EXCLAMAT!ON:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

BORDERS, BOUNDARIES
& MARGINS

Exclamat!on:

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Borders, Boundaries, and Margins

Submissions to the journal are welcome and should be addressed to the editors (exclamation@exeter.ac.uk).

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EDITORIAL BOARD

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EDITORIAL

Without a doubt, 2020 has been a challenging year for us all. Despite all the difficulties, it is testament to not only our fantastic editorial team, but to all our contributors and peer-reviewers that we have been able to complete volume 4 of *Exclamat!on: An Interdisciplinary Journal.* The theme of this volume, 'Borders, Boundaries and Margins' is one that is incredibly topical under the current political and social climate, not only within the United Kingdom, but globally. As many of us resorted to working from home under lockdown restrictions, and social groups were restricted to social bubbles, the borders, boundaries and margins between us were never more apparent.

The choice of 'Borders, Boundaries and Margins' as theme for this edition of the journal was one which we felt spoke to all aspects of English, Creative Writing and Film, as we live in an increasingly globalised yet divisive society. Politics are becoming increasingly more fractious as fake news spreads online, causing division and polarisation. Protests in Hong Kong are still ongoing. January 31st saw Great Britain and Gibraltar withdraw from the European Union. 16th of March saw Great Britain to go into lockdown and all social contact was immediately reduced. On May 25th, George Floyd was killed by police in Minnesota, leading to mass Black Lives Matter protests across America and the rest of the world. On the 2nd of Novemeber, Great Britain entered lockdown for the second time. The 3rd of November saw one of the most divisive elections in American history. Borders, boundaries and margins are not only physical and cartographical, but are often imaginary and ideological. These borders and divisions are not concrete and can instead be fluid, unstable, and these boundaries can be transgressed and broken. Through the material in this journal you will find work that engages with borders, boundaries and margins in many different ways – but at the crux of these articles and creative pieces there is always a liminal point which is being interrogated, explored, analysed or questioned.

In order to facilitate the growth of the journal, this year our call for papers was disseminated to every University in the United Kingdom, and we welcomed many submissions from research and taught postgraduates. We were incredibly pleased that the amount of submissions we received this year was at its highest yet, and the work that constitutes this volume of the journal was the result of many lengthy discussions amongst the editorial team (over web conferencing software, of course). We were incredibly impressed with the calibre of all submissions that we received, and we hope that this can grow from year to year, and *Exclamat!on* can continue the maintain the high standards established by its founders, Teresa Sanders and Sarah-Jayne Unsworth back in volume 1, published in 2017.

Unfortunately this year, we were unable to host a conference as we have done previously in June. However, the 2019 conference, which was on the theme 'Borders, Boundaries, and Margins' was a great success, and we are pleased that some of the conference speakers went on to submit papers for this edition. In initiating the theme a year in advance, and hosting the conference on the subject,

we were able to seek out potential contributors to present their work, begin conversations, and create networks and connections across different disciplines, colleges, and universities. We are therefore proud to be playing our part in encouraging discussion, collaboration and intellectual development amongst not only the postgraduate community at Exeter, but the wider postgraduate community as a whole. We will – circumstances permitting – be hosting our annual conference in 2021.

We could not have produced this volume without support. Our thanks and gratitude must first go out to our editorial team for all their hard work, from conducting the peer-review process, working with the authors, as well as proofreading and copyediting the submissions. On behalf of the journal I would also like to thank all of the internal and external peer reviewers for their enthusiastic and constructive feedback. We are grateful to the University of Exeter Alumni Award which generously supported the physical publication of this issue. Finally, I would like to thank Jim Milnes, Cathy Baker, Kim Mugford and Cat Rocks from the University of Exeter's HASS PGR administrative team, for their unwavering enthusiasm and support for the journal.

The production of this volume exemplifies the extent to which the journal has not only continued to grow in reputation and scope, but to which it has become a fully-fledged, nationally-recognised postgraduate journal. From my involvement with the journal from 2018, I am incredibly proud of what the journal has achieved and its ongoing growth from strength to strength. Whilst my tenure as Editor has now come to an end, I leave the journal in the very capable hands of Joe Holloway and Sophie Smith. Joe has worked as my Co-Editor for this issue, and Sophie served this year as Assistant Editor of English. I have all the confidence that *Exclamat!on* will continue to flourish and grow under the guidance of Joe and Sophie, and as they, in turn, pass the journal on to future generations of editors that *Exclamat!on* will continue to be a site of discussion, collaboration, and intellectual development for the postgraduates of the future.

We will no doubt remember 2020 as the year in which borders, boundaries and margins were never more prevalent. But despite all the obstacles, challenges, and difficulties, this has been a year in which for many of us, our communities are closer than ever, the bonds between families and friends have strengthened, and the human spirit, insurmountable, has thrived.

Ash Gannicott

Editor

Levity (Lingua Franca)

Antonella Pallini Zemin

The borders are clear cut,
there is a territory
in which I often wander erratically
trying to find a meaning,
trying to translate, to infer
a hopefully felicitous statement
which your mouth may utter
in another tongue;
the very tongue which captures
me inside these code-switching
and emotion-switching bars.
Yes, we do share a lingua franca
but that's not enough,
not when the languages of two bodies
differ so much.
And so I cannot lean towards you,
tap your shoulder,
or grab your hand,
because in your traditional language
that wouldn't be right.

And so my forehead gives up and rests
over the wooden table,
which is still missing one leg.
The ironmonger says the leg I want
in the continent was made,
and so what the manual says
I cannot make.

I stroll blindly up and down
the grey area of ways and traditions
that rule me out,
and I cannot look at you directly in the eye
so I look away from your tattooed heart,
your eyes with pain at their back,
your thin mouth which pronounces
deep thoughts and some stubborn ideas
which throw me even further out.

And so the territory a continent becomes,

                                                                      a different one,

which makes my touching your hand
an impossible task.
And all I can do is speak the language
of gestures
of my straight yet queer heart
until one day my verbs
                              will become
                                        a performative act.

Geographic Borders, Structures of Feelings and Raymond Williams: An Exploration of Borders within Williams's *People of the Black Mountains*

Amber Hancock

As both a novelist and scholar, Raymond Williams's work introduced ideas and concepts that influenced the fields of cultural studies and human geography.[1] Raymond Williams's conception of the structures of feeling, in particular, underpins our understanding of the association between social structures, space and the assignment of meaning. Within his work, this term is used to represent the tension between political/ societal expectations in response to structures and lived experience. As such, it is representative of the similar dichotomy which exists within discussions surrounding borders and ordered space. Borders might function as supposedly-static points of division and/or as an extension of the societal structures within the landscape, but we also engage with them within the movement of our daily life. Lived experiences influence our understanding of the context within these structures and are influenced by them. Thus, after providing some of the context in relation to these concepts, an examination of the elements — societal structures and lived experience – connected to structures of feeling reveal the fluidity within a bounded landscape through individual engagement with different frameworks of meaning as illustrated within the Williams's *People of the Black Mountains*.

Geography is an integral, perhaps even overlooked, facet of our daily lives; this connection manifests not only regarding our physical mobility, but more significantly, our social awareness and engagement within the landscape. Borders are a significant aspect of our understanding of ordered space within geography particularly when we engage with them in our personal lives. Within the opening of Gabriel Popescu's book *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-first Century*, he compares the constructed map of the world – highlighting the manner in which all of its borders clearly are delineated – with the view of the Earth from space, and he declares that 'the natural condition of the earth is borderless'.[2] He further clarifies this point when he introduces the theory of natural borders, which is the idea that certain features within the landscape such as rivers and mountains present natural barriers that encourage the placement of borders, as being a flawed presumption due to the fact that such features 'are not necessarily barriers to human activity'.[3] This description suggests that the justification of natural borders only reinforces the idea that borders are created because it is *people* who need them, and it is linked to the process of identity formation. Indeed, when discussing the association between ordered space and borders, one is expounding upon the ways in which borders define a place by one's individual status within it. Chris Rumford further highlighted this correlation within his 'Introduction to Theorizing Borders'. After explaining the ways in which borders, as the result of globalization, have been transformed into networks of mobility on the societal, cultural and national levels, he states that 'All borders, each act of debordering and rebordering, and every border crossing are constitutive of social relations,

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[1] Don Mitchell and Carrie Breitbach, 'Raymond Williams', in *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, eds. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin and Gill Valentine, (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 330-336. They state clearly that Williams is 'one of the founding figures of the field of cultural studies' (p. 332). They relate this to his work *Culture and Society* as one which discusses what culture is and how it forms through a Marxist lens.

[2] Gabriel Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-first Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2012), p. 1.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 17.

and, as such, help us orientate ourselves to the world'.[4] Though borders and one's associations with borders are in constant flux, as spaces of social interaction, they allow us to define ourselves in relation to our ability to cross and engage with them. This is the internalizing function of geographic borders and is a concrete aspect of our lived experience within the contemporary world.

As identity formation correlates to social and cultural interactions, the second function of geographic borders coincides with the first as they reinforce the political, social, cultural processes of the nations and regions these borders represent. Explaining this from an anthropological perspective, researchers Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson highlight this function by describing borders as 'signs of the sovereignty and domain of a state, and are markers of the peaceful or hostile relations between a state and its neighbours'.[5] Within this context, the general term state is used here to reference a political structure that experiences a level of autonomy from its neighbours which allows it to control certain elements within its boundaries. Having borders signifies a level of power granted to the state in question because it represents an uncontested claim on the space that it inhabits. This level of control is reflected in the processes by which people, goods and services move not only within the space but, more significantly, across its borders. They are '…political membranes through which people, goods, wealth and information must pass in order to be deemed acceptable or unacceptable by the state'.[6] Using the biological term membranes here emphasizes both the living, changeable nature of state's borders as well as its categorizing function as a gateway. One's ability to traverse a border exists along a spectrum of mobility; this term refers to what level of ease one experiences when crossing the border. For some, this membrane will make crossing that boundary difficult while for others it is a simpler affair. Wilson and Donnan affirm the individualized affect borders have when they state that 'it is self-evident that borders can create the reasons to cross them, and may act both as barriers and opportunities, often simultaneously'.[7] As part of the lived experience of geographic borders, one's ability to move through the bordered space reveals one's associations with the state it inhabits.

Michel De Certeau, within his work the *Practice of Everyday Life*, discusses the dichotomy of ordered space/lived experience and institutional structures. It is an example of what he calls spatial practices. Developed in relation to Foucault's scrutiny of societal structures of power, this term refers to the ways in which lived experience navigates the influences of the homogenizing processes inherent within a bounded space. He illustrates this by examining the movements of individuals within an urban setting:

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[4] Chris Rumford, 'Introduction to Theorizing Borders', in *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9.2 (2006), 155-169 (p. 167).

[5] Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 15.

[6] Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, 'Nation, State and Identity at International Borders', *in Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-30 (p. 9).

[7] *Ibid*, p. 22. See also Popescu, p. 84. It is important to note that these systems are reflective of borders existing currently within a networked form, which moves it away from more traditional geographic borders. Additionally, the spectrum of mobility correlates with a greater awareness of borders (internally and otherwise) as it suggests that, rather than a binary of citizens/others, mobility within a bounded space rans along a spectrum linked to their associations within that space.

> Their story begins on ground level, with footsteps. They are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined
> paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together.[8]

This narrative description highlights 'place' and 'space' as two different terms. Here, their usage suggests that 'place' refers to a specific location while 'space' refers the areas between places. Wilson and Donnan are more specific with their definitions:

> *Space* is the general idea people have of where things should be in physical and cultural relation to each other…*Place*, on the other hand, is the distinct space where people live; it encompasses both the idea and the actuality of where things are.[9]

The nebulous nature of space is dependent on perspective, both individually and culturally; meaning is derived from the *expected* ways people would move between places, or the reality of a mapped, even imposed order represented by their specificity. De Certeau here emphasizes the individual's ability to traverse the space and give it meaning. Though he uses collective pronouns, he emphasizes the uniqueness of the movements of the individual, focusing on their qualitative character and singularities. It suggests that while places and the cultural signifiers they represent are stationary, there are a multitude of ways in which one's movement through the spaces between them define their shape and meanings.

The vagueness of defined space coupled with the significance placed on the concept of place and movement corresponds with Raymond Williams's conception of the structures of feeling. This term is used throughout his work to represent the tension between political/ societal expectations and lived experience. In *Marxism and Literature*, for example, Williams surveys this idea within an exploration of social consciousness. Like structures of feelings, this collective term refers to the influences and institutional concepts which form the cultural understanding and experience within a society. In explaining the nature of social consciousness and structures of feelings, he states that 'practiced consciousness is always more than a handling of fixed forms and units. There is frequent tension between the received interpretation and practical experience'.[10] The focus is on practical, lived experience. Earlier within the chapter, Williams had been very clear that institutional units are only an aspect of social consciousness, and then, 'only if they are lived, actively, in real relationships, and moreover in relationships which are more than systemic exchanges between fixed units'.[11] 'Fixed units' refers to the institutional frameworks of politics, traditions and belief systems which help to define a community. The key word here, is active. For Williams, it was not enough that certain aspects of a culture are *believed* to be true; they must currently affect the way people live and engage with the space currently, and these aspects are reflected within the dynamic of place and space.

The clearest definition of structures of feelings within Williams's work occurs within the book *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review.* In it, he clarifies the framework within the term by more specifically defining the tension within it as that of the articulated and the lived:

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[8] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press,1988), p. 97.

[9] Wilson and Donnan, p. 9.

[10] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 130.

[11] *Ibid.*

> ...the peculiar location of a structure of feeling is the endless comparison that must occur in the process of consciousness between the articulated and the lived. The lived is only another word, if you like, for experience... For all that is not fully articulated, all that comes through as disturbance, tension, blockage, emotional trouble seems to me precisely a source of major changes in the relation between the signifier and the signified, whether in literary language or conventions.[12]

Realistic representation of a location must be layered between articulated expectations of a place and the lived experience of one's movement through the space. As with the relationship between social consciousness and structures of feeling, Williams is suggesting that this binary is an expression of a spectrum of associations and experiences. Indeed, while our understanding of our personal status is gained through the manner in which our identity is able to match up with the articulated (or expected) morays of the societal order of the place, where 'most meaning and values are in practice found,' what occurs if our lived experience does not match? This is the area of the border, which is made apparent by one's movement (engagement) with its boundaries. When the articulated (signifier) and the lived expectations (signified) do not align, the character experiences 'disturbance, tension, blockage, emotional trouble', or something uncanny. Crossing the border as an act is usually described in uncanny ways, and here, Williams is suggesting that this is a natural response to major changes during which 'all that is not fully articulated'. Additionally, as with De Certaeu's focus on the defining aspects of space and place, these elements – the mapped, framework of place, the nebulous pathways of space and (from Williams) the blurring aspect of borders – is revealed through the movements of people within the given region, society or nation.

This dynamic is a defining feature within Williams's unfinished trilogy *People of the Black Mountains*. Of his own novels, Williams said that he was interested in 'the *movement* of history through a particular place which connected not only one period with another but, in a sense, all the periods with the present, and with a present understanding of them'.[13] The focus on 'movement' of history defines spatial awareness within this context as dependent upon both the articulated framework of place and the lived experience of the present. More specifically, Williams is claiming to focus on the ways in which the articulated history becomes real within the social consciousness of the living present. The series of the vignettes which make up the bulk of the novels are the means of describing the historical eras embedded into the landscapes through the lens of lived experience while the movement through space occur in the present through Glyn's search for his grandfather. It is his observations and his living within these glimpses of literary historic memory on a trail which allow the reader to experience an overview of the geographic area as efficiently as possible while still maintaining focus on an end goal.

From the opening, *People of the Black Mountains* defines the borders within its space in layers. First, it maps it in geological terms, and then remaps it through the scope of one's personal experience. Kenneth Burke in his work *A Grammar of Motives* describes the nature of defining a thing in terms of a paradox:

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[12] Raymond Williams. *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: Verso, 1979, 2015), p. 147.

[13] Raymond Williams, '*People of the Black Mountains*: Interview with John Barnie', in *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*, ed. Daniel Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. 165 [Emphasis added].

> To tell what a thing is, you place it in terms of something else. This idea of locating, or placing, is implicit in our very word for definition itself: to *define*, or *determine* a thing, is to mark its boundaries, hence to use terms that possess, implicitly at least, contextual reference.[14]

In other words, it takes an external perspective either through comparison or 'contextual reference' to order a space into a recognizable place or thing. Popescu affirmed this when he stated that 'Borders acquire their roles as barriers or bridges from the context in which they are erected and in which they function'.[15] To add to its ambiguity, this external perspective becomes integral to the identity of the place described. Indeed, context is only gained through engagement with the border and the space it encloses. We see this principle in practice in the opening section of both novels of *People of the Black Mountains*: *The Beginning* and *The Eggs of the Eagle*:

> See this layered sandstone in the short mountain grass. Place your right hand on it, palm downward. See where the summer sun rises and where it stands at noon. Direct your index finger midway between them. Spread your fingers, not widely. You now hold this place in your hand.[16]

Within this short paragraph, Williams foreshadows the kind of mental journey he hopes the readers will take within the broader novel. He begins by addressing the readers directly; it is their perspective that he is seeking to conform to the space. He supplies them with a basic outline of a landscape features of rock type and some vegetation; giving the reader a reference to what the thing being ordered is: land. He then spatially orders the area by having the reader impose a recognizable shape (their hand) over the image; by micromanaging the way the hand is placed, Williams whittles down the variables. It is still the reader's hand – the reader's perspective – but it has been structured through the necessity of the place into a desired form. The inclusion of the position of the sun highlights that time has an effect on the accuracy of location, and further adjustments must be made. In the end, 'holding the place in your hand' is reliant on balancing the internal signs/landmarks of the bound area with the culturally-aware voice of instruction on positioning those borders correctly. Williams pinpointed this binary within his work by stating that:

> …there is a contrast between what is available — which is very scattered and discontinuous - and the physical reality of the place, which…in most of its contacts seems untouched. In fact the records of every period are there, but you have to know about them before you see them.[17]

By 'there', he is referring to within the landscape itself; regardless of the available written records classifying the culturally and historically relevant features of a locale being scarce or disjointed, an educated native individual would be able to see evidence of their traces. In recognizing the intricacy of the landscape and its inherent symbols, the observer can lay claim on belonging to the internal side of the border and its corresponding culture.[18] One can

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[14] Kenneth Burke. *A Grammar of Motives* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 24.

[15] Popescu, p. 21.

[16] Raymond Williams. *People of the Black Mountains: the Beginning* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1990), p. 1.

[17] *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*, *Ibid*, p. 167.

[18] See also: Wilson and Donnan, *Borders*, p. 10 which defines the concept of cultural within an anthropological context and the issues this causes with regards to the multiplicity inherent to border cultures.

therefore guide others into viewing them as well. This point of imposing another layer — culture — over the structure of identity within a location carries through as the metaphor of the hand metamorphoses.

