she hopes will engage and inform those both inside and outside of academia.

Rinat Harel, native of Israeli, holds bachelor and master’s degrees in fine art, as well as studied creative writing at Emerson College in Boston USA, where she received the 2015 Nonfiction Award (Judge: Robert Atwan, editor of Best American Essays). Her writing has been shortlisted in the 2017 OWT Short Fiction Competition, and published in *East Coast Ink*, *The Masters Review*, *Consequences Magazine*, *Canyon Voices*, *Dunes Review*, and forthcoming in *Waves*, an anthology by A Room of Her Own Foundation. Currently a PhD student in Creative Writing at University of

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Jonathan Hay is a MRes in English student at the University of Chester, and is currently researching towards a dissertation titled 'Amazed anew': The Posthuman Dream, The Repetitive System, and Novum Decay in Modern SF'. They presented a paper titled 'The Joys of Masturbation: Genital Stimulation in the Works of Jeanette Winterson' at the 3rd International and Interdisciplinary Talking Bodies conference in 2017, and is currently co-editing a forthcoming edited collection of essays from the conference. Their work has been published in the University of Edinburgh's FORUM journal (Issue 26, Summer 2018). They were awarded the University of Chester's Burrows (St Peter's, Saltley) Vaedictory Prize, and were also shortlisted for the 2017 Jane Martin Poetry Prize, run by the University of Cambridge's Girton College.

Linda Horsnell is an Associate Tutor and final year PhD candidate at the University of East Anglia. Her thesis, entitled: 'A Portrait of Grief: Attachment and Loss in the Works of James Joyce', uses Attachment Theory to analyse Joyce's representation of grief. She has recently published a book review on Luca Crispi's Joyce's Creative Process and the Construction of Character in *Ulysses*: Becoming the Blooms in Notes and Queries.

Essie Karozas-Dennis is currently studying her MA in English Literary Studies at the University of Exeter. Whilst completing her undergraduate study, she became particularly interested in the study of film and digital games. She was part of the first year to be offered the option of choosing a video essay-based dissertation, which inspired her to apply for a doctorate in Digital Humanities. During Essie's MA, her academic interests have been situated in memory studies, and despite having a specific interest in postcolonial literature, she has chosen to focus her research on the memorialization of World War II in contemporary culture.

Sally King is a third-year PhD student at De Montfort University, Leicester. Her thesis examines the representation of the slipper and other shoes in translations and adaptations of the fairy tale *Cinderella*, focusing on works that have had a considerable influence on the tale's development in the west. She explores the tale's evolution since written versions by Charles Perrault (1697) and the Brothers Grimm (1812-1857), and is interested in adaptations in film, toys, pantomime and dance. Her research harnesses theories from Translation and Adaptation Studies, fairy-tale scholarship and

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Brandon K. Liew is an MA postgraduate student in the Department of English and Film at the University of Exeter. He has a background in Political Theory and Creative Writing from the University of Melbourne, with a current focus on Literary Theory, Postcolonial Literatures and Malaysian History. His prior publications include a hardback on Malaysian Art-Deco architectural design and essays on native Malaysian Orang Asli aborigines, and has contributed to art festivals in Penang and Australia on the themes of tropical environment-focused creative design. Brandon's current research interests include the Global Literary Market and approaches to World Literature.

Oliver Portillo is studying an MA at the University of Exeter. Prior to this, he studied his undergraduate in English Literature at the University of Plymouth between the years of 2014 and 2017. His main area of academic interest lies in Eighteenth-Century Romanticism, with additional strands of LGBT Activism, Queer Theory, Modernism, and Medical Humanities. His article in this issue of *Exclamat!on* combines these interests, which are both academic and personal. During the MA he has had the pleasure of taking part in scholarly conversation in the forms of conferences, debates, and lectures, and simultaneously extend his experimentation and personalisation with essays. He hopes to undertake a PhD in Eighteenth-Century Romantic Literature in the coming years. He is very grateful to the team of *Exclamat!on* for providing a platform to extend the scholarly conversation in and outside of Exeter.

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Kim Squirrel is a writer and visual artist living and working in Dorset. Her poems have appeared in *The Poetry Review* and the *Out of Bounds* anthology (Bloodaxe 2012) under the name Kim O'Loughlin. As a writer she has worked in collaboration with artists actors and musicians to devise environmental theatre and one-off performances. In 2016 she joined the MA Creative writing course at the University of Exeter. Her first short story, set in Exeter's Exploding Bakery Café, was shortlisted for the Dinesh Allirajah prize in May 2018. Kim runs a letterpress and print studio with her partner David, a bookbinding mandolinist. They are currently collaborating on a musical poetry performance.

Joe Van Bergen is currently studying for a Masters in English, specialising in the American and Atlantic Studies pathway. Joe completed his undergraduate in Film in 2013, specialising in screenwriting. Since graduating, he has been working in hospitality, but has recently returned to academia to work towards a career in a literary field. His favourite authors are Charles Bukowski and Ernest Hemingway, he enjoys boxing and music, and is currently working on a short story collection.

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