In further defining the route his character Glyn will take, Williams encases the reader's hand in the specificity of place, and thus, maintains the underlying structure of it being a human-constructed space. Rivers like the Honddu and the Mynwy run between one's fingers, and regions/counties including Gader Fawr and Bal Mawr take up residence on the digits.[19] He defines this shape as 'the hand of the Black Mountains, the shape first learned'.[20] This phrase 'the shape first learned' suggested that this is a learned memory framed by a familiar structure over an unordered space. It is not only, as Williams demonstrates here, that one learns the shape of their native land through living in the community, but the hand is the first shape an infant might learn from their first interactions with themselves and others. After all, a hand is one of the most recognizable parts of a human being. Furthermore, this inclusion of memory (one's lived experience) with history (articulated associations) motivates the understanding of moving from one space to another as these connotations shape one's understanding of their own lived experience. Simon Dentith in his article 'Landscape and Historical Memory in Raymond Williams's *People of the Black Mountains'* explain these two spheres of understanding much as a binary in and of itself. He states that:

> A society whose understanding happens exclusively within the integument of memory has no need of such sites, because everywhere is marked or appears within its memorialising consciousness. A 'historical' society, by contrast, needs to learn its historically significant locations as a conscious act, since 'memory' has been lost and history replaces it by learnt stories, subject to sceptical adjustment and therefore fragile in principle.[21]

By 'sites', he is referring to historically/culturally relevant sites; reflecting the dynamic of social consciousness and structures of feeling, these are fixed units where societal norms and understanding are reinforced. Significantly, a 'historical society' requires an 'act' to come into being while memory-based comes through osmosis. The word 'act' alone suggests a movement or journey towards building a society, and though Dentith states that history is 'fragile in principle' because it can be affected by sceptic interpretation, Williams's structure of the novel depends on these two forms of perspective to convey a complete representation. While memory carries greater weight within this presented binary, Williams does not limit his descriptive representation to one or the other. Rather it is the inclusion of both lived experience and learned/historic associations that offer a more complete, though potentially ambiguous, understanding of the geographic area. This is further emphasized by the closing line of that paragraph: 'You hold their names and their shapes'.[22] Just as each reader's hand is slightly different, so the final image of the route will differ from individual to individual, yet the cultural boundaries set by the names and preferred shapes of the locales add a level of consistency to the visualization.

This consistency is further elevated as Williams moves away from the generic hand representation to a far more specific one; in trying to give a clearer vision of the space, he states exactly what kind of being should inhabit this province. Burke explains this relationship

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[19] *People of the Black Mountains,* p. 1.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Simon Dentith, 'Landscape and Historical Memory in Raymond Williams's *People of the Black Mountains*', *Literature & History*, 24.2 (2015), 73-88 (p. 74).

[22] *Ibid.*

between literary scene (setting) and agents (characters) as one of symbiotic constancy: 'It is a principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene'.[23] This signifies that certain settings encourage the development of certain characters; on the most basic level, one expects to find a Welshman in Wales, for example. A set of cultural, familial or even physical boundaries can influence the development of specific identities so long as those structural borders are accompanied by a level of societal expectation. In his essay entitled 'Are We Becoming More Divided?', Williams considers the question of unity within a communal British context:

> The truth is that very few people believe in unity or in division as abstract social and political principles. What most people believe in, simultaneously, is the kind of unity they've got used to and the kind of divisions, separations they've got used to.[24]

As suggested earlier, context defines the space, and awareness of that context comes through traversing it. Though lived experience is personal, to belong to the culture/community encourages a certain level of conformity and shared meaning. 'Unity' signifies an internal, cultural sameness in a general sense. Within *People*, this joining of the framework of place and the lived experience of space is reflected within the growing specificity of the hand. The overall shape of the mapped space is later described as having '…fingers are long and skeletal, curving on themselves…' giving it more distinct outline.[25] In all of this breakdown, the external (hand) has come to represent not only an overview of a place but even the beginnings of a character. Thus, the movement foreshadowed in this opening is not only a physical trajectory but also a psychological and sociological one as well.

Indeed, moving from one ordered space to another involves the changing of one set of expectations and cultural signifiers for another; because of this, it can represent a shift in mindsets as well as space. As in Burke's theory of specific characters dwelling in specific locales, the transit between places encompasses a procedure of acclimation, and this movement of one state to another is reflected in much of Williams's writing. This is exemplified within his definition of realism, which indicates that '…it is a certain perception of reality and a certain awareness of interrelationships, not that it carries a certain mode of composition with it…'[26] In this delineation, one can see that each illustration of reality is presenting an evident view of reality circumscribed by interrelationships understood by a limited point of view. Daniel Williams in his article 'Writing Against the Grain: Raymond Williams's *Border Country* and the Defence of Realism' further explains that 'Realism, for Williams, is conceived as a process; an aim in writing that calls for new forms and approaches as our world, and our understanding of that world, changes'.[27] Combined, these two characterizations of 'realism' are expressed as a 'process', or transitional movement, through which a certain perception of the world is described and like a living thing, this image of the world changes as one's 'understanding' of that space changes. In other words, an accurate representation of either a person or even a country cannot be complete without the identity of that something being subjected to shifting descriptors of perspective.

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[23] Burke, p. 3.

[24] *Who Speaks for Wales?,* p. 186.

[25] *People,* p. 1.

[26] *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review*, p. 330.

[27] Daniel G. Williams. 'Writing Against the Grain: Raymond Williams's *Border Country* and the Defence of Realism', in *Mapping the Territory: Critical Approaches to Welsh Fiction in English*, ed. By Katie Gramich (Cardigan: Parthian, 2010), p. 225.

In terms of *People*, this concept of realism is reflected within the layers of memory and history which demarcate the landscape. In understanding and recognizing these layers, Williams indicates that additional knowledge of a place and a change in perspective transforms its decipherable identity. These two elements of exploration are not only a focus within *People*, but the brief glimpses of consecutive time periods also introduce a personal connection. The vignettes that compose the bulk of the narrative demonstrate how different peoples might have lived. The intimacy of the lived experiences contrasts with the contemplative tone of Glyn's segments. As Dentith argues, 'while the 'Glyn to Elis' sections are based on the fiction of the younger man going in search of his grandfather, they also contain a summative and explicatory language largely absent from the stories themselves'.[28] These segments provide the context – geographically, culturally and historically – needed to illustrate national meaning for readers on the perspectives of the characters within the vignettes, as well as impart movement within the narrative as Glyn walks through the Black Mountain. Representative of the crossover between the two elements of bounded space, these categories are evolving ones as the gaining of new data and experience changes one's perspective on even common cultural elements. This evolution means that, like the culture itself, these spheres are subject to 'seepage', a term used by Tony Conran to highlight the porous nature of boundaries.[29] As with many of the aspects of Welsh culture including language, literature and history, there is an ambiguous separation between the two spheres of knowledge, and the equal importance given to the two styles of segments within the narrative bears this out. To gain a complete understanding of this locale, it requires both. This is never more evident than in the event that precipitates the traversing narrative between lived and articulated experience.

Corresponding with the ambiguous separation between lived and articulated experience, Glyn experiences an uncanny moment crossing the temporal border within the Black Mountains. Glyn's consciousness is suddenly and absorbed into the landscape in a depersonalising way as he begins his journey through it. At first, his view of the landscape emphasizes his familiarity to the structures within the space:

> He had often walked into one of these hollows and closed his eyes, trying to feel its generations of life. Sometimes what he knew and what he sensed came briefly together. But more often there was only the indistinct awareness of some long presence. It was more than a sequence of particular moments – the specific times, the changing ways, of the extended history. It was a more settled, permanent sense, of men and women on these mountains, handling earth, stone, trees, grass, animals: people deep and gone into this place but still seeming to shape it.[30]

In addition to again giving the reader an overview of the narrative's structure, this begins as an incidence where 'what he knew' (articulated) and 'what he sensed' (lived) meet. Experiencing this internally, Glyn expresses it in external terms; he describes the land as having 'some long presence'. This presence is made up of *both* the history of the place and 'people deep and gone into this place but still seeming to shape it'. 'To shape' here is literal and is enacted by the people who stayed; the breakdown of the natural elements of place (earth, stone, trees, grass, animals) suggest that there is not a single aspect of the space that

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[28] Simon Dentith, p. 77.

[29] Tony Conran. *The Cost of Strangeness: Essays on the English Poets of Wales* (Llandysul: Gommer Press, 1982), p. 27. See Also: Jacques Derrida. *Monolingualism of the Other, or the Prothesis of Origin*. Trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 5 for a similar usage of the term.

[30] *People*, p. 12.

has been untouched, and it is only through that level of inclusion within a given environment which denotes a permanent mark on its identity. Still, these are Glyn's thoughts and way of ordering his sense of the space. Yet, it is soon apparent that his later temporal change in perspective will be *imposed* upon him by the landscape.

After the initial introduction of the 'long presence', it increasingly expands its ability to influence the world around Glyn. On the next page, it becomes a 'close presence' which 'alarmed him. But there was nothing to be seen'.[31] Though it is a tangible feeling, it is not a visible one. Then, Glyn begins to hear a voice ('Marod ...'). This word 'seemed not to have been uttered but to materialize, breathe, in his mind. A sound suddenly distinct but not his own word'.[32] Here is the first occurrence of the influence of the external landscape affecting Glyn; this time it is his thoughts. Moreover, the fact that it is characterized as a 'voice' is significant. Williams viewed 'voice' as a vocal representation of a structure of feeling. David Simpson explains the linguistic aspects of structures of feeling as:

> …a symptom of Williams's vocalic idealism, or faith in the resonance of the *voice*, so that it fails to embody itself fully in literary forms (as it occasionally promised to do), and always remains content to appeal for verification to what is supposedly "lived and felt".[33]

Using the term 'the voice' is essential to conveying the essence of lived practice. Though it has no more weight than air, it carries language, social connection and general information — aspects which make up the lived experience. Yet, even the word "articulated" invokes the image of conversing, and its place within the framework of shared understanding. Therefore, the voice drawing Glyn into the past is the first step into syncing lived experience with articulated knowledge.

Indeed, for as much as the word is intended to draw Glyn into a lived moment from the past, the fact that it is not 'his own word' represents a level of the articulated. Yet, it became something internal as he heard it first within his mind, and it influenced his perspective on the landscape around him. As he looked around ('the moon', 'the empty mountain'), the felt-rather-than-heard sounds intensify in power into a '…strange rhythm beginning to alter him', as he took '… his steps with care but found, as he walked, that he was following the rhythm which had come into his mind'[34]. The sounds did not remain internal, but instead, began to influence his actions even later his breathing. He cannot separate himself from the ways in which the setting has guided his actions, and this synergy between the present-articulated knowledge/visitor perspective — and the past-lived experience/the native perspective — allows the temporal border between them to be crossed. The final moment of convergence comes with the first moment of the first vignette 'Marod at once woke…'[35] It is with these words that the reader comes to start glimpsing the different time periods; however, as the only moment of on-screen collaboration, this is also the moment of divergence between the past and present's movement from the space and their approach to their individual identities.

As suggested earlier, after the initial convergence, a barrier is erected through tone between the present route through the landscape and the past one through its divergent

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[31] *Ibid*. p. 13.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] David Simpson, "Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing "History"', *Social Text*, 30 (1992), p. 9-26. (p. 21). [Emphasis added]

[34] *People*, p. 13.

[35] *Ibid*.

tone, people and focus. Glyn is focused on explaining the historical situations that he passes through, and his tone is reflective of that. This is never more clearly demonstrated than in the first Glyn to Elis section after the visions of the past started. Instead of being fixated on looking for his grandfather, he is providing context for the previous vignettes, and in this case of the first two, this meant a geological explanation of the region. After explicating 'the vast movements of the earth', Glyn tells the reader that the 'new landforms shifting their place on the planet…Thrust and folded, it took the shape of a hand, with wide rivers flowing around it: a shape awaiting its history'.[36] By explaining that the shape was determined by the forces of nature, he is removing the human element in the ordering of space; yet, 'history' depends on the interaction of people, and by including this element of foreshadowing, he constructs the platform in preparation for the next vignette. These sections are also dedicated to moving to the next signifier within the landscape, or the next entrance to a historical period. The route is more important in the present than lingering on any specific place, and because of this, Glyn acts as the observer to the vignettes but not someone who inhabits those moments.

In contrast, Williams's representations of the past have a lingering, lived-in tone, and the people within them are portrayed as ones who could populate the given environment. Reflective on his musings on unity, he has created characters that fit within the chosen aesthetics of the given time periods. During an interview on *People of the Black Mountains*, Williams discusses the ways in which people are 'the focal point of his feelings for the Black Mountains'. Rather than explaining the correlation directly, he uses an example of a Neolithic slave woman half of whose face had atrophied[37]. In the novel, she is called Bibra,[38] and through his research of the individual, 'the story almost writes itself, because we know that woman, the history is there…The story comes out of her. I only have to give her a name, and the thing has happened.'[39] He designed the story to fit the facts of the individual, and yet, he is the enactor of the life of the story through the giving of her name. The structure of the story and its environment is determined by the research/facts while the creativity – the names and the heart of the vignettes – is what gives them weight and relatability. Even within the vignettes, Williams maintains the balance between these two elements, and as counterpoints to each other, this is reflected within the tone of these short stories.

An example of this tone can be found in 'Tami in Telim and Grain Valley'. This story explores the effect that introducing stronger borders within the settlements of the area has on the communal structure of the valley. Stories are important in this culture, and as such, becomes the way that Williams conveys the rising culture of the environment:

> For this was one true story, that in the time of the Black Stranger, many generations ago, a filthy choking death had come to the people and to the sheep. And this was a disaster that would never have happened if the people had kept to themselves, in their own place and ways.[40]

Words such as 'filthy' and 'people had kept to themselves' suggest a connection to the current culture being represented. They convey emotion and opinion basis on a cultural norm; the sharing of the story of the Black Stranger implies a tale that is told and re-told within a community to reinforce the opinions being expressed. In this way, the attitudes and culture

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[36] *Ibid*. pp. 38-9.

[37] *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*, p. 173.

[38] Raymond Williams, *People of the Black Mountains: The Eggs of the Eagle* (London: Paladin, 1992), p. 46.

[39] *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*, p. 173.

[40] *People* p. 243.

of a given people can be expressed while still maintaining a continuity between the vignettes themselves.

Within the descriptions of the past, there is a continual progression between one time period to another with continuous references to earlier times and reoccurring themes. For Williams: 'the capacity to "see a history" is one that cannot come simply from the act of looking, however symptomatic appear those innumerable traces left in the landscape… "Seeing a history" in the full sense to which the novel aspires is a matter of making connections, of seeing these various places and the stories that they tell as part of a pattern'.[41] Williams's focus is on representing a complete picture of the landscape and culture of the Black Mountains, and as a border region, the shifting nature of borders is an integral part of understanding the relationships between the people who define the region. As Simon Dentith suggests here, this is possible through 'making connections', and in this way, Williams holds '… both ends of the stick, to have the synoptic overview, the view from the hill-top, with the immersion in the here and now: the view from the valley bottom.'[42] However, the way that he points out the 'pattern' is determined by the cultural movement between the time periods which emphasise the reoccurring formation of borders leading to an overall cultural ambiguity.

In discussions between characters, it is apparent that different cultures and classes understand the same space differently. One of the most memorable exchanges occurs in the first book under the chapter called 'The Wise One and the Slave'. The conceit of this chapter is that the sister of a slave called Derco tripped and grabbed the boot of Mation, the son of the lord, on her way down. To punish her, Mation wanted to cut off her hair, but Derco stepped in and defended his sister. Because of this, the uncle of Mation, the Druida Lugon, came forward to judge the situation. To defend Derco, a leader of the slaves called Karan steps forward as his advocate. What begins as a discussion of the situation soon becomes a discussion of the cultural understanding of their individual peoples. While Lugon continually states that 'there is this place or another, and in every place there is a law', Karan is insistent that it is related to 'the sweetness of this place' and that 'In every place there are truths…'.[43] Lugon is of the belief that there exists an overreaching culture or social order, and being of a higher class, he can impose this order on the space and call it 'law'. Karan, however, views culture and social order as being bound to a specific place. This leads to Lugon defining this as a social weakness:

> You speak of this place and its sweetness. Yet all you are saying is that you are tied to it. You are tied to clods and stones. You have no freedom of spirit, no movement of the heart. Have you not seen, by contrast, the life of your lords? We are tied by no place. We put little trust in any possessions but ourselves. We move as free men, between this place and another, as between this world and another…We astonish the world with all the moving colours of life. And that is why we are lords, for we have taken life and shaped it, and moved in its shapes.[44]

This statement offers a strange juxtaposition between borders and classes. Though Glyn's statement in the next novel about the imperial order suggests that boundaries are of more relevance those of the upper classes, here Lugon emphatically states the opposite. To him, his belief in an overreaching national law transcends borders and yet, allows his people to shape

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[41] Dentith, p. 87.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *People,* p. 300.
[44] *Ibid*. p. 306.

the space they inhabit. He knows that his people even move other lives into their shapes. Further, he associates this strength as something inherent to their being. The 'freedom of spirit' and 'movement of the heart' are a poetic way of stating that they have no national roots; instead, they are the overreaching structure that blankets the entire space. In contrast, Karan's people are 'tied to clods and stones'; they are bound to a place and a set of cultural norms. There is no separating them from the area where they are from and the class they belong to, and to Lugon, this is the greatest evidence of Karan's inferiority. Contrarily, Karan feels that to be tied to a place and its history is the greatest honour, and they '…cherish each mark where we and the powers have joined.'[45] The 'mark' not only refers to their lives, but more significantly, to the nationality and their roots to a place and what it represents. For both of these cultures, the same bounded space carries different meaning and essential representations relative to their own cultural backgrounds.

Williams is a proponent of porous borders and cultural ambiguity. In discussing Williams theories about cultural materialism, Jim McGuigan and Marie Moran in their article entitled 'Raymond Williams and Sociology' explain that:

> consideration of each 'sphere' in cultural-materialist terms demonstrates that their emergence as categories indicates and is bound up with the substantive material importance of the actions, ideas, institutions and behaviours that have come to be framed in terms of these categories. Emphasis on the social and historical constitution of culture, economy and society as categories enables us to see that the very separation of different practices into different spheres is not natural or universal but in fact political…[46]

By 'sphere', McGuigan and Moran are not referring to a people or group of people; instead, they are referencing the different parts of a single societal unit. For example, the economic sphere cannot be studied as separate from the domestic sphere because the overreaching context is what gives them meaning within a communal structure. Furthermore, the "actions, ideas, institutions and behaviours" which demonstrate this communal structure often are not bound by the different spheres or categories. Though it is not referenced here, Williams would include different nationalities inhibiting a single 'border' space. For Williams, geographic borders — particularly the Welsh Border — in all their porousness are a central part of his own identity as a Welshman-from-the-border. Because of this, there is no clear line separating the Welsh aspect from the English one within his personal culture:

> They talk about both the English and the Welsh as other peoples…It is probably changing…but I have heard both groups talked about as if they are other than the people here which is clearly impossible. I suppose it is the sort of thing that happens in a border area…[47]

The border is a place where cultures meet, transverse the space, and mix together; in other words, it is a place of ambiguity. Williams views the entirety of Wales as a border space: 'This is the continuing ambivalence in Wales as elsewhere. It is precisely the problem of the border country as I remember experiencing it'.[48] For this reason, the representation of its history

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[45] *Ibid*. p. 307.
[46] Jim McGuigan and Marie Moran, 'Raymond Williams and Sociology', *The Sociological Review*, 62 (2014), pp. 167-188 (p. 180).
[47] *Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity,* p. 171.
[48] *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*, *Ibid*, p. 4.

within *People* is dependent on being able to traverse the space while maintaining a firm grasp on its layered cultural identity. In one of the most self-aware moments in the novels, the character Conan summarizes the purpose behind the vignette structure and past/present dichotomy of the unfinished trilogy's narrative: 'What we see, if we choose, from this height, is neither an order nor a vision, but something more compelling. We see a history'.[49] Through this character, Williams suggests that an observer like Glyn – separate but emotionally committed – will not 'see' the social order and the feeling of the culture but what those things combine to become: 'a history'.

History is a progression through time and social experience; it is a movement from one state of being to another. Whether articulated through a shared culture and societal framework or lived through personal engagement with place, the past defines our present association with the space and influences our engagement with the landscape and its borders. In presenting the history of the Black Mountains through glimpses, Williams is providing a layered overview of what the space has come to mean to the people who have lived there. Through this, he encourages his readers to share in the structures and evolving culture within the Welsh landscape. Though it sadly was left unfinished, it invites us to consider how balanced these two influences within our own perceptions of space, place and geography are, and what that might signify within our broader worldview.

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[49] *The Eggs of the Eagle, Ibid*, p. 249.

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Crossing Points: Domestic

Rachel Carney

The following photographs and poems are taken and adapted from 'Crossing Points', a project commissioned by the *madeinroath* community arts festival in 2018.

The project began with a series of 'photo walks' around Roath (a suburb of Cardiff) capturing the crossing points – the doors and windows – those over-familiar objects that stand for so much: security, protection, barrier, opportunity, freedom, escape… In response to these photographs came poems – short and simple, taking on a life of their own but always linked back to the images that inspired them, exploring the complexities of living in an urban space that is both public and private.

The original 32 photographs and 13 poems were displayed in the window of a local laundrette. Four pairs of photographs and poems have been re-worked into a short sequence for publication, focusing on one particular theme, encapsulated by the word 'domestic', which also serves as the title for the third poem.

Falter

out from
folds of darkness

a shadow
forms

caught in the play
of sly refractions

pale hand
on the latch

drawn towards
forgotten light

Wandering

we walk familiar streets
eyes unseeing –

houses multiply
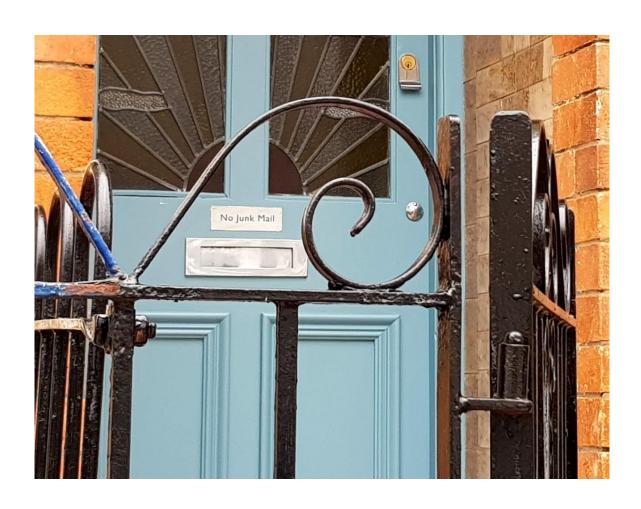while roads divide

in all directions
leading nowhere but

the places we know
so well –

stone walls,
and iron gates and

doors, closing

Domestic

pinned into
silence behind

neat doors
in tidy rows –

tamed and
tight, flat as

a photograph,
bright

blue like
boiled sweets

Still Life

the silence lingers
long after they left,

as if some trace of
hope remained –

SONG of the NORFOLK LONGSHOREMEN [1]

Janice Lingley

This piece presents a reworking of a sea song or chanty as a 'found poem',[2] and draws upon the 1974 work of socio-economic history concerning the East Anglian herring fishery, The Longshoremen, *by Roy Clark (1911-2008). The first section of this work is based on Roy Clark's recollections of his childhood, and in conveying the distinctive linguistic register of seamanship features dialectal speech. 'The Song of the Norfolk Longshoremen' is an attempt to re-create for a children's readership, or audience, Roy Clark's formative experience in summary form. 'The Song of the Norfolk Longshoremen' is intended to commemorate the work of an author and conservationist, and the sea hunter who in childhood befriended him.*

Recollections of Childhood[3]

One afternoon, in the summer of 1920 or 1921, a small boy was given the opportunity of going out in a sailing lugger skippered by a Norfolk longshoreman. It was a magical moment for the child when he was gently lifted by the fisherman from the beach, over the boat's sides and set down upon the forward thwart for his first trip afloat. As an incoming wave took the boat's bow and lifted her, the willing hands of the other longshoremen who worked off the beach helped the skipper push her further into the sea. As the boat rapidly slid forward into her natural element, he jumped inboard over her quarter, and the crew lost no time in manning the oars to gain an offing.

In this account of a vivid childhood memory, the reader is not told the skipper's name, but we do hear his voice — a distinctive dialectal idiom, speaking in the nautical register which demarcates all those who go down to the sea in ships. 'Thet'll about do us' was the signal for the crew to stow their oars, as the skipper slid the rudder into position at the stern. 'Best have th' boy Roy aft here, so's I cen keep an eye on 'im. Give 'im a hand, yew tew'; and the child was carefully manoeuvred round the pile of herring nets into a place of safety, in the sternsheets next to the skipper. Then, 'Let's give' 'er some cloth' was the order to hoist sail, and the boat took on a life renewed as she gently heeled and began to step out. The boundary from land to sea had been crossed. A wind-driven boat moves silently through the water, which makes the rhythmic sound at her bows made by the lapping of the waves especially noticeable. So perhaps it was with this heightened sense that, as the child gazed shoreward, he was conscious of a new perspective on the land — its bushes, distant farmhouses, and further inland, on the skyline, a church tower — 'how different everything seemed'.

Looking back on that day more than fifty years later, the writer precisely recalls what the wind conditions were: 'a light but steady breeze, partly off the land, out of the south-west, a

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[1] *Editorial note: This is a highly stylised and idiosyncratic piece which merges creative writing practices with academic and historical research. The first sections of this piece serve as the authors commentary on their found poem, 'The Song of the Longshoremen', and whilst some editorial changes have been made to accommodate the style guide of our journal, we have striven to preserve the style of this piece, which blurs oral history, regional dialect, and traditional form.*

[2] 'Found poetry, also called the poetry of citation or appropriation, is created by taking words, phrases, and, even more commonly, entire passages from other sources and reframing them as 'poetry' by altering the context, frame and format in which the source text appears'; Roland Green, ed., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[3] This section is a rewriting and paraphrasing of the chapter 'Years Ago'; in Roy Clark, *The Longshoremen* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1974), pp. 9-30.

fine quartering wind to carry us over the young flood tide till we had Winterton Ness abeam, a mile or so to the north.' The wind direction could be critical to obtaining a good catch, something that was well understood by the longshoremen whose observation and understanding of the sea and weather conditions was based on years of experience and inherited knowledge. A professional Norfolk fisherman, Ernest 'Jumbo' Fiske (1905-1977) has left us this testimony:

> *The best weather for fishin' on the hoom fishin' was after a good sou-west breeze, and then fall away. You know, drop away. Say a good ol' force 6 or 7 and then drop away. Drop away to about 2 or 3, 3 or 4. They used to stick their snouts in then and swim up then, they did. But on the real hoom fishin' on the full moon, that could be calm or anything, yet that allus seemed you got herrin'* [. . .] *You can't beat a sou-westerly wind anywhere for herrin' catchin', I don't think. Anything westerly or sou-westerly allus seemed the best direction t' have.* [4]

Roy Clark's father had converted an old army hut on the dunes at Hemsby, on the Norfolk coast, into a summer house, and thus began his young son's interest in the fishing boats that were berthed on the beach and his acquaintance with the longshoremen who owned them. These well-maintained boats, about seventeen feet in length, had tarred bottoms, white hulls, with gunwales painted bright green, red or blue. This type of open clench-built boat, once common on the east and south coasts, was rigged fore-and-aft with a dipping lug and mizzen, and was valued for its handiness in a sea in which few other small boats could survive.[5] Such a craft had to be capable of staying at sea and working safely in conditions when other boats headed for the shore.[6]

As a child enjoying his first trip under sail on a breezy summer afternoon within sight of the beach, Roy Clark would not then have understood the experience in terms of a sense of the enormous power inherent in the ever-changing sea and its elements, but the three experienced longshoremen who crewed YH62 (a Yarmouth register) that day would have been fully aware of the significance of the transition from land to sea, and alert to its perils.

Roy, no more than about ten years old at the time, spent many hours on the beach with his father's telescope keenly watching the longshoremen shoot their nets, and observing other craft. It especially delighted him to hang about the berth of fishing boat YH62, volunteering for any jobs he could lay his small hands to, such as clearing crabs and seaweed from the bottom of the boat, or even better, lending his strength, such as it was, to the launch. Her skipper — a middle-aged man with 'a kindly weather-beaten face and blue eyes', always ready to smile — tolerated these attentions with good humour. The longshoreman of those days was born to the sea, and began learning the skills of his trade from the time he was a small child. By the age of twelve he would be serving as mate to his father or other member of his

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[4] Referenced in David Butcher, *The Driftermen* (Reading: Tops'l Books, 1979), p. 65. The 'home fishing' referred to the fishing carried out from Yarmouth and Lowestoft. The East Anglian fishermen also took their boats to fish for the herring in Scottish waters, and south to the Channel.

[5] Roger Finch, *Sailing Craft of the British Isles* (London: William Collins, 1976), pp. 64-5.

[6] After, at the age of nine, enthusiastically observing a fishing smack sailing along the West Mersea shore in a strong wind, and then reading Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Alone Around the World* (1900) and Frank Bullen's *The Cruise of the Cachalot* (1898), Michael Frost, even as a child, became convinced that 'to be seaworthy a vessel must be at ease with the sea and must be able to look after herself with only a minimum of tending. I was quite sure that these qualities could be found in their highest perfection in working fishing boats.' Determined on sailing and fishing from 'a boat that was genuinely committed to the sea for reasons that were adequate', Frost, a dentist by profession, eventually became the amateur owner of the fishing smack *Boadicea CK213*; Michael Frost, *Boadicea CK213: The Story of an East Coast Fishing Smack* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1974), pp. 14-17, 49.

family. By the age of sixteen, he could be a skipper of his own boat. He was not only a sailor and a fisherman, but also a bait-gatherer, net-braider, shipwright, sailmaker, fish-seller and curer; he was also, when need arose, a lifeboatman.[7] Yet despite the differences in their background and culture, this native sea hunter recognised in the child — though a casual summer visitor with his family to the area — the makings of another, and this aptitude was fostered.

   Roy's first sail was brief, just long enough for a few herring to be caught, and presented to him for his mother 't' fry for breakfast', but nevertheless the relationship between the boy and the fisherman had moved to a new and significant phase. Roy was taught how to fish from the beach with a long line, and there were further fishing trips aboard YH62. The friendship between man and boy which developed at the margin of land and sea was formative, and encouraged the development of an interest in, and commitment to traditional sail, that was to be lifelong.

   For Roy Clark, growing up in the 1920s, the wind-driven wherries of Norfolk's waterways were also a familiar sight. Beautiful in their graceful lines, distinctive on account of their bright paintwork and huge black sail, with a pivoting balanced mast, capable of being lowered and raised to pass under bridges, these craft had for 300 years carried substantial cargoes from the village staithes of the Broads to Norwich and the coast. Their quiet progress under sail was sympathetic to the Broads as an area rich in wildlife, and they were vital in maintaining the farming economy of the village communities they served. They also fostered the crafts of the woodman and the skills of the country boat-builder. But by 1945 these trading craft had all been swept away as if of no account, the victims of the monopolistic urban-led growth of modern transport systems — the railway network, and the diesel-driven articulated lorry.

<u>The Later Years and a Fishing History of Norfolk</u>

   On D-day in the Second World War, Roy Clark commanded a tank landing craft destined for a stretch of coast near Arromanches in north-west France. The area was defended by barbed wire, mines and machine-gun emplacements, and as Clark manoeuvred the craft into shore, the beach was subject to aerial attack. Interviewed for a BBC documentary,[8] Roy Clark recalled that he was profoundly shocked by the destruction he witnessed. Close to the sand dunes of the Normandy beach, a field of dead and dying cattle and, lying beside them, the corpses of soldiers in khaki, made a devastating impression. This was followed by stumbling upon a dyke where Clark came upon a patch of wild flowers that he immediately recognised — Yellow Flags[9] — bringing at once vividly to mind the quiet and peacefulness of Norfolk's wetlands. It was this experience that determined him, if he survived the war, to do something to preserve the traditional country life of his native county.[10]

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[7] Clark, *The Longshoremen*, pp. 27-28; the notable rescue of the crew of the steamer *Hopelyn,* together with the ship's cat, made the longshoremen who manned the Gorleston and Lowestoft lifeboats seem real heroes to the author as a youngster. For the manifold skills of the longshoreman see Finch, p. 64.

[8] The 1998 documentary, titled 'The Last Wherry' can be viewed on YouTube. BBC, 'The Last Wherry – Albion Documentary 1998', *YouTube*, uploaded by bluecatblack (7/1/19), <https://youtu.be/2MZ5UvS-fNM> [accessed 10/10/20]

[9] The Yellow Flag, or Wild Iris, *Iris pseudocorus*, is very common in the British Isles and in Europe, in fens, wet woodlands, and by and in fresh water.

[10] This wartime experience is described in an article titled 'The D-Day vow that saved Norfolk's wherry Albion' by Rowan Mantell, that appeared in the *Eastern Daily Press* on 3 June 2019; <https://www.edp24.co.uk/features/heritage/d-day-promise-launches-norfolk-wherry-trust-70th-anniversary-1-6085879> [accessed 16/5/20].

It was largely on Clark's initiative, and due to his efforts, that, in February 1949, four years after the War ended, the Norfolk Wherry Trust was formed to re-establish on the Broads a working wherry. Fortunately, a wherry built in 1898, named *Albion*, had survived as a lighter in stalwart condition, but she required re-rigging with a new mast — equipped with the requisite metal weight — and a sail. When they had been made redundant, many of the wherry hulls were sunk on the edges of the rivers and dykes to shore up the banks. It was the Norfolk naturalist Ted Ellis,[11] well-known for his exceptional knowledge of Broadland ecology and wildlife, who accompanied Clark on his search for such metal as could be salvaged from the sunken craft. After much fund-raising by volunteers, *Albion's* restoration proceeded. She was promised freights, and for three years she was back on the waterways of Norfolk as a trading vessel. But since she was by now a veteran, it was decided that, in order to preserve her, *Albion* should be used for charter trips to educate school children, and the public generally, in Broadland history. *Albion* now operates from her own special base near Ludham.

In his mature years, Roy Clark was to write two books on Norfolk's traditional sail. *Black-Sailed Traders: The Keels and Wherries of Norfolk and Suffolk,* first published in 1961,[12] recounts the history of the working craft that used to be a characteristic feature of the life of the Broads. *The Longshoreman*, charting the history of the East Anglian herring fishery, and forming the basis of this article, was published in 1974.

The East Anglian herring fishery is documented in *The Domesday Book* (1066-68) and dates from the late Anglo-Saxon period. The golden age of the fishery was from the last quarter of the 19th century until the early years of the 20th. The dearth of herring (due to overfishing and using nets of an inappropriate size of mesh) that in the 1950s laid idle the hundreds of boats that once fished from Yarmouth and Lowestoft, was then unthought of. In the late 19th century, the fishery became increasingly important to the economy of the East Anglian coastal towns and inland villages. It was these communities that supplied the fishing vessels with their crews, seasonally augmented by countrymen who combined farming with fishing. These men, known as 'joskins', were valued for their great physical strength, then, as the rural writer Richard Jefferies observes, a notable characteristic of the landworker.[13] Before steam winches were introduced, these countrymen were fully equal to hauling heavy nets. The herring was caught not only along England's eastern coast, but also off the east coast of Scotland, in the English Channel and in Irish waters. As noted by Clark in *The Longshoremen*, the progress of the huge shoals southward was followed by large numbers of Scottish fisher lasses who prepared the fish for market.[14]

Roy Clark informs us: 'For centuries the herring was called 'the king of the sea', not on account of its size, but because it appeared in such plenty.'[15] He adds: 'It was common custom on the east coast as the first net was thrown into the sea for the skipper to call out, 'In the name of the Lord'.[16] David Butcher explains this superstition, in his book titled *The Driftermen*, by quoting a fisherman by the name of Billy Thorpe: *'When you shot the nets, you always said*

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[11] Edward Augustine Ellis (1909-1986), was an outstanding naturalist, author, broadcaster, and journalist. From 1928 to 1956, he was Keeper of Natural History at the Castle Museum in Norwich, and lived for 40 years with his wife and family at Wheatfen Broad near Surlingham, Norfolk, amid 130 acres of woodland and fen. The area is now a nature reserve.

[12] Roy Clark, *Black Sailed Traders: The Keels and Wherries of Norfolk and Suffolk* (London: Putnam, 1961).

[13] Richard Jefferies (1848-1887), his essay titled 'Strength of the English', in Samuel J Hooker, editor, *The Old House at Coate* (1948) (Bradford on Avon: Ex Libris Press, 1985), pp. 131-140, and the portrait of the agricultural labourer John Brown, 'My Old Village', in *Field and Hedgerow* (London: Longman, Green, & Co, 1889), pp. 311-329.

[14] Clark, *The Longshoremen*, pp. 62-63.

[15] Clark, *The Longshoremen,* p. 55.

[16] Clark, *The Longshoremen,* p. 57.

'In the name o' the Lord.' Yes, that you did. It was supposed t' remind you o' the time when the disciples caught all them fish in the Sea of Galilee.' [17] As the first net hauled in, it was also customary to say, '*Now for the Grand Secret.'* 'Often the 'Grand Secret' was a very scanty show of fish,' observes Roy Clark, 'but I never heard these expressions without feeling admiration for the simple faith of men who genuinely believed it took something besides their own skill to reap the harvest of the sea.' [18]

In detecting the presence of the fish they sought, the fishermen had to exercise their considerable powers of observation, and the insight gained through experience and inherited knowledge: the nature and geography of the sea floor, the wind direction and tidal flow, the colour and appearance of the sea, the presence of gulls and porpoises, the lunar phase and time of day, were all indicators of the possible presence of the fish they sought.[19]

The charismatic voice of the skipper of YM62 makes him a vivid presence in the first chapter of *The Longshoremen*. We also learn something of the songs that were sung in the fishermen's local 'four-ale bar'.   Roy Clark draws particular attention to a traditional sea song generally referred to as 'The Fishes' or 'The Fishes' Lamentation'. He quotes the chorus ——

> *Singing, stormy old weather boys,*
> *How the sea roar.*
> *Stormy old weather boys,*
> *How the sea roar.*

and four verses ——

> *Up jumped the Mackerel with the fork in his tail,*
> *He said to the Skipper, 'You'll soon have a gale.'*
>
> *Up jumped the Sprat with his pretty back,*
> *He said to the Skipper, 'You're on the wrong tack.'*
>
> *Up jumped the Cod with his ugly fat head,*
> *He said to the Skipper, 'Take a cast of your lead.'*
>
> *Up jumped the Herring the King of the Sea,*
> *He said to the Skipper, 'Put your helm hard a-lee.'* [20]

As can be seen, the verses follow the same formulaic pattern, the variants provided by the different species of fish and some distinguishing feature of their appearance, and by a witty transference of role-playing, include advice to the Skipper on how to conn his boat, or observations on the sea and its weather. 'Jumped up' could be interpreted as a euphemism for being hurled involuntarily aboard a vessel in rough weather, but, whatever the reason, these amusing fish behave as though bewitched. The couplets rhyme but do not necessarily scan, because recitative could be a feature of the song's performance. The fishermen would individually take turns to rehearse couplets that were well known, and / or improvise new

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[17] Butcher, *The Driftermen,* p. 114.

[18] Clark, *The Longshoremen*, p. 57.

[19] Butcher, *The Driftermen,* pp. 67-8.

[20] Clark, *The Longshoremen,* p. 55.

ones, and all would then join in the chorus. Roy Clark suggests an East Anglian origin for the version he quotes because of the dialectal 'roar', which omits the 's' from the third person singular of the verb.

The song, and its variants, is recorded in the Roud Index: the entry numbered 472 collates 102 versions, which are mostly identified by their chorus and/or title[21]. This organisation does not, however, make very obvious the fact that these versions observe two rather different themes: the version quoted by Clark is typical of those songs in which the fishes act as supernumerary skippers giving orders and providing commentary, which suggests the context of an offshore fishery. In the second category are those songs in which the fishes assume the various roles of the crew manning a larger, deep-sea vessel. Titled 'The Fishes', this version appears in one of the earliest collections, *Ships, Sea Songs and Shanties* by the merchant seaman and master mariner, Captain William Boultbee Whall (1847-1917). The first verse reads: *Oh, a ship she was rigg'd, and ready for sea. / And all of her sailors were fishes to be.* The second and third verses ——

> *O, the first came the herring, the king of the sea,*
> *He jumped on the poop, 'I'll be captain,' said he.*
>
> *The next was a flat-fish, they call him the skate,*
> *'If you be the captain, why, sure, I'm the mate.'*

—— make this kind of context clear, but the inclusion in prime place of the herring as 'king of the sea' strongly suggests the song had its origin in a coastal fishery. Joanna Colcord, in her 1924 collection *Roll and Go: Songs of American Sailormen*, observes: 'There can be little doubt that [this] song, although it was sung throughout the merchant service, began life with the fishing fleet. We have the testimony of Kipling in *Captains Courageous* that it was a favourite within recent years of the Banks fishermen. It is known as *The Fishes* and also by its more American title of *The Boston Come-All-Ye*.[22] The chorus finds its origin in a Scottish fishing song *Blaw the Wind Southerly*.' Whall's version gives a chorus which is similar to this: *Blow ye winds westerly, gentle south-westerly, / Blow ye winds westerly – steady she goes.*

Almost forty of the songs listed in the Roud Index have no recorded provenance, usually because they refer to the songs which were sold as street ballads. However, the Roud Index lists six marketed with the title, 'The Fishes Lamentation', all of these making reference to the herring.[23] A significant proportion of the remainder, more than twenty, are identifiable with Norfolk.[24]

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[21] All Roud Numbers referenced here and forthwith can be accessed at the Vaughn Williams Memorial library, accessible at <www.vwml.com/roudnumbers> [accessed 10/10/20]. The Roud Number index is a database of nearly 200,000 references to nearly 25,000 songs that have been collected from oral tradition in the English language all over the world. The songs are listed in the index by accession number, rather than subject matter or order of importance. Closely related songs are often grouped under the same Roud number.

[22] Roud index: 21, 46 and 53; Joanna Carver Colcord (1882-1960*), Roll and Go: Songs of American Sailormen* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1924); quoted on the website *Mainly Norfolk, English Folk and Other Good Music* <https://mainlynorfolk.info/cyril.tawney/songs/windyoldweather.html> [accessed 10/10/20]. Rudyard Kipling includes the song in Chapter 4 of *Captains Courageous* (1896)*,* which features a schooner engaged in the cod fishery of the Grand Banks. He quotes the chorus, another variant on those already referred to, and two verses, whose content whilst alluding to the structure of a large vessel, again suggests an origin grounded in a localised fishery.

[23] Roud index: 14, 15, 40, 42, 69, 72.

[24] Roud index: 1, 5, 7, 12, 16, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 38, 41, 49, 50, 58, 61, 71, 78, 91, 94.

The songs with the titles 'Stormy Weather', 'Stormy Weather Boys', or 'Stormy Ol' Weather', eleven in total, have been recorded in the Atlantic provinces of Nova Scotia (Nos 48, 55, 59, 83, 84) and New Brunswick (Nos 60, 82); two in Barry, Glamorgan (Nos 64, 73); one in St Leonards, Sussex (No 8); and one in Catfield, Norfolk (No 62). Another version, referred to as the 'Haisboro' Light Song', or 'Happisburgh Light', begins with the verse: *As we were a-fishin' off Haisburgh Light, / Shootin' an' haulin' an' trawlin' all night* —— which links the song to the large shoal ten miles long and a mile wide off Norfolk's east coast, at Happisburgh. This version has the chorus: *It was windy old weather – stormy old weather / When the wind blows – we all pull together*.[25]

The found poem, or song, presented here, combines lines of vernacular dialect, which express in the longshoremen's own words the traditional fishing techniques they employed, with lines composed in Standard English, describing the diversity of fish which could be caught offshore in the North Sea. The fishes are assumed to be East Anglian natives, and their instructions and comments are a way of dramatically presenting, in annotated form, the processes involved in drift-net fishing from a small sailing lugger, as described by Roy Clark in the opening chapter of his book. The rendering of the Norfolk dialect is based on his representation of the longshoremen's speech. The song is child-centred, because Clark's inspirational experience of offshore fishing was when he was a boy.

SONG of the NORFOLK LONGSHOREMEN

From Hemsby we sailed on a fine summer night;

The full moon was rising; the stars were alight.

Chorus: *Singing: Sea winds and spindrift,*

> *A-fishin' we go.*

> *Sea winds and spindrift,*   5

> *A-fishin' we go.*

As we rowed our boat *Spunyarn* away from the shore,

To the Skipper a gull say, 'Ahoy, Jimma Bor!'

Up jumped a Dogfish with odd bird-beak jaws.

Says to the Skipper, 'Yew cen unship yer oars.'   10

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[25] Included in the CD collection, *Sea Songs & Shanties from the Last Days of Sail* (1994), sung by the professional sailing barge skipper, Bob Roberts (Alfred William Roberts, 1907-1982), who besides a folk-singer, was also an author, and journalist.

Up jumped a Flounder and flopped on the deck.

Says, 'Look out, Ole Skipper, below hare's a wreck.'

Then up surfed a Halibut, as flat as a raft.

'Yer rudder, Ole Skipper, dew yew ship aft.'

Up jumped a jellyfish all in a quiver.   15

Says 'Ole Skipper, sum cloth dew yew giv'er.'

Then up jumped King Herring, a grin on his face.

'Tha sea be for fishes a grand hidin' place!'

Up jumped the Haddock, with close-hauled top fin.

He say to the Skipper, 'Dew yew sheet yer main in.'   20

A Sturgeon came armoured on sides and on back.

'Fur Winterton Ness, dew yew put in a tack.'

Next came a dolphin who played in our wake.

'Tha Flood,' he say, 'Skipper, begin now ter make.'

A lobster jumped in, and a sail crept beneath.   25

'Oi met a big shark,' he cried, 'a-showin' his teeth!'

Up jumped a Lanternfish, eyes all agog.

'Tha *Cockle's* abeam,' he say, 'a-smothard in fog!'

Off Catfield, a sprat to the rigging did leap.

'A harvest o' fish yew sea joskins shall reap!'   30

Up jumped the Sole from a sandy sea bed.

'Dew yew tak' now, Ole Skipper, a cast o' yer lead.'

Up jumped the Pipefish, and sounded a toot.

He say to the Skipper, ''Tis deep here, now shoot!'

Humming a hymn, a skate skidded aboard.   35

To the skipper he say, 'In tha name o' tha Lord!'

The Snipefish came pointing to leeward his snout.

Says to the Skipper, 'Dew yew hull yer dan out.'

The lobster - no Jonah - then crawled out to call,

'Yer net be cran-full o' a Grand Secret haul!'   40

Up jumped the Mullet, in mail silver-grey.

'Look yew on, Skipper. Orl hands heave away!'

Then in barged the Bullhead with barbelled mouth.

He say to the Skipper, 'Tha wind's backin' south.'

A hake somersaulting came chuckling in glee,   45

Says, 'Hibbledey-hobbledey, rough be tha sea!'

A whirly-tailed seahorse jumped over the side.

'Oi think not much longer this sea cen yew ride!'

Up jumped the Codfish with lower lip claw.

'Ole Skipper,' he say, 'dew yew head fur tha shore.'   50

A crab in the bilges woke up with a yawn.

Says to the Skipper, ''Twill soon be tha dawn!'

A Pilotfish boarded, and lit up his diddle.

'Oi'll dance a jig,' he say. 'Yew man tha fiddle!'

Notes on the Song

Line 1: Hemsby is a coastal village and seaside resort located c 12 km north of Yarmouth. It is referred to in *Domesday Book* (1086) as *Heimesbei,* a community based on sheep-farming and salt-panning. *The Oxford Names Companion* (2002) (ONC) proposes the meaning: 'farmstead or village of a man called *Hēmer': an Old Scandinavian personal name + *by*' (p. 1065).

Line 2: The longshoremen fished at night because their nets were then invisible to surface-swimming fish.

Line 8: Sailors believed that the souls of those buried or lost at sea transmigrated into seagulls. In the Norfolk dialect, 'Jimma bor' is a traditional form of colloquial address.

Line 12: Also a colloquial form of address is the epithet 'Old' preceding 'Skipper'. The captain of a merchant vessel was traditionally referred to by his crew as 'the Old Man', whatever his age.

Line 16: The expression, 'Let's giv' 'er some cloth', means 'to make sail', in the days when sails were of canvas, and made of hemp or flax.

Line 22: Winterton Ness, a narrow foreland, now almost destroyed by erosion, to the north of the village of Winterton-on-Sea. These place-names are of Old English derivation.

Line 24: It was customary for the longshoremen to begin fishing at the turn of the tide. It was not usually possible to catch fish when the tide was ebbing.

Line 28: *Cockle* (no longer extant) was one of several lightships in the North Sea.

Line 29: Catfield: another *Domesday*-listed settlement. The name could be Old English referring to land frequented by wild-cats, or derive from an Old Scandinavian personal name (ONC, p. 975). The village is situated c 9 km due west of Winterton Ness and 2 km east of Barton Broad. The attractive village sign is a collage of the themes of plough and sail.

Line 32: The leadline was for hundreds of years the only navigational instrument the seaman had. It was used to gauge not only the nature of the seabed, and the depth of the water, but also leeway, set, drift, and speed over the ground, in tidal waters.

Line 34: To 'shoot' means to cast the net, or fleet (several nets joined together), overboard. The size of the mesh used allowed small and immature fish to pass through the net, thus helping to conserve fish stocks.

Line 38: A dan-buoy is a small buoy made of wood or inflated sheepskin, supporting a stout pole which bears a flag by day and a hurricane lamp by night. It was used to mark the position of the shoreward end of the fleet.

Lines 39-40: A 'Jonah', named after the Biblical character, was someone aboard a boat who brought bad luck. Roy Clark did not come into that category apparently. The longshoremen humorously reckoned a bumper haul was as a result of taking him

briefly aboard their lugger for his first sail.[26] 'Cran' is an official measure: 28 stones in weight, or 37 and a half Imperial gallons in volume; the word is of Gaelic derivation.

Line 42:   To 'look on' the fleet of drift-nets means to pull part of the first net inboard to assess the size of the catch.

Line 44: The backing of the wind, *ie*, turning in an anti-clockwise direction, is usually a sign of worsening weather.

Line 46: 'Hibbledy-hobbledy', meaning 'a confused mass'; this fish must have migrated north because the compound is assigned a Suffolk provenance in Joseph Wright's *The English Dialect Dictionary* (1898) < http://eddonline-proj.uibk.ac.at/edd/> [accessed 8/7/20].

Line 48: A line adapted from 'Windy Old Weather', as sung by Bob Roberts (see footnote 22), skipper of *Cambria* and the last of the sailormen.

Line 53: 'Diddle' – According to Roy Clark, the colloquial name given to the clay pipes the longshoremen used to smoke; when at sea they smoked pipes with very short stems which were less likely to be caught in the rigging or gear.[27]

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[26] Clark, *The Longshoremen, p.* 9
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BOOK REVIEW: *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* by Caroline Criado Perez
Abrams Books, March 2019
Reviewer: Atlin Merrick

You are atypical. Abnormal. A complicating factor. In architecture, politics, and medical research you are almost always kept at the margins, your biology, body, and experiences deemed unimportant, confounding, not *universal.*

Who are you?

You are a woman.

In *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men,* writer Caroline Criado Perez provides 400 pages of proof of these dismal truths, should proofs you require. Dense with facts and figures, *Invisible Women* is infuriating, mind-boggling, and exhausting. Above all it is a vital resource, clarifying in detail how worldwide women have been discounted, ignored, banished behind boundaries male-dominant groups have made.

Excluded from medical studies, for example, women's hormones are regularly cited as 'too complex'. Though sex-dependent drug effects occur in 54% of animal studies, females are excluded even from studies on female-prevalent diseases. Women are 70% more likely to suffer depression than men, and yet animal studies on brain disorders are five times more likely to be done on male animals. Even studies on the side-effects of the 'female Viagra' saw researchers recruit twenty-three men and two women.

This can only happen 'in a culture that conceives of men as the default human and women as a niche aberration', writes Criado Perez, pointing out that medical students learn about physiology and female physiology, anatomy and female anatomy. 'The male is 'anatomy itself' and women a special case'.

Proof of the gender data gap's prevalence makes *Invisible Women* an infuriating read at times, and the avalanche of information can be overwhelming because the issues women face in a world not designed for them appear over and over, in the military, healthcare, schools, factories, and politics.

Yet when we proceed as if the male body and its life experiences are gender neutral, the results can range from frustrating to fatal, Criado Perez shows. From piano keyboards and smartphones designed for men's hands to stab vests designed for their bodies, when men are the default and women the special case, women suffer and sometimes die, such as the UK police officer who could not safely do her job in the ill-fitting stab vest issued to her.

With its vast amounts of data *Invisible Women* can be a dry read, but in the mountain of figures readers find hope. Here is a dismal fact, the book says, here is how we got here, how we prove that, and here is what we need to do about it.

And we very much do need to close the gender data gap. Gathering data almost exclusively on men makes sense only if you do not see women as essential, writes Caroline Criado Perez. 'Keeping women at the margins makes sense only if you see women as an added extra, a complicating factor. It doesn't make sense if you're talking about half of the human race. It doesn't make sense if you care about accurate data'.

'Only a memory to be avoided, locked away': The Intertextual Duplexity of Bertha Mason/Antoinette Cosway's Marginalisation in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Danny Lawson

Bertha Mason/Antoinette Cosway is a central figure that otherwise exists in the margins of both *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*.[1] From all sides, she is oppressed, repressed, and marginalised, to such an extent that her integral role in the narrative is acknowledged only to the most minimal degree, and subsequently dealt with swiftly in the pursuit of the narrative's conclusion. As a consequence, Bertha/Antoinette's maltreatment has prompted innumerable readings that serve to posit feminist and postcolonial considerations within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Certainly, since the publication of Rhys's revisionist prequel in 1966, efforts have intensified to reconcile the liberational feminist resolve of *Jane Eyre* with an emerging postcolonial discourse. Critical response to *Wide Sargasso Sea* has produced – and continues to produce – fervent readings of *Jane Eyre* as complicit with nineteenth-century Imperialist attitudes; that Jane's happy ending is contingent upon the oppression of the 'Other'. By writing in Bertha's origin story, Rhys aimed to undo the silencing of this peripheral character – to give voice to 'the other side' (*WSS*, p. 82) – yet, that inability, or rather, impossibility, to herself escape from the pretextual precedent means Rhys falls short in her liberation of Antoinette, to the extent of inadvertent complicity. In both texts, Antoinette/Bertha's role is critical to the narrative, and yet, to appreciate the full extent of this, it is necessary to be complicit: to turn our attention away from her – to *temporarily* marginalise her – and focus, instead, on the narratives, narrators, and authors. By so doing, we can reveal the inherently oppressive regimes at work against her and understand her inescapable destiny to always be confined to the margins of the narratives in which she exists.

To begin with, we will reconsider Bertha's paradoxical status in *Jane Eyre* as having a central role, yet peripheral presence, in the narrative, specifically: Bertha as a subtextual Gothic trope. This will then allow us to turn our attention to Jane as narrator: to delineate her oppressive techniques of narration as geared towards her happy ending and thus, by consequence, the marginalisation of Bertha. Upon reaching Jane's conclusion, we turn to *Wide Sargasso Sea* as the instigator for the postcolonial revisions of *Jane Eyre* and how Jean Rhys sought to liberate Bertha from the confines of the attic at Thornfield Hall by instilling her with perspective, origins, and agency; to give humanity to the 'strange animal' – that 'clothed hyena' – from the attic of Thornfield Hall (*JE*, p. 293). By placing Antoinette, née Bertha, at the centre of an origin story, we would suspect her to have a central role *and* central presence, however: through reconsidering the intertextual relationship between Brontë and Rhys's novels, we will expose the inescapability of Antoinette's fate – her marginalisation – and thus, Rhys's inadvertent complicity in it. In consideration of this intertextual duplexity of marginalisation, we cannot hope to liberate her from her marginalised state; we can only acknowledge it – bring it to the fore of our textual understanding in order to comprehend how this grovelling, snatching, growling being with 'grizzled hair wild as a mane', locked away in

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[1] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. by Margaret Smith, introduction and revised notes by Sally Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, ed. by Angela Smith (London: Penguin, 1997). Hereafter *JE* and *WSS*. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

the 'deep shade' of a 'cardboard world' (*JE*, p. 293; *WSS*, p. 117), plays a pivotal role in the narrative without really being seen.

Peripheral centrality - a Gothic paradox

Bertha Mason exists on the periphery of *Jane Eyre*'s narrative, yet her role is key to Jane's happy ending. In every instance of narrative presence, she is confined – restricted – to Thornfield Hall; her narrative presence is inextricably linked to place. Despite this, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar imply a continuous, symbolic presence throughout the text as 'Jane's truest and darkest double […] the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead'.[2] Such is the extent of this consistent presence that Gilbert and Gubar consider the relationship between Jane and this personified alt-Jane as the 'central confrontation' of the novel – one representative of Victorian women's repressed 'hunger, rebellion, and rage'.[3] Certainly, the parallels between Jane and Bertha are clear: 'Jane's experiences as a child prefigure the later representation of Bertha' as one who, oppressed and marginalised, breaks out in 'fire and violence' (*JE*, p. 240).[4] Symbolically, Bertha can, indeed, be considered to be manifest throughout the novel – a recurring surge of passion and emotion as Jane journeys along the 'windings of an unknown road' from childhood to adulthood (p. 281), coming across various moralities, modes of thinking, and expectations, before happening upon love, financial security, and independence on her own terms. Literally, however, *Jane Eyre* is a realist *Bildungsroman*, within which there is no comfortable place for the protuberance of the unspeakable. Bertha's 'centrality' as a character is marginal; confined to a recurring Gothic motif in order to destabilise the assurances of reality. Following her formative years at Gateshead and Lowood, Jane takes on a 'new chapter', a 'new scene' (p. 93), at Thornfield Hall as governess to Adela Varens, the illegitimate child of Rochester's period of '*grande passion*' with former mistress and French opera dancer, Céline Varens (p. 140). All throughout this predominant place of the novel, Bertha speaks and acts from the shadows: a 'curious' and 'preternatural' laugh, 'eccentric murmurs', a 'goblin ha! ha!' (pp. 107, 110, 208); mistaken for Rochester's dog, Pilot, as she scampers from setting Rochester ablaze in his sleep (pp. 147-8); a 'tigress' who bit and mauled Richard Mason in the 'dead of night' (pp. 212, 205); and a 'purple' spectre, 'the Vampyre', with 'bloodshot eyes' who 'rent' and 'trampled' Jane's wedding dress under the flicker of candlelight (pp. 283-4). Robert B. Heilman considers the Gothic recurrence within the realist text a 'New Gothic' – one in which the centralised narrator functions to subvert traditional Gothic modes by bringing to reality various Gothic conventions.[5] Operating within realism, Brontë employs Gothic motifs in such a way as to lead 'away from standardized characterization toward new levels of human reality, and hence from stock response toward a new kind of passionate engagement'.[6] Rather than consisting of those 'relatively crude mechanisms of fear', Heilman argues against the 'often disparaged' Gothic elements of the realist *Bildungsroman* to suggest that they, instead, engender an emotional response that

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[2] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress', in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, ed. by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 2nd edn. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 336-371 (p. 360), *ProQuest Ebook Central.*

[3] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 339.

[4] Sally Shuttleworth, 'Introduction', in *JE*, p. xviii.

[5] Robert B. Heilman, 'Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic', in *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse*, ed. by Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 118-132 (pp. 121, 123), *ProQuest Ebook Central.*

[6] Heilman, p. 121.

extends far beyond those 'stock responses' of cheap, inexplicable thrills, to a greater insight into the emotionality of Jane and thus, 'new levels of human reality'.[7] Necessarily, then, Jane's 'darkest double' remains in the darkness of Thornfield; a 'presence of some malevolent force' anticipating the 'holocaust at Thornfield'.[8] Until then, she is the oppressed repression: an uncanny manifestation against propriety in which, besmirched by the generic conventions of the text, she must remain in the darkness.

Despite a significant role in the narrative as the literal and symbolic impediment to Jane's quest for love, personhood, and independence, Bertha is resigned to a recurring Gothic motif, with only one instance of any substantial narrative presence. In the 'deep shade' of Thornfield's attic, we glimpse a grovelling, snatching, growling being – 'some strange wild animal' with 'grizzled hair, wild as a mane' that 'ran backwards and forwards […] seemingly, on all fours' (p. 293). Read sequentially – that is: as a continuous configuration of experience[9] – the revelation of the Gothic motif provides us with our first, and only, view of her; a look that threatens to kill the narrative dead in its tracks. Rochester, 'with a smile both acrid and desolate', declares: 'That is *my wife*' (p. 293). This 'brief scene with the lunatic' leaves Jane wrestling her resolution for immediate yet inexplicable flight (p. 297). However, even at the climax, we strain our eyes to get that glimpse – the dark and dinge of the attic distorts our view, and the sheer overwhelming horror as Rochester and his mad first wife thrust, grapple, and struggle leaves us with only impressions. Jane *is* there, 'flung' behind as the scuffle ensues (p. 293), but the episode ends as quickly as it began and she is back in her room 'as usual – just myself, without obvious change' (p. 295). For Jerome Beaty, this is an:

> unusually explicit narrative midpoint in which the forward movements of Jane's narrative seems brought to a dead end, turns back on itself to the beginning, spatializing the moment, and proceeds only after some of the detritus of her recent past and hopes for the future have been cleared away. So dramatic and traumatic is the revelation of the existence of Rochester's mad wife, Bertha, the solution of the mystery of Thornfield, so disruptive for the reader's expectations and Jane's, of her life and her life-story, it is difficult for Jane or the reader to see clearly how to go on.[10]

So quickly is her 'darkest double' 'shut up' again (p. 294), that Brontë forces our attentions back on the central protagonist.[11] No longer does the prospect of conclusion – of love, personhood, and independence – seem viable; we, along with Jane, are invited 'to recapitulate and reconfigure' our expectations and sympathies.[12]

That the marginalised Bertha has seemingly now been repressed – that impediment to conclusion no longer relevant – Jane leaves Thornfield, and Bertha returns only in a brief aside; a passive commentary on events missed since Jane's departure. During her soul-searching sojourn to Moor House, she happens to discover living family in St. John, Diana, and Mary Rivers, and is bequeathed a fortune. Only as the narrative appears to be destined to fizzle out does the inexplicable occur: Jane hears Rochester's voice calling (pp. 419-20). This instance revives the narrative and is characteristic of Heilman's 'New Gothic' as a device creating 'new levels of human reality': a coalescence of interior and exteriority that 'seemed

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[7] Heilman, pp. 120, 121.

[8] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 360; Heilman, p. 120.

[9] Jerome Beaty, '*Jane Eyre* Cubed', *Narrative*, 4.1 (1996), 74-92 (pp. 77-8) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20107072> [Accessed 15 November 2019].

[10] Beaty, p. 81.

[11] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 360.

[12] Beaty, p. 82.

in *me* – not the external world' (p. 421).[13] Hastily, Jane returns to Thornfield, finds it a 'blackened ruin' (p. 424), and inquires at the Rochester Arms as to what happened during her absence. It is here that Bertha musters one final appearance; one final Gothic haunting before being brutally written out of the narrative – repressed unto perpetual marginality. It was Bertha who set fire to Thornfield: the 'big woman' stood atop its battlements, 'long, black hair […] streaming against the flames'; 'she yelled, and gave a spring, and the next minute she lay smashed on the pavement' (p. 428). The innkeeper purports to have 'witnessed' the conflagration and spectacular leap (p. 426), but our restricted view within Jane's consciousness makes this difficult to ascertain with conviction. Rather, Bertha's final act is reserved to a narrative aside – a 'lunatic' of hearsay (p. 426) – that propels Jane's focus and the narrative towards Ferndean and the blind, crippled, desultory Rochester, and ultimately, the happy ending. Reunited with Rochester, a time-shift of ten years brings us to as close as we can get, temporally, with the narrator, Jane Rochester (p. 448). Having achieved that which she set out to achieve – love, personhood, and independence – her concluding remarks follow from 'a quiet wedding' to briefly tie up loose ends surrounding her family, that is: herself and Rochester, St. John, and Diana and Mary (pp. 448-52). From that explicit narrative midpoint, it seems now that Jane has recapitulated and reconfigured herself; undoing the threat to her desired conclusion and forcing the reader to reassess their conceptions of her.[14] Her 'darkest double' is now 'dead as the stones' (p. 428); a footnote in the unilinear sequence of her narrative that need not be consulted further; marginalised and repressed out of existence since her rage has no reason to return.[15] Hers is, from an unhappy beginning, a happy ending.

Jane, the narratorial oppressor: the 'darkest double' of Rochester

Though the narrative has concluded, we have the luxury of reconsidering the novel as a 'spatial configuration' – that is: a single space in which the various narrative stands converge on its ending[16] – and it is from this perspective that we can identify Jane as complicit in Rochester's oppression and marginalisation of Bertha. Rather than Bertha being Jane's 'darkest double', it is more prudent in narratological terms to designate Jane as the dark double of Rochester: her narrative echoes the imprisonment and marginalisation of Bertha in Thornfield's attic as an unpleasant, unavoidable necessity that, when the time comes, can be forgotten about without regret.[17] Following Jane's discovery of family and inheritance, the narrative is swiftly resolved around the centrality of her journey:

> Jane's return to Thornfield, her discovery of Bertha's death and of the ruin her dream had predicted, her reunion at Ferndean with the maimed and blinded Rochester, and their subsequent marriage form an essential epilogue to that pilgrimage towards selfhood.[18]

Indeed, in terms of the generic multiplicity of the novel, and the various impediments faced and overcome in order to attain that happy ending, it seems – on the surface – only right that Jane's narrative concludes neatly with all that which she strove for. Beaty seconds Gilbert and Gubar's pointing to the essentialism of Jane's conclusion:

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[13] Heilman, p. 120.
[14] Beaty, pp. 81, 82.
[15] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 360; Beaty, pp. 77-8, 81.
[16] Beaty, pp. 77-8.
[17] Gilbert and Gubar, p .360.
[18] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 367.

> After the twists and shifts of the plot, the confusing multiplicity of generic signals, the uncertainty of the moral and ontological groundings of the fictional world, there is at last a sense of narrative and thematic unity and of significant and comforting closure.[19]

Jane will continue on with Rochester after her autobiography, 'supremely blest' in living 'entirely for and with what I love best on earth' (p. 450). After all, 'no one questions after the first page whose story this is. Everything important that happens in the novel has its bearing either direct or indirect and its influence, either immediate or eventual on Jane'.[20] As Jane and Rochester 'entered the wood, and wended homeward' after their reunion (p. 450), the echoes of Adam and Eve leaving paradise points to an underlying, inherent evil that necessitated recapitulation and reconfiguration. Unity and closure exist only for Jane, who has achieved that which she set out to at the expense of Bertha Mason; yet she is oblivious to her narratorial oppression.

Viewed as part of the spatial configuration of the text's narrative, Bertha is marginalised to such an extent that she becomes little more than a bump in the road to Jane's happiness. Indeed, both the novel as a 'spatial configuration' and as a sequential and continuous configuration of experience is dialogic: Bertha is comprehended and subsumed into the realist narrative as a recurring Gothic intrusion, repressed until revelation is unavoidable due to factors beyond the narrator's control.[21] Each view functions to prioritise our sympathies with Jane and support her on her quest for love, personhood, and independence. As Melvin R. Watson notes, there is a careful structuring of the text in which balance, mirroring, and character development work in functional harmony to centralise Jane.[22] In turn, this impels the reader to sympathise with Jane, but this sympathy is unfounded. Beaty suggests that 'the reader hardly knows the Jane Rochester who has narrated her life-story', referring to the two key instances of time-shift in which large portions of her story are omitted – the 'uniform' eight year gap between her tenth and eighteenth year (p. 83), and the ten year gap between reuniting with Rochester at Ferndean and having married him (p. 448).[23] Not only her dreams – that in themselves have an eerily predictive value – but everything contained within the novel has been authorised by Jane for its significance and contribution to the plot, and so, to its end.[24] If we are to believe that Jane only included that which possessed 'some degree of interest' (p. 83), then we must question the repression and narratological marginalisation of Bertha. As Jane's 'tale draws to a close', she musters 'one brief glance at the fortunes of those whose names have most frequently recurred in this narrative' (p. 450) – all whom she encountered relegated to a footnote of her experience. Despite a haunting presence within the prime location of the text and almost derailing Jane's quest, Bertha is never mentioned. The various narrative strands have converged on its ending and been cut off – a tumour of experience that is of no use to Jane now she has achieved her goal. Bertha, 'as dead as the stones on which her brains and blood were scattered' (p. 428), confessedly had *some* significance in Jane's life – she has a strong presence within the depicted years of Jane's life – but suffers the most brutal, gruesome narratological excision. Those dialogic lenses through which we view the narrative relegates

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[19] Beaty, p. 75.

[20] Melvin R. Watson, 'Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels', in *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by Rathburn and Steinmann, Jr., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 106-117 (p. 112).

[21] Beaty, pp. 77-8.

[22] Watson, pp. 110-12, 114.

[23] Beaty, p. 76.

[24] Beaty, p. 88.

her not merely as a footnote in the unilinear sequence of the narrative, but as barely legible marginalia; a recurring symbol, 'shouting out' for identification and interpretation from the peripheries of Jane's oppressive narrative (p. 248). Jane, therefore, is complicit in the marginalisation of Bertha – after all, as a text predicated on realism, we cannot believe that in ten years of marriage the Rochesters never discussed the one thing that almost prevented this happy ending.

'The other side': postcolonial revisions of a feminist classic

Having examined the narratological marginalisation of Bertha – both as a figure in the plot and as a component of the narrative of *Jane Eyre* – we now turn, necessarily, to the unavoidable postcolonial question surrounding her maltreatment. A predominant argument for her marginalisation stems for the postcolonial perspective, yet, perhaps controversially, Wolfgang G. Müller argues that there is *no* colonial subtext in *Jane Eyre*. Instead, 'the discovery of a colonial subtext in *Jane Eyre* is only possible from a modern or post-colonial vantage point', insofar as 'modern readings […] are the result of the knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity of a later – post-colonial – period, which has learned to recognise the ideology, principles, and practices of colonialism'.[25] He goes on to contend that it is wrong to suggest Brontë's complicity with colonial assumptions, despite the fact that Jane benefits from colonialism, because 'the Victorian novel takes colonialism for granted when to our modern minds it ought to be questioned'. Modern readers, he argues, 'are bound to find such a subtext' because they read from 'another historical, epistemic, and moral perspective'.[26] If this is the case, Brontë's (post)colonial complicity extends to Jane, therefore reinforcing our argument for Jane as narratorial oppressor. From this, reading from that other perspective, we – the modern reader – now turn to consider Jean Rhys's revisionist writing of Bertha as Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as it brings in to play those postcolonial considerations as the premise for Bertha's marginalisation in *Jane Eyre*. For Rhys, a modern, postcolonial perspective would bring to the centre those 'voices that Brontë's novel pushes to the margins or out of hearing' by inviting Bertha, now Antoinette, to 'narrate her own story' and thereby undo Brontë's, *and* Jane's, 'sin' of 'narratorial omission'.[27]

Rhys's preoccupation with the marginalisation of Bertha rests upon the feminist notions of *Jane Eyre* as a text in which Bertha 'must play out her role, act the transformation of her 'self' into that fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction'.[28] In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys gives Bertha, now Antoinette, a backstory, agency, and a voice to 'the other side' (*WSS*, p. 82) – placing centre stage that 'what is 'off stage" in *Jane Eyre* and liberating what it represses.[29] On the surface, then, this rewriting of a marginal figure appears to achieve that liberation. Antoinette plays a central role in the narrative and, unlike Bertha in Jane Eyre, has a more

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[25] Wolfgang G. Müller, 'The Intertextual Status of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*: Dependence on a Victorian Classic and Independence as a Post-Colonial Novel', in *A Breath of Fresh Eyre: Intertextual and Intermedial Reworkings of 'Jane Eyre'*, ed. by Margarete Rubik and Elke Mettinger-Schartmann (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 63-79 (p. 68), *ProQuest Ebook Central*.

[26] Müller, pp. 68, 69-70.

[27] Angela Smith, 'Introduction', in *WSS*, p. viii; Kathy Mezei, "And it Kept its Secret': Narration, Memory, and Madness in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *Critique*, 28.4 (1987), 195-209 (pp. 196, 195), in *Periodicals Archive Online* <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1310172474> [Accessed 17 December 2019].

[28] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985), 243-261 (p. 251) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343469> [Accessed 17 November 2019].

[29] Sylvie Maurel, 'The Other Stage: from *Jane Eyre* to *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *Brontë Studies*, 34.2 (2009), 155-161 (p. 156) <https://doi.org/10.1179/147489309X431566> [Accessed 24 September 2020].

central presence. Certainly, as an independent textual entity, this is the case: it resists intertextual convergence by denying her gruesome end; instead opting to prefigure her conflagrative suicide through a dream and thereby drawing attention to her suffering – unlike in *Jane Eyre* where she is denied – and to her agency in her *choosing* to ignite Thornfield and jump to her death. John J. Su contends that 'Rhys leaves the reader uncertain whether or not Antoinette will in fact fulfil Bertha Mason's fate' since 'the danger of concluding the novel with the destruction of Thornfield Hall would be the perception that the act somehow ameliorates or undoes Antoinette's suffering; or worse would be the possibility of creating a certain triumphalism in the ending'.[30] This uncertainty, however, opens the door to the reality of the text on an intertextual level. Despite a certain 'aesthetic originality and independence', epitomised most clearly through that dream ending, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a 'derivative text' that would be unable to exist without its pretext, *Jane Eyre*.[31] No matter the degree of voice, agency, or backstory that Rhys supplies Antoinette with, she is inescapably destined to become marginalised. In light of this, the remainder of this essay will focus on Rhys's vain efforts to liberate Antoinette from her fate as Bertha; to demonstrate that the revised narrative of how she came to be locked away in the attic of Thornfield cannot change her outcome, even if it alters our perceptions of her. In fact, so futile were Rhys's efforts that this essay will strive to show a certain complicity with Brontë and Jane – that the oppression and marginalisation of Antoinette was manifest long before she became Bertha Mason.

Narratological inheritance: becoming Bertha

Derived from *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s Antoinette is an 'interfigural' construction of Bertha – a shared character whose renaming and rewritten narrative Rhys constructed with the intention to 'forestall the impression of a simple identity of her protagonist with Charlotte Brontë's'.[32] Not merely a prequel, Bárbara Arizti employs Gary Saul Morson's term '*paraquel*' to denote that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is 'a text 'in which one author continues or fills in the gaps in a well-known classic by another'.[33] By filling in those gaps – in Antoinette's case, the majority of her life, since we are given little information in the pretext – we are literally given 'the other side' (*WSS*, p. 82); the human side to the grovelling, snatching, growling, animal of Thornfield Hall (*JE*, p. 293). And yet, despite humane origins, neither Antoinette nor Rhys can escape from *Jane Eyre*, and as a consequence, the narrative of *Wide Sargasso Sea* comprises of the gradual marginalisation of Antoinette into the Bertha we don't really know. That intertextuality manifests the recurring Gothic subtext of *Jane Eyre* into the uncanny sense of *déjà lu* – the already read, in which the text is 'pervaded by a strong feeling of doom and predestination' and whereby 'its ending depends on the links the reader makes'.[34] The polyphony of the novel gives no authoritative version of events, so much so that there is no semblance of a unilinear sequence, as shifting perspectives and changing narrators distort the liberation that Rhys sought.[35] As a result, the overarching narrative that stretches

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[30] John J. Su, "Once I would have gone back… but not any longer': Nostalgia and Narrative Ethics in *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *Critique*, 44.2 (2003), 157-174 (pp. 169-70), in *Literature Online* <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2152733296> [Accessed 6 December 2019].

[31] Müller, pp. 63-4.

[32] Müller, pp. 63-4, 66.

[33] Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 12, cited in Bárbara Arizti, 'The Future That Has Happened: Narrative Freedom and *Déjà lu* in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*', in *A Breath of Fresh Eyre*, ed. by Rubik and Schartmann, (Amsterdam: Rodpoi, 2007), pp. 39-48 (p. 42).

[34] Arizti, p. 42; Smith, 'Introduction', in *WSS*, pp. xiv, xxii.

[35] Smith, 'Introduction', in *WSS*, p. xxii.

across and between the two texts is, ultimately, geared towards Antoinette's marginalisation – a 'trajectory that the narrative has promised to fulfil from very early on'.[36]

It is in Part One that Antoinette exhibits voice and agency, but her narrative is entangled in post-Emancipation tensions within the Caribbean setting that gradually marginalises her outside of her own backstory. The novel begins with 'They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did', immediately establishing oppositional structures that serve to marginalise Antoinette within a larger geographical context – 'we were not in their ranks' (*WSS*, p. 5). She exists, 'marooned' (p. 6), within an inter-racial marginalised stasis; a 'white nigger' (p. 10), neither native nor foreign, and so living in isolation in the former plantation of the Coulibri estate (pp. 5-19). As racial tensions boil over, an attack on the estate and the resultant conflagration pushes Antoinette and her family further away, beyond their hitherto marginalised existence. The death of her brother and madness of her mother follows (pp. 24-6), resulting in Antoinette's relocation to a convent (pp. 26-34). It is with such pace that Part One of the novel progresses and the narratorial hold Antoinette begins the novel with is taken from her before she has had the chance to find her voice – her 'sense of desertion and isolation' compound her gradually disintegrating character, corresponding with the dissipation of her narratorial lucidity.[37] In the closing pages of Part One, within the convent, Antoinette must narrate, must remember – 'Quickly, while I can' (p. 29) – in anticipation of the forthcoming narrative intervention from her soon-to-be husband, the unnamed 'Rochester'.

Lee Erwin argues that 'the shift to Rochester's voice upon their marriage suggests that Antoinette's own narrative is now ended, having reached its proper nineteenth-century conclusion [of marriage], and that his desire now drives the narrative'.[38] From within the 'refuge' of the convent (p. 31), we are thrust forward to when 'it was all over […]. Everything finished, for better or for worse' (p. 39). And yet, we still have a long way to go before Antoinette is confined to the attic of Thornfield, and so we must investigate the remnants of her voice before she is incarcerated. Kathy Mezei, in her examination of the interrelationship between Antoinette's narrative and her madness, suggests that, come the end of Part One, this narratorial shift is necessary due to the deterioration of her sanity – that 'since she is now outside herself, her story, appropriately, is told from the outside by an outsider'.[39] Whether or not her mental deterioration begins this early is not wholly relevant to our debate; the fact that she has been marginalised this early into what is supposed to be the platform for *her* voice, however, is. Antoinette is gradually pushed further from the centre of her own narrative as 'Rochester 'labors to make English sense out of this colonial confusion': she is 'driven mad by the tensions between his assumptions about her and demands on her, and her precarious sense of where she belongs' which, as becomes tragically clear, is not even in her own story.[40] Notwithstanding the brief recovery of narratorial control in the middle of Part Two (pp. 67-75), Antoinette's voice fails to significantly penetrate 'Rochester's' narration. Her brief discussion with Christophine foreshadows the narrative trajectory as she expresses her perturbance concerning the trajectory of her marriage: 'he does not love me, I think he hates me' (p. 68). Mezei argues that Part Two was Rhys's giving him 'a chance to justify himself' –

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[36] Lee Erwin, "Like in a Looking-Glass': History and Narrative in *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 22.2 (1989), 143-158 (p. 153) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1345800> [Accessed 12 December 2019].

[37] Mezei, p. 204.

[38] Erwin, p. 146.

[39] Mezei, p. 205.

[40] Laura E. Ciolkowski, 'Navigating the *Wide Sargasso Sea*: Colonial History, English Fiction, and British Empire', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 43.3 (1997), 339-359 (p. 342) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/441916> [Accessed 12 December 2019]; Smith, 'Introduction', in *WSS*, p. xiii.

'an attempt at a rational, analytic explanation of the breakdown of his marriage and of his wife' that comes to haunt the text of *Jane Eyre*.[41] But in being gifted the opportunity to give 'the other side', he forgets that 'There is always the other side, always' (p. 82). What was Antoinette's platform to 'narrate her own story'[42] – to present that 'other side' (p. 82) – becomes another exercise in her oppression and marginalisation. As 'Rochester's' narration draws to a close, we can begin to identify the Bertha in Antoinette as foreshadowing an allusion to Part Three as *Jane Eyre* escalates. 'Rochester's' drawing of a 'large', 'English house', 'surrounded by trees', within which he 'divided the third floor into rooms and in one room […] drew a standing woman – a child's scribble, a dot for a head, a larger one for the body, a triangle for a skirt, slanting lines for arms and feet' (pp. 105-6) – clearly anticipates Bertha's incarceration in the attic of Thornfield Hall. Moreover, in a narratological self-referential turn, he begins calling her Bertha – *insists* that she 'must be Bertha' – in anticipatory prefiguration of the narrative's relocation to where the reader knows to be Thornfield Hall (pp. 71, 86, 87, 94). By the time of their departure, Antoinette's identity has been stripped away, the authority of her voice oppressed; marginalised into 'silence itself' (p. 109).

Such is the extent of Antoinette's marginalisation and subsequent inability to narrate due to the disassociation of herself that Part Three – the shortest of the novel – begins from the perspective of Grace Poole, Bertha's keeper, in order to reorient the reader to the new geographical and temporal setting. It is here, locked away in where we can confidently presume to be that third-floor room of a 'large', 'English' house (pp. 105-6) – Thornfield Hall – that Antoinette, now Bertha, manages one final narratorial whimper. Whereas the taking away of Antoinette's voice at the end of Part One suggested conformity to those nineteenth-century socio-literary conventions – that is: marriage equals subjugation to the husband – Erwin refers to Rachel Blau DuPlessis in arguing:

> the subsequent return of Antoinette's voice as narrator [in Part Three] ironizes the novelistic conventions of *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s generic forebears: that is, the 'ending' of part 1, namely marriage, didn't work out, to say the least, and so the 'second moment' of Antoinette's narrative will enact the *other* endings that […] close nineteenth-century narratives about women, that is, madness and/or death.[43]

That trajectory of Antoinette's marginalisation, 'promised […] from very early on', becomes reality.[44] Locked away in the 'cardboard world' of Thornfield (p. 117), her narration is the manifestation of the disassociation of herself and metamorphosis into Bertha. Contrasting Part One, 'she now speaks in the present, digresses into the past (analepsis), and into the future through a dream (prolepsis) that foretells the events that follows after the narrative concludes, for a narrator presumably cannot describe her own death'.[45] It is here that, paradoxically, Antoinette – now Bertha – presents her 'side' (p. 82): a distorted daze of reality, mired in disassociation as she becomes the madwoman; an actuality of her marginalisation that constitutes the disintegration of humanity into 'some strange animal' that is removed from narratorial control as the text approaches intertextual narrative convergence (*JE*, p. 293). At first, she awaits 'Rochester's' return, 'but he never came' (*WSS*, p. 116). Grace Poole, 'the woman who looks after me', no longer 'trouble[s] about me' (p. 116). Of those few who near

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[41] Mezei, p. 205.
[42] Mezei, p. 196.
[43] Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), cited in Erwin, pp. 146, 153.
[44] Erwin, p. 153.
[45] Mezei, p. 207.

her room, she cannot – does not – see: 'Grace stands and talks to another woman whom I have never seen. Her name is Leah. I listen but I cannot understand what they say' (p. 117); and Richard Mason, whom she attacked but cannot remember doing so, is 'gone and he won't come back' (pp. 118-20). Marginalised from her narrative platform, disassociated from herself, and detached from the world, time for Antoinette ceases to have meaning (p. 120); what matters now 'is the sense that her future is already laid out for her and that she must remember it in order to complete her narrative'.[46]

'Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do'

On the brink of intertextual convergence, however, Rhys makes a final resistance: one final attempt to liberate Antoinette from her pretextually defined fate. Whether or not we consider this final resistance successful depends on whether we have been receptive to the voice that Rhys has provided her – whether or not 'the other side' has been conveyed convincingly so as to penetrate the gradual marginalisation of its central protagonist (p. 82); whether, unlike Jane Rochester, we have come to know Antoinette enough to warrant sympathy, or indeed, any response at all.[47] In other words, we have to decide whether the narrative voice is the dwindling consciousness of Antoinette, or if the speaker has already been subsumed into her pretextual guise, Bertha. As we will see, neither reading is right nor wrong; neither has any more weight than the other. Instead, this division demonstrates the impossibility of a conclusive, determinate identity, which ultimately functions to characterise that which we have sought to illustrate: Rhys's inadvertent complicity in the marginalisation of Antoinette/Bertha.

On the one hand, we can consider the final narrative voice as Antoinette's because she does *not* die. She resists the physical enactment of Bertha's conflagrative end in *Jane Eyre* by, instead, dreaming it, therefore making '*Jane Eyre* […] appear as the continuation of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Jean Rhys as Charlotte Brontë's precursor'.[48] Through a dream, Rhys 'allows her foresight into her future, thereby *enabling* her to actively *choose* to follow through with the narrative set out for her by Brontë's Bertha'[49] – 'Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do' (p. 124). In dreaming of setting fire to Thornfield, thus determining the course of her actions, Antoinette resists the meaninglessness of time (p. 120), and thereby resists her wait, in limbo, to enact her predetermined end in the margins of *Jane Eyre*. Therefore, 'Rhys makes her an *agent* of her own fate', allowing her 'to make the *choice* to commit suicide' and ultimately changing 'the perception of Antoinette's death'.[50] Viewed as such, the ending of the narrative conforms to its pretext on a surface level by acknowledging the inevitable fate, but otherwise rewrites the impetus for that gruesome end that awaits.[51] In defence of Antoinette, her own delineation of her forthcoming actions ties the reader into a sympathetic acceptance of the determinacy of her narrative outcome that has been foreshadowed throughout the text, and through which the intertextual relationship with *Jane Eyre*, manifest through *déjà lu*, prefigures.

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[46] Stephanie de Villiers, 'Remembering the Future: The Temporal Relationship between Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *Journal of Literary Studies*, 34.4 (2018), 48-61 (p. 57) <https://doi.org/10.1080/02564718.2018.1538079>.

[47] Beaty, p. 76.

[48] Arizti, p. 46.

[49] de Villiers, p. 57, italics in original.

[50] de Villiers, p. 59, italics in original.

[51] de Villiers, p. 57.

On the other hand, Antoinette cannot escape her fate: *Wide Sargasso Sea* cannot escape from its pretextual precedent, *Jane Eyre*, and so, this resistance to intertextual convergence presents only an *illusion* of liberation. That agency and choice with which de Villiers suggests Rhys ascribes Antoinette is, in fact, the acting upon a memory already narrated; an inverted anticipation of memory.[52] The resistance to narrative convergence – having Antoinette dream, rather than (re-)enact, Bertha's actions – echoes the foreshadowing of her demise strewn throughout the novel: Coco the parrot's 'screeching' leap, 'all on fire', echoing Bertha's conflagrative end (*WSS*, pp. 22-3; *JE*, p. 428); the burning down of the Coulibri estate echoing Thornfield's similar conflagration (*WSS*, pp. 19-24, 84, 122-124; *JE*, pp. 427-8); and the 'great many moths and beetles [that] found their way into the room, flew into the candles and fell dead on the tablecloth' reminding us that, no matter the degree of centrality she has to her narrative, her fate is inescapably sealed (*WSS*, p. 49). Indeed, 'prefiguration endows each experience of Antoinette's life with the weight of Bertha Mason's tragic fate' in such a way as to remind us that 'by the time we read Rhys's novel, *Antoinette already has suffered the same fate*'.[53] Now Bertha, characteristically locked away in Thornfield's attic – that only constitutive element that makes up her character in *Jane Eyre* – she can no longer finalise Antoinette's narrative, for she is no longer Antoinette. This final attempt to liberate Antoinette from Bertha has come too late, reminding us that 'no action can ameliorate Antoinette's suffering'[54] – 'time has no meaning' precisely because it is already determined and cannot be changed, and in the moment of the narrative, breaks down (p. 120). The 'retrospective dimension of the ending' – recalling the past through Bertha's hearing the parrot ask '*Qui est là? Qui est là?* [who is here? who is here?]', seeing the pool at Coulibri, and calling to her childhood friend, Tia, immediately before jumping and awaking (pp. 123-4) – 'contributes to distancing the novel from its pretext at the very moment when it is about to be assimilated into it', thus engendering a sort of intertextual, temporal stasis in which the narrative beckons to a past identity as Antoinette and to the future as Bertha.[55] Our narrator, then, marginalised and disassociated, has become neither Antoinette nor Bertha — no-one; that Gothic presence in the darkness; 'only a memory to be avoided, locked away' (p. 112). She has become peripheral, haunting the 'dark passage' of Thornfield Hall (p. 124), just as she does in *Jane Eyre*. Rhys couldn't rewrite Antoinette's end because 'in the realism of the novel's fictional world, this would not be plausible', yet her rewriting of the way in which the outcome of *Jane Eyre*'s narrative is depicted – 'as the convenient removal of the marginalised and silenced madwoman'[56] – is resoundingly complicit in the marginalisation of Antoinette/Bertha, who – in the impossibility of determinate identity – becomes resigned to marginality.

'Only a memory to be avoided, locked away': conclusion; the intertextual duplexity of Bertha/Antoinette's marginalisation

The chronological narrative arc across *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jane Eyre* overlaps in such a way as to make Antoinette/Bertha the fulcrum point: a central figure that, paradoxically, exists in the margins. Rhys attempts to instil perspective, origins, and agency in Antoinette before Jane (Brontë) oppresses any semblance of humanity in Bertha, yet the chronological historicism of the two texts – that is: *Jane Eyre* as the nineteenth-century

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[52] de Villiers, p. 59; Erwin, pp. 153, 154.
[53] Su, p. 168, italics in original.
[54] Su, p. 170.
[55] Müller, p. 75.
[56] de Villiers, p. 58.

precursor to the twentieth-century *Wide Sargasso Sea* – imposes limitations within the narrative's chronology. As a result, no matter the extent to which Rhys tries to undo the marginalisation of Bertha in Jane's quest for love, personhood, and independence, she must accept complicity in that marginalisation. Rhys's novel delineates Antoinette's metamorphosis into Bertha within the temporal overlap with *Jane Eyre* – those nine pages (excluding Grace Poole's brief introduction) of Part Three of *Wide Sargasso Sea* constitutes Bertha's entire peripheral existence in *Jane Eyre* – which inadvertently reiterates the narratorial oppression employed by Jane in her dedication to achieving her happy ending. Having been marginalised out of existence, it is only through marginalising her in our discourse – to, instead, concentrate on and expose the workings of both narratives, narrators, and authors – that the true extent of Antoinette/Bertha's marginalisation is revealed. In doing so, we must accept that she will always be marginal – 'only a memory to be avoided, locked away, and like all memories a legend' (*WSS*, p. 112) – and so destined to always return to the battlements of Thornfield Hall, 'waving her arms' and 'shouting out' in one final, futile effort to communicate 'the other side' (*JE*, p. 248; *WSS*, p. 82).

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'To be or not to be': Possible Worlds, Hypothetical Focalisation, and the Blurring of Boundaries between Reality and Fantasy in Ian McEwan's *Nutshell*.

Naomi Adam

0. Abstract.

This paper undertakes a stylistic exploration of British postmodernist author Ian McEwan's 2016 novel *Nutshell*. It harnesses the ontologically-based possible worlds theory alongside complementary point-of-view frameworks, in order to examine the novel's unconventional narrative viewpoint and the resultant blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy throughout the novel. Indeed, so 'singular' is the narrative viewpoint adopted that it is argued that *Nutshell* reveals revisions to current stylistic frameworks to be warranted. The seminal formulations of point-of-view scholars like Genette and Fowler simply do not cater for so perspectively innovative a novel. Even Herman's subsequent amendments to focalisation theories require refining in relation to the novel; his brainchild of hypothetical focalisation does not quite tally with the stylistic features that *Nutshell* displays. Consequently, I propose the existence of a subset of hypothetical focalisation: *assured hypothetical focalisation*.

1. Introduction.

'So here I am, upside down in a woman.'[1]

Thus begins Ian McEwan's 2016 novel *Nutshell*. An initially baffling sentence, it is soon elucidated by the revelation of its somewhat unconventional narrator: an intelligent, 'introspective' (as per the blurb) full-term foetus.[2] So unusual a viewpoint – and it has been deemed 'singular' and 'oddly ridiculous' by nonetheless enthralled critics – necessarily makes for a narrative rich in potential for stylistic analysis.[3] Therefore, taking a stylistic standpoint, this paper will seek to explore the interplay of possible worlds within the novel, a narrative feature which allows for the blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy. A possible

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[1] Ian McEwan, *Nutshell*, (London: Vintage, 2016), p. 1. All subsequent page-numerical references to quotations from the text are to this edition, and will be included in parentheses within the body of the essay.

[2] As an unnamed protagonist, throughout this paper the fetus will be referred to simply as 'the fetus,' or with a generic masculine pronoun.

[3] Michael W. Miller, 'Ian McEwan on *Nutshell* and its Extraordinary Narrator,' *Wall Street Journal*, 29 August 2016. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ian-mcewan-on-nutshell-and-its-extraordinary-narrator-1472491905>, [accessed 16 March 2018]; Ron Charles, 'Ian McEwan's Nutshell: A tale of betrayal and murder as told by a fetus,' *Washington Post*, 12 September 2016. p. 37. See also Tim Adams, 'Nutshell by Ian McEwan review- A tragic hero in the making,' *The Guardian*, 30 August 2016.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/30/nutshell-ian-mcewan-review-hamlet-foetus>, [accessed 13 January 2020]; Emily Donaldson, 'Ian McEwan's Nutshell, narrated, with great fun, by a fetus,' *Toronto Star*, 11 September 2016. p. 30. <http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2016/09/11/ian-mcewans-nutshell-narrated-with-great-fun-by-a-fetus>, [accessed 10 January 2020]; Carol Iaciofano, 'Ian McEwan's Modern Hamlet Hears Everything- From His Mother's Womb- In 'Nutshell,' *WBUR.org*. <http://www.wbur.org/artery/2016/09/13/nutshell-ian-mcewan>, [accessed 10 January 2020].

worlds theory that is based in ontology will consequently also be harnessed in order to explore this interplay.

Nutshell charts a couple's conspiracy to murder an inconvenient yet innocent reminder of their adulterous betrayal: respectively their ex-husband, or brother, John. Said victim is in turn father to the narrating foetus, whilst the scheming duo are the foetus' mother, Trudy, and uncle, Claude. As both plotline and nominals imply (Claude maps to Claudius, Trudy to Gertrude) this is a modern remastering of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, albeit with a protagonist concealed not behind an arras but in an embryonic sac.[4] This foetus, as the author has stated in an interview, 'overhears everything, sees nothing:'[5] he relies most heavily upon his least restricted sense, that of hearing. As a narrator he is clearly, in Gregoriou's formulation, 'non-standard,' one with a distinctly restricted viewpoint.[6] Despite this, he does not slot easily into any of the categories – 'cognitively impaired, psychologically primitive or emotionally troubled' – that she proceeds to elaborate.[7] His primitive age does not correspond to mental primitiveness; instead he is best described as sensorially impaired.[8] To combat his claustrophobia and increasingly cramped conditions, he engages in speculative hypotheses – what he terms 'exercise[s] of the imagination' (35) – about events in the 'outside' world. Furthermore, not only does he fictionalise scenarios, but he also engages in unabashed hypothesising about the thoughts and feelings of others. This results in a complex intermingling of fact and fiction, certainty and speculation, reality and fantasy. In the foetus' own estimation, it 'create[s] the illusion of a known world' (1). Similarly complex is the resultant layering of possible worlds within the narrative discourse. It is to a brief explication of this literary-philosophical theory, alongside the related notion of narrative focalisation, particularly of the hypothetical variant, that this paper will now turn.

2. Literature Review.

2.1. Possible Worlds Theory.

Initially a philosophical concept originating with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz in the seventeenth century, it has more recently been harnessed as a framework for literary analysis.[9] The most significant instance of its narratological application can be found in the seminal 1991 work of Marie-Laure Ryan, entitled *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*.[10] In the monograph, she elucidates how a narrative may be viewed as a configuration of 'possible worlds' centred around a superordinate Text-actual World,

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[4] As the ghost of the king in *Hamlet*, the character to which the fetus' father corresponds, remains unnamed in the original, he gains the prototypical Everyman's name in the novel: John. His 'Cairncross' surname, meanwhile, hints at his impending demise, composed as it is of two morphemes pertaining to a lexical set of death.

[5] Miller, n.p.

[6] Christiana Gregoriou, *English Literary Stylistics*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 73.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4.

[8] Indeed, the narrator states: 'My head, as well as my thoughts, are fully engaged.' (2) For a prototypical example of this advanced cognitive ability, see the existential musings which comprise Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy in foetal form (2-3).

[9] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, *Essays on Theodicy: of God's Goodness, Man's Freedom and the Origins of Evil*, trans. by E. M. Hubbard, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001 [1710]).
On the history of possible worlds in literary studies, see Alice Bell, *The Possible Worlds of Hypertext Fiction*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[10] Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

otherwise known as the 'reality' of the fiction. This is of course complicated by the denotation of *fiction*: itself a polysemous noun, it is by its very definition counterfactual, distinct from reality.[11] Hence the scare quotes are necessary to establish that there are in fact two realities: that of the (fictional) narrative, and that of our 'real' world.[12] Nonetheless, the orbiting 'possible world' satellites of the Text-actual World can be seen as diverging even further from reality, both of the narrative and non-narrative variety. Throughout her work, Ryan dubs them, collectively, as 'Alternate Possible Worlds.' They comprise the following: the Epistemic World; the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World; the Obligation World; the Intention World; the Wish World; the Fantasy World; the Hypothesis World; the Prediction World.[13] To clarify the varying ontological statuses of the world-types outlined above, I provide a diagrammatical representation in the Appendix.[14] The figure also demonstrates how the various worlds interconnect, as well as which worlds are of particular relevance to this article.

In *Nutshell*, three main possible world-types interconnect with the Text-actual World to achieve its ontological mutability. The world-types in question are 1, 2, and 6: the Epistemic World, the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World, and the Fantasy World. The first of these worlds denotes the Text-actual World as viewed through the prism of the narrating consciousness, therefore accommodating potentially erroneous beliefs as well as facts. The second extends this world into the future domain, and covers what the narrator (here, the foetus) believes could happen in the future. It encompasses 'things the characters anticipate' that may well happen in their Text-actual future.[15] The final world-type refers to the dreams, visions, fantasies, or hallucinations of the narrating consciousness – in short, any fictive scenario within the fiction.[16] Yet *Nutshell*'s foetus does not only harness these worlds – he confounds them, leading to an often disorienting reading experience. Through linguistic manipulation, the boundaries between distinct world-types are conflated, allowing for a blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy.

Through micro-scale linguistic and stylistic analysis, this essay will explore the novel's ontological and perspectival deviance using three key extracts, a trio of examples designed to align with the three possible-world types identified above as key to the novel. Not only does the interplay of these three distinct world-types mitigate against a novel perspectivally stymied by the narrator's uterine incarceration, it also leads to the blurring of the boundaries between fantasy and reality throughout. The following sub-section will briefly sketch key theories in the related field of point-of-view studies, in order to situate the aforementioned 'unconventional' status of *Nutshell's* foetal narrator. It is just this unconventionality that warrants the theoretical amendments I go on to suggest in this paper.

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[11] Anthony J. Sanford and Catherine Emmott, *Mind, Brain, and Narrative*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. Ch. 3.

[12] Scare quotes are also necessary here, for there is metaphysical debate as to how real our world (the Actual World in possible worlds terminology) is. Ryan, Ch. 5, provides a succinct overview of the anti-realist, moderate realist, and modal realist camps in relation to this ongoing discussion.

[13] The capitalisation of world-types throughout this paper reflects the planetary analogy developed by Ryan, as well as adhering to the typography of subsequent possible worlds scholars.

[14] See below, Fig. 1.

[15] Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 93.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 94.

2.2. Point of View, Hypothetical Focalisation, and Counterfactual Narratives.

According to Wales' dictionary of stylistic terminology, point-of-view embraces 'the angle of vision or perception from which events are narrated and information are presented' in a narrative. Wales continues to differentiate between two distinct, but potentially overlapping concepts: that of the narrator and the focaliser.[17] Whilst the narrator *tells* the story, it is through the focaliser that the reader *sees* the events unfolding. These concepts may converge (as they often do in *Nutshell*) or they may be distinct (as also evidenced in the novel). This essay will make use of the basically synonymous terms 'reflector of fiction,' 'focaliser,' and 'origo,'[18] when referring to the latter category, and 'narrator,' or 'narrative voice' in relation to the first. Of particular interest in this novel is the reliance of the narrative voice upon other characters as focaliser, due to its impeded senses.

Theorists have also more finely delineated the overarching category of 'narrator.' In his seminal *Narrative Discourse* (1980), Genette established the binary distinction between the heterodiegetic (outside the text) and homodiegetic (text internal) narrator, and it is to the latter of the categories that the foetal incarnation of Hamlet belongs, for he is a presence in the novel as well as narrator.[19] However, and of special relevance to this particular narrative, Genette further divides the category of homodiegetic narration into two, a strong (autodiegetic) and a weak type. The foetus typifies a weak homodiegetic narrator, a witness to events, 'a mere bystander' as opposed to the hero of his own narrative.[20] The paradigm of Fowler is also of interest in this instance.[21] Like Genette, he distinguishes between the external (heterodiegetic) narrator, and internal (homodiegetic) narrator, further differentiating these categories by splitting each one in two. Thus are established four, distinct, narrative 'types:' type A, mimetic; type B, omniscient; type C, impersonal; and type D, estranged and critical. Type A and type B both access the thoughts and feelings of the narrative's characters, yet whilst A has a subjective, first-person narrative stance, B has a third-person narration that allows for the accessing of multiple characters' perspectives. Type C is the most impersonal, difficult to find in what Simpson deems a 'pure' form, and exemplified by both Simpson and Fowler in the reportage style used by Hemingway.[22] The final type, D, emphasises an act of interpretation of the character's thoughts and feelings, based largely upon their appearance, characteristics and gestures. This means that through the technique of 'one character observing another,' the reader can deduce pertinent information about them.[23] Narrators utilising this type are often implicitly or overtly critical about the characters they observe, presenting them ludicrously as aliens or caricatures.

With regard to focalisation, the tripartite classification of Genette is still the basic reference point for critics. This distinguishes between internal focalisation (subjective), external focalisation (restricted), and zero focalisation (omniscient). Meanwhile, Simpson's attenuated focalisation, in which narrative viewpoint is 'momentarily restricted', may be deemed a subordinate category of the latter type. A more pressing addendum, however, is

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[17] Katie Wales, *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, 3rd edn., (London: Longman, 2011) p. 306.

[18] This term places more emphasis upon spatial perspective than the other two.

[19] Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1980).

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

[21] Roger Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 127-47.

[22] Paul Simpson, *Language, Ideology and Point of View*, (London: Routledge, 1994); Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism*.

[23] Fowler, p. 142.

that of hypothetical focalisation, an inexplicable critical oversight noted by David Herman. Indeed, he deems it 'a significant omission' from previous studies of focalisation.[24] This fervour is justified, borne out not only by the subjective remarks of other theorists, but by a quantitative lack of quality research on the subject.[25] The hypothetical focaliser conjures 'what might be or have been seen or perceived,' had a witness to events been available.[26] As Currie acknowledges, this type of focaliser dovetails well with possible worlds theory,[27] in particular aligning with the Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World, and the Fantasy World, both of which, as identified above, are integral to the novel *Nutshell*. Simpson's discussion of counterfactual narratives espouses similarities to both of these possible worlds, but is limited as it fails to acknowledge differences between the likelihood of different discoursal worlds occurring in Text-actual reality.[28] The paradigms of Stockwell and Ryan, in contrast, explicitly differentiate between worlds in this regard. Stockwell, for example, defines the Fantasy World as being of a relatively low likelihood, especially in comparison to the more probable Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World.[29] Considering both largely address configurations of future events, this is a pertinent comparison, particularly in relation to the focus of this paper.

Nevertheless, what the theories of hypothetical focalisation, possible worlds and counterfactual narratives all share is the realisation that weak epistemic modality is the primary characteristic of identification, often accompanied by the future conditional tense. This includes modal auxiliaries, like 'may,' 'might,' or 'could,' to highlight weak epistemic modality, as well as modal lexical verbs ('think', 'know') and modalising locutions, typified by phrases including 'it appeared,' 'as if,' or 'it seemed,' within the narrative.[30] What I hope to show is that even Herman's amendments to focalisation theories requires refining in relation to this innovative novel. In doing so, I will adopt a 'steam stylistic' approach, as advocated by Stewart-Shaw: this introspective linguistic technique, a variant of close reading, involves micro-scale analysis of textual extracts in an attempt to elucidate a novel's larger thematics.[31]

3. Extract 1: The Epistemic World.[32]

This passage features the narrator's mother, Trudy, informing her lover, Claude, of the success of their conspiracy to murder the foetus' father, John Cairncross. Its most striking feature is the use of three separate characters as focaliser, a result of which is the blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy. Initially, it is the (restricted) perspective of the

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[24] David Herman, 'Hypothetical Focalisation,' *Narrative*, 2, (1994), 230-53. (p. 230).

[25] Elena Semino, Mick Short and Martin Wynne, 'Hypothetical Words and Thoughts in Contemporary British Narratives,' *Narrative*, 7, (1999), 307-334. A brief search on the scholarly database JStor can confirm this deficit. Whilst the string 'internal focalisation' elicits 252 results for related articles and/ or reviews, 'external focalisation' has 203 hits, and 'zero focalisation' 122. 'Hypothetical focalisation,' meanwhile, has a lowly 54 Search results true as of 31/01/2019.

[26] Herman, p. 231.

[27] Mark Currie, *The Unexpected: Narrative Temporality and the Philosophy of Surprise*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 99-101.

[28] Paul Simpson, 'Point of View,' in. *Language and Style*, ed. by Dan McIntyre and Beatrix Busse, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 293-310.

[29] Stockwell, pp. 93-4.

[30] Herman, pp. 230-33; Paul Simpson, *Stylistics*, (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 300.

[31] On this somewhat facetious term, see Lizzie Stewart-Shaw, 'The Cognitive Poetics of Horror Fiction', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham, 2017), p. 10.

[32] Due to the extended length of this textual extract, it is included in the Appendix.

foetus that is privileged. This is made clear through the proximal dynamic verb 'advancing,' in conjunction with the adjunct 'on,' which renders movement towards the figure of Claude by the foetal origo. Temporally, the scene is being simultaneously experienced and narrated, as established by the instantaneous present tense, and the immediate deictic adverb 'Now' used in the passage's latter half. This conceit results in the effect of increased readerly immersion in the scene. Also indicating that the focaliser is the restricted foetus is the appositional characterisation of Claude as 'a bell-curve of sound baffled by bedclothes.' For it emphasises the auditory element, concurrent with the foetus' 'best sense,' as it personifies Claude as a receptacle of noise, as well as highlighting restriction in the verb. Moreover, the bilabial plosive alliteration in evidence only serves to foreground the primacy of the audial. For the foetus gleans the majority of its information through eavesdropping; he states 'I have my sources, I *listen*' (4) to defend his otherwise implausible omniscience. In this regard, there are also echoes of Polonius' fatherly imperative in Hamlet: 'Listen to many, speak to few' (1, 3, 55) he councils his son.[33] Meanwhile, as the 'rising volume' of snores 'announces' a proximity to Claude, not any visual referent, it is further clear that the foetal viewpoint is being privileged. Indeed, throughout there is an auditory semantic field, including the onomatopoeic 'purr,' 'groan,' and 'moan.' Even the absence of sound is used by the foetus to make deductions, as in 'Trudy sits in silence [...] It's brewing.' This sense, as established above, is the only one the foetus can truly rely upon, explaining its repeated reference in the passage. In the terminology of Fowler, he is overlexicalised in this area.[34] Wales concludes that this linguistic state 'occurs when a particular concept [is] of vital concern to a culture;'[35] here, hearing is 'vital' to the foetus as it is his only unimpeded sense. When the foetus employs an auditory simile- 'he coughs into life like his brother's car'- it is also related to a sound he himself has previously heard. This represents the application of a sound schema from his idiosyncratic frame of reference, necessarily limited due to his age and restricted, uterine location. Reviewers have similarly noted this overreliance upon the auditory field. Iaciofano, for example, notes 'his whole universe is built on sounds.'[36] This remark is not, however, intended to disparage: it merely reflects what she views as a *bravura* narrative adjustment by the author, necessitated by a deictically restricted focaliser. Indeed, in many of the novel's passages, as with the initial section of Extract 1 below, the dominance of auditory elements suggests that Nelles' terminological framework for focalisation may be more apt than those reviewed above.[37] Rejecting the visual bias inherent in the word focalisation, Nelles identifies five distinct focalisation sub-types, stratified in relation to the specific sense being privileged at any one point within the narrative. The corresponding lexeme here, reflecting the auditory semantic field, would thus be *ocularisation*. It is perhaps most accurate to describe (at least) the first paragraph of the passage below as being *ocularised*, not focalised, by the foetus.

Thus far, all described is verifiable to the foetus, part of a tangible world of reality: his Epistemic World. However, reliance upon a solitary sense, and consequent attenuation of

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[33] William Shakespeare, *The RSC Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[34] Fowler, p. 133.

[35] Wales, p. 284.

[36] As the concluding remark to her 2016 review, it is additionally foregrounded, see n.3 above.

[37] William Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narratives*, (Frankfurt: Lang, 1997).

viewpoint, is not a constant feature of the passage. As will be explored below, the foetus is soon overreaching his own, unavoidably limited, knowledge frame.

As the passage continues, the foetus makes so many assured speculations as to the mind-state of Trudy and Claude as to adopt them as reflectors of fiction. For example, the rhetorical 'Has he breathed his last?' could be taken as an indication of uncertainty on behalf of the foetus, alongside a probable hopefulness that this is true of his dastardly uncle. Yet, conversely, it may also be taken as a free direct thought representation of Trudy's viewpoint: an indication of panic, paranoia, and a deteriorating mental state having discovered the death of her former spouse, John. This would then dissociate the sense of doubt from the foetus, instead assigning it to Trudy. Meanwhile, the subsequent adverb 'finally' suggests an element of subjective perception, and, as in this context it expresses relief that Claude is alive, it is much more likely to be part of a free indirect expression of Trudy's thoughts. This argument is given weight by the personal pronoun combined with *verba sentiendi* in the declarative statement 'she needs to share their success,' which definitively adopts Trudy as the reflector of the fiction. Either due to his close physical proximity to his mother, or the extended timespan they have shared a body, the foetus feels qualified to ventriloquise her thoughts. However, he also takes the liberty of presupposing the mind of Claude, using him as an additional focaliser. Clearly, no justification can be given for the remarkable assuredness he displays in doing so. It is through instances like this that the boundaries between reality, and speculative fantasy, are blurred. This is exemplified in the sentence fragment 'Truly dead?,' a mimicry of the mind-state of the newly-awakened. Similarly, the duo of interjections – 'Ah, yes –' represent Claude 'catching up to' events. Meanwhile, in a subtle use of Uspensky's phraseological point of view plane, naming strategies are used to further underline the shifting viewpoint.[38] John is no longer 'my father' (as he indeed reverts back to later in the passage) but 'my brother:'readerly attention is focused upon Claude, whilst the familial nominal only compounds his betrayal.

Notably, this passage is resistant to the rigid classification system of Fowler's 'types,' as discussed above. Indeed, its characteristics suggest a total of three of the possible four categories. The foetus narrates in first person, and makes subjective, evaluative comments, as in 'Grandiose, in a corrupted romantic style, to my newly-formed ear'. These are clear indications of a type A narrative. Yet this sentence continues 'redemptive orchestral poetry to Claude's,' indicating that the intimate thoughts and feelings of more than one character are displayed – a characteristic of type B narratives. For each of the three characters in this extract are assigned verbs of cognition: the foetus, for example, with 'I know,' Trudy with 'She needs,' and Claude with 'he feels,' as it moves between them as reflectors of fiction. Yet crucially, unlike in Fowler's estimation, it is not a third-person narrative. Sentences of narrative report of action, or direct speech, may pass ostensibly in third person, but then the first-person narrator intrudes again, as in his 'She means my father's fedora' clarification.

Meanwhile, elements of type D also correspond to the passage. Due to the type A and B qualities present, especially the consistent use of verbs of perception, the passage admittedly does not achieve an alienating distance between the narrator and the characters

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[38] On Uspensky's four point-of-view planes, see Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The structure of the artistic text and a typology of composition*, trans. by Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig, (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1973).

observed. What the passage does is 'emphasise an act of interpretation' in certain aspects of the character's behaviour; from Claude's whistling the declarative statement 'He's happy' is deduced. Similarly, Trudy's impatience is presumed from her rough shaking of Claude's shoulder. Notable in these instances, however, is the certainty with which the foetus presents what are really only assumptions. Epistemic operators are lacking; it is not 'He's *probably* happy,' or 'She *may* be impatient, because her touch on his shoulder isn't gentle.' Instead, the foetus presents these conjectures assuredly, as if they are fact. In each of the three passages under discussion, for ease of analysis of the foetus' relative levels of certainty, sections highlighting instances of doubt have been rendered in italics. In this particular passage, this includes the clause 'so the complaining mattress says,' and the final sentence fragment of the passage. Yet as both these instances are post-posed displays of doubt, the effect is that the reader first treats the declarative statements that precede them as fact only afterwards recalibrating them to be speculation. For it may be counterintuitive, but even in the Epistemic World speculation is present, a consequence of the necessarily restricted viewpoint of the foetus. This does not, however, detract from the classification of this passage as from the Epistemic World: this world encompasses, in the formulation of Stockwell, both what the character knows and 'believes to be true' about their surroundings.[39] The foetus may take perspectival liberties, but they are based upon evidence he interprets from (his limited) reality. Meanwhile, it is clear that the limitation of knowledge inherent to type D, instinctively at odds with the omniscient narrator of type B, met in this passage, as reasoned deductions are made about the thoughts and motivations of characters. As the foetus more often than not presents these speculations with assurance, the passage leans more towards type B than type D classification, alongside including elements of type A. Meanwhile, his brand of presumptive, hypothetical reality is presented as if it is definitive reality. The following excerpt, despite shading even further towards hypothetical conjecture, likewise presents a veneer of definitive reality.

4. Extract 2: The Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World.

> To divert myself I send my thoughts ahead to spy on them. *Purely* an exercise of *the imagination*. *Nothing here is real*. […] It sits between them on the desk, five thousand pounds in filthy fifties, five odorous heaps of script. To each side are poetry books and typescripts loosely piled, sharpened pencils, and two glass ashtrays, well filled, a bottle of Scotch, a gentle Tomintoul with an inch remaining, a crystal tumbler, a dead fly on its back inside, several aspirins lying on an unused tissue. Squalid marks of honest toil. *My guess is this*. My father has never understood his younger brother. Never thought it worth the sweat. And John doesn't like a confrontation. His gaze won't meet the money on the desk. It wouldn't occur to him to explain that returning home to be with wife and child is all he wants. (35-6; my italics.)

As indicated, this excerpt is a figment of the foetal narrator's 'imagination,' his conjuring of the scenario he knows will soon take place. His property developer of an uncle is about to offer a substantial amount of money as a loan to his father, John; as the foetus knows Trudy will not be there as witness, he projects what will happen, an event both spatially and temporally remote, as indicated by the distal deictic 'ahead' of the first sentence. The neutral

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[39] Stockwell, p. 94.

locative expressions 'between them,' and 'to each side' suggest that the foetus has adopted authorial omniscience, along with an elevated bird's-eye position, or 'floating viewpoint' that often accompanies this.[40] There then follows a multisensorial description of the imagined scene. There is an evocation of the olfactory, in 'odorous' notes, and visual detail abounds — note the precision of the post-modification in the phrase 'typescripts loosely piled.' No longer limited to his (acute) sense of hearing, the whole gamut of senses is utilised, with the extract displaying olfactivisation, auricularisation, and ocularisation, in Nelles' formulation.[41] This is clearly an instance of hypothetical focalisation. Due to the futuristic aspect of the events depicted, it can be categorised as a 'what might be' scenario if a witness to events were available. Notably, even if the events here had been experienced directly, they would have been mediated through 'confinement' (1) in Trudy: he would have been blinkered, and unable to attest to the detail he describes. What is marked about this excerpt is the lack of epistemic modality to indicate uncertainty, as attested by the sparse italicization above. After the initial caveat, statements are (largely) presented as fact through unmodalised categorical verbs. The passage thus exudes a high level of certainty: 'unmodalised categorical perceptions are always strongest'[42] in relation to certainty. When modals are used, they are strong variants in relation to the 'spectrum' of certainty and doubt. '[W]ould' is employed, not *could*, *may*, or *might*. Even this negligible display of uncertainty is largely overruled by the certainty of the surrounding unmodalised sentences. Meanwhile, the most common modal auxiliary of the passage in full is 'will' (often employed in its contracted form), marker of a high level of certainty and commitment to factuality. 'He'll go on with the only work that matters [...] won't look up until six [...] he'll tip the fly from the tumbler,' (37-8) the foetus predicts with assurance.

The wilful manipulation of reality by the foetus is evident in the subjectivity of the passage. One character (John) receives marked preferential treatment over the other (Claude). Towards the latter part of the extract, he is even briefly adopted as the reflector of fiction, an innovation that encourages the reader to align with him. Here, the *verba sentiendi* John is assigned, including 'thought,' 'understood,' and 'occurred to,' mark him as cerebral in comparison to the banal Claude. The partiality of the passage, slanted in favour of John, continues in the presence of value-laden adjectives. While the negative 'odorous' and 'filthy' map metonymically to Claude through the money he offers as bribery, John is linked to the positively valent 'honest.' He is also assigned the admirable quality of disliking confrontations. The foetus even presumes that his father is not financially oriented and will reject the money offered to him in favour of a relationship with his wife and child. Later subtly segueing into adopting John as focaliser, the narrating foetus omits the possessive pronoun in the nominal phrase to anchor the narrative viewpoint more firmly to John. A reunion with wife and child is both supposed to be, and presented as, John's ideal. Ironically, however, the foetus' faith is misplaced, for John does take the money. The later discovery of the foetus that events have diverged from his speculative extensions illustrates well the true ontological status of this extract. The 'things the characte[r] anticipate[d]' have not come to pass, for all was, at root, hypothesis, despite the veneer of certainty presented through deft linguistic manipulation. Speculative Extensions to the Epistemic World, as noted above, are nonetheless more solidly

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[40] Simpson, 1994, p. 63.

[41] Nelles, esp. p. 153.

[42] Gregoriou, p. 70.

grounded in fact and likelihood than those of the Fantasy World. Many of the events presented in Extract 2 do, in Text-actual reality, occur: John is greeted at his office by his devious brother Claude, proffering substantial sums of money to provide his later denial of murder more plausibility. What does not dovetail is the idealistic (free indirect) representation of John's thoughts, a presumed fondness for his family. He chooses to take the money with little regard for his unborn child. Perhaps it is more accurately deemed as a Wish World embedded within a Speculative Extension to the Epistemic World: after all, it conveys what the narrating consciousness desires to happen, not how events actually pan out. Much like Simpson's 'counterfactual narratives' it presents 'an outcome which is preferred over and at odds with' Text-actuality.[43] Furthermore, Ryan's typology does allow for the embedding of worlds within worlds.[44] Nonetheless, the above passage is ontologically much closer to reality, much more viable, than a narrative episode that follows later. This is the focus of the third and final extract, an instance which typifies a Fantasy World.

5. Extract 3: The Fantasy World.

Footsteps on the stairs. Trudy and Claude look up, startled. *Has* the inspector found a way into the house*? Has* a burglar chosen the worst of all nights*?* This is a slow, heavy descent. They see black leather shoes, then a belted waist, a shirt stained with vomit, then a terrible expression, both blank and purposeful. [...] Now he stands at the foot of the stairs, *taller than we remember him*. He's come from the mortuary to find us and knows exactly what he wants. I'm shaking because my mother is. (186-7; my italics)

The above-quoted passage is the most striking instance in the novel of a Fantasy World created by the foetus (As with Extract 2, it has been excerpted from a larger reverie [186-8]). Converging with the source text *Hamlet*, the murdered John Cairncross appears as an apparition, albeit a fictionalised one from the foetus' imagination. It can again be viewed as a counterfactual narrative, one now even further divorced from reality. It correlates once more to Simpson's criteria, being an expression of what the character wants to happen, but an event unlikely to be realised in the Text-actual World.[45] For the foetus explicitly states 'I'm asking myself, what it is that I most want now' (186, note the *boulomaic* verb). Initially, it may seem somewhat perplexing that the sinister scenario depicted in the text could be constituted a 'desired' scenario. However, in the foetal origo's estimation, the appearance of a Cairncross ghoul would bring retribution to the couple who successfully plotted his murder. Yet it is devoid of many of the features Simpson associates with these narratives.[46] Instead of adopting the future conditional, for example, there is an upkeep of the instantaneous present tense. This places the fantastical excerpt on a parallel plane to those depicting Text-actual events. The proximal temporal adverb 'Now' foregrounds this, especially due to its sentence-first positioning. As noted by Currie, modality is intrinsically linked to the concepts of tense and time, and the present tense corresponds to the highest level of certainty, with the future as yet unestablished, the past potentially forgotten or misremembered.[47] Its inclusion, then, is

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[43] Simpson, 2010, p. 300.
[44] Ryan, p. 119.
[45] Simpson, 2010, p. 300-01.
[46] Simpson, 2010.
[47] Currie, p. 111.

another means of presenting fantasy as if reality. Also notably lacking, as in Extract 2, are the epistemic modals said to characterise hypothetical focalisation, to create a sense of *could* not *will* happen. No modal verbs feature to 'tie it down' to any particular level of factivity. Instead, disorienting the reader, the juncture between reality and fantasy is barely marked. Yet while linguistic triggers all suggest continuity, in the context of the postmodern, realist novel, the ghost is a discoursal implausibility.

Focally, the scenario begins as from the perspective of Trudy and Claude, the guilt-ridden murderers; there is then a viewpoint shift back to the perspective of the foetus. The binary set of pronouns clearly indicates this, as the third person 'They' transfers to the first person 'us' and 'we.' It is then through Trudy and Claude's eyes that we first 'see' the ghost. Note the verb of perception here, a licence taken by a foetus who cannot see the outer world. The foetus also has no awareness of colour,[48] making the pre-modification of 'black leather shoes' an observation outside his blinkered bounds of knowledge. The sequencing of information, as the ghost appears in disjointed segments in parallel, co-ordinated clauses, is also key in conveying their perspective. Event coding, as signalled by the repeated, clause initial 'then,' mimics what Trudy and Claude would perceive descending the steps. Staccato syntax parallels the 'ghost's' staccato movements. Describing the duo as 'startled,' meanwhile, unobtrusively presumes privileged access to their inner, emotive state. The two rhetorical questions are of special interest in relation to point of view. As expressions of free direct thought, the least mediated variant available on the discourse presentation cline,[49] they affect direct access to the characters' subjective and idiosyncratic perspectives. Yet are they to be read as the workings of the foetus' mind, or, alternatively, as Trudy and Claude's thoughts? In this instance, following as they do the locative expression 'up' and the post-modifying 'startled' which both relate to Trudy and Claude, they are best interpreted as their thoughts, not the thoughts of the foetal narrator. Far from asserting his presence (as in Extract 1 with the 'she means my father' clarification), here the foetus attempts to background himself, allowing the viewpoints of Trudy and Claude to direct the discourse. Whilst characters are unaware of what will happen next, so too are narrator and reader.

However, as in Extract 1, the foetus cannot tamp down his own (subjective) perspective for long. Following the privileging of Trudy and Claude's perspective, there is a lapse back into first person. The foetus regains the position of both narrator and focaliser. There is the cognitive verb in 'we remember,' whilst the ghost has 'come' (proximal) for 'us' (collective first person). Problematically, however, the foetus in this extract seems to 'remember' aesthetic details beyond his cognition. The comparative 'taller' in relation to John's height is aesthetic information the restricted foetus could not possibly attest to Text-actually. '[W]e remember' could be an instance of the foetus using the figurative 'royal we,' and granting himself access to Trudy's thoughts due to their prolonged physical contact. Conversely, it could be the foetus acting as reporter of the simultaneous thought processes of Trudy and Claude, in fear of the ethereal spectre. Yet this would clash with the overall pattern of the narrative, in which the foetus reserves third-person pronouns for characters when he adopts them as focalisers. (See, for example, Extract 2, and the first half of Extract 3.) It is therefore most likely that this lapse functions as the single clue that the whole passage is mere

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[48] See, for example, the fetus' ruminations on blue and green, and golden (pp. 1 and 147, respectively).
[49] Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction*, (Harlow: Pearson, 1981).

conjecture. Otherwise, there is little discrepancy between this hallucinatory episode, an undoubted instance of a Fantasy World, and the preceding and successive paragraphs. Once more, linguistic 'sleights of hand'[50] enable what is mere fantasy to be portrayed as text-actual reality.

6. Conclusion.

'Life's most limiting truth- it's always here, always now, never then or there.' (35)

The lie in this epigraph has been revealed through the foregoing analysis. Through combining a 'steam' stylistic introspection[51] with the literary-philosophical notion of possible worlds, a range of different possible world-types have demonstrated that the foetus does not in fact limit himself to the 'here [and] now.' Instead, he overreaches his necessarily restricted knowledge innovatively, particularly through linguistic manipulation. It may be a novel that is overwhelmingly hypothetical and subjective in its presentation of Text-actual reality, but there is a distinct lack of the weak epistemic modality that would be expected to highlight this. The foetus has learnt, as attested throughout the novel, to make confident and cognisant hypotheses, both about possible scenarios, and the thoughts and feelings of characters around him. The reader must therefore be attuned to the most minute, momentary lapses of certainty to identify the scenario as hypothetical. In fact, I suggest his ontological wrangling is so distinct as to warrant slight modification to existing terminology in order to precisely delineate the specific type of focalisation employed in the novel. It is more of a subset of hypothetical focalisation – *assured* hypothetical focalisation – characterised not by 'what might be, or what might have been,' but what *is* or *will be* 'seen or perceived' by those who can. This allows the unconventional (foetal) narrative stance to be maintained throughout, without stymying the novel's plot, or limiting it to a series of hypothetical statements. Perhaps it also suggests the foetus has inherited his mother's deviousness. Meanwhile, for the reader, the resultant effect of this is *Nutshell*'s blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy. 'To be, or not to be'?,[52] indeed.

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[50] Joanna Gavins, *Text World Theory: An Introduction*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p. 39.
[51] Stewart-Shaw, p. 26.
[52] To adopt Hamlet's famous phrase, (3, 1, 1).

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Appendix.

Fig. 1. Possible Worlds Theory.

Key.

The distance from text-actual reality (i.e. the Text-actual World) and thus the relative ontological level of each world, is indicated by the length of the connecting line.

🔵 Recursively embedded worlds. Note: all text-possible worlds have the potential to be recursively embedded, the recursive embedding of Knowledge Worlds here is for illustrative purposes only.

◯ Worlds of particular relevance to this paper.

┆┆ Boundary between reality and fiction. Following Bell (2010: 79), a dotted line indicates contextual knowledge applies in both domains.

REALITY   FICTION

[FICTIONAL RECENTERING]

ACTUAL WORLD

TEXT-ACTUAL WORLD

7 HYPOTHESIS WORLD

6 FANTASY WORLD

5 WISH WORLD

4 INTENTION WORLD

3 OBLIGATION WORLD

1 EPISTEMIC WORLD

EMBEDDED (EPISTEMIC) WORLD

FURTHER EMBEDDED (EPISTEMIC) WORLD

2 SPECULATIVE EXTENSION TO EPISTEMIC WORLD

8 PREDICTION WORLD

Extract 1.

We are advancing on slumbering Claude, a hump, a bell-curve of sound baffled by bedclothes. On the exhalation a long, constipated groan, its approaching terminus frilled with electric sibilants. Then an extended pause, which, *if* you loved him, *might* alarm you. *Has* he breathed his last? *If* you don't there's hope he has. But finally, a shorter, greedy intake, scarred with the rattle of wind-dried mucus, and, at the breezy summit, the soft palate's triumphant purr. The rising volume announces we are very close. Trudy says his name. I feel her hand extend towards him while he's on a downward plunge through the sibilants. She's impatient, she needs to share their success and her touch on his shoulder isn't gentle. He coughs into half-life, like his brother's car, and takes some seconds to find the words to pose his question.

'What the fuck?'

'He's dead.'

'Who?'

Drawn from the deepest phase of sleep, he has to sit on the edge of the bed, *so the complaining mattress says*, and wait for his neural circuitry to restore him to the story of his life. I'm young enough not to take this wiring for granted. So, where was he? Ah, yes, attempting to murder his brother. Truly dead? Finally, he's Claude again.

'Well blow me down!'

Now he feels like getting up. It's 6 p.m., he notes. Enlivened, he stands, stretches his arms athletically with a creak of bone and gristle, then moves between bedroom and bathroom cheerily whistling, with full vibrato. From the light music I've heard I know this to be the theme tune from *Exodus*. Grandiose, in a corrupted romantic style, to my newly-formed ear, redemptive orchestral poetry to Claude's. He's happy. Meanwhile, Trudy sits in silence on the bed. It's brewing. At last, in dull monotone she tells him of the visit, the kindness of the police, the discovery of the body, the early presumption as to cause of death. To each of these, delivered as bad news, Claude chimes, 'Marvellous.' He leans forward with a moan to tie his laces.

She says, 'What did you do with the hat?'

She means my father's fedora with the broad brim.

'Didn't you see? I gave it to him.'

'What did he do with it?'

'He had it in his hand when he left. Don't worry. You're worried.'

She sighs, thinks for a while. 'The police were so nice.'

'Bereaved wife and all.'

'I don't trust them.'

'Just sit tight.'

'They'll be back.'

'Sit ... tight.'

He delivers these two words with emphasis and a sinister break between them.

Sinister, or fractious.

(111-13; my italics.)

A Cross-Cultural Dialogue on Chinese and Anglo-American Academia:

An Interview with Professor Regenia Gagnier

By Associate Professor Yanli Duan 段艳丽, Research Fellow, University of Exeter

A brief introduction to Professor Regenia Gagnier: Gagnier holds the Established Chair in English Language and Literature at the University of Exeter, founding and co-editorship of the Global Circulation Project, and Senior Research Fellowship in Egenis, the Centre for the Study of Life Sciences. Her monographs include *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Stanford, 1986); *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain 1832-1920* (Oxford, 1991); *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society* (Chicago, 2000); *Individualism, Decadence and Globalization: on the Relationship of Part to Whole 1859-1920* (Palgrave Macmillan 2010); *Literatures of Liberalization: Global Circulation and the Long Nineteenth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). Gagnier has edited special issues of *The Global Circulation Project* on *Scholarly Editing in the Twenty-first Century* (2010), *Global Modernisms* (2012), *Twenty-First Century 'Chinoiserie'* (2015), and *Rabindranath Tagore's Global Vision* (2015). She is on the Editorial Boards of 21 scholarly journals and has supervized to completion 79 doctorates at Stanford and Exeter. She recently held Visiting Professorships at Tsinghua, Fudan, Melbourne, UMass Amherst, Vanderbilt, Arizona State, Leeds, Delhi, and the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, and will be Visiting Fellow at The Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study in South Africa and the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University in 2021. Gagnier has served as Chair of the Consortium of Institutes of Advanced Study, Great Britain and Ireland; Presiding Officer of six MLA Division Executives in the USA and the AHRC Research Panel and University English Executive, UK. She is Honorary Centenary Fellow of the English Association; Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and of Academia Europaea, and on the International Executive Committee of IAUPE (International Association of University Professors of English). She was President of the British Association for Victorian Studies 2009-2012. She currently sits on the £1.5 Billion Selection and Interview Panels of Research Councils UK for Global Challenges Research Fund. In July 2020, she was elected Fellow of the British Academy.

I interviewed her while I was at the University of Exeter as a visiting scholar in December 2019.

1. Hi, Professor Gagnier. Before I came here, I read your CV and it was very impressive. Let's start with it. You are an editor of several important journals, at the same time you have your teaching work, classes, supervising postgraduates and PhDs and attend conferences all over the world. Do you remember the first time we met while you were driving me home I asked you how you can be so energetic and have published so many papers and book reviews? You just joked: 'I sleep 10 hours a day.' I am still wondering what your reading and daily lives are like?

RG: I have been a professional academic since I got my PhD in 1981 and so have had a lifetime to develop a disciplined work ethic. When my children were born, I got into the habit of working early while everyone else was asleep, and I am still an early riser. When the children came home from school I stopped working and turned my attention to them, and I still don't work in the evening unless some deadline absolutely requires it. I tend to work first, in the morning, reading and writing, and do emails and management later in the day. On weeknights I go to bed early, around 10:00, and so get a minimum of 8 hours sleep, and sometimes more. Disciplined work habits came easily to me, and when I travel for work I tend to mix business with pleasure. For every three days at a conference I might spend a day sight-seeing.

2. I've finished reading three of the five books you published. They cover different aspects. The first one *Subjectivities A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (1991) is about identity, in which you analyze lots of autobiographies. It was recognized as 'a pathbreaking investigation in Cultural Studies'; the second, *The Insatiability of Human Wants* (2000), is on political economy and aesthetics, in which you trace the parallel development of economic theory and aesthetic theory; and the third, *Literatures of Liberalization: Global Circulation and the Long Nineteenth Century* (2018), is about world literature. They are totally different from each other, though most of them focus on Victorian and modern literature. All of them reflect your open mind to the different cultures. For example, in *Insatiability* while talking about the aesthetics of evaluation, you point out that it 'was historically linked with the idea of national cultures and races' (123) and 'The goal of the political economists of art was not to objectify others as art but to provide the conditions that would allow oneself and others to live with the freedom of art' (135). Does it connect with your own experience in San Francisco? In *Subjectivities* you mentioned that you lived in California for 43 years, In the 1960s and 1970s California was in the vanguard of new social movements. Is it because of this you embrace the different cultures?

RG: My Acknowledgements in *Subjectivities* begin, 'I was blessed to have passed my youth in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s, dividing my adolescence between rock concerts in Golden Gate Park and Black Panther parties in Oakland penthouses. In pursuit of these activities I saw people with more varied histories and goals than I have ever seen since.' Of course I have seen even more in the intervening years since then, but that early experience was formative. California is multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and my family and friends were progressives—hippies, trades unionists, socialists, communards, committed social planners. Until very recently, for the first 60+ years of my life, I believed that humans would progress. Now I am less confident of that. The welfare state of the 1970s was a high point of human civilization for many of us: it had enough for all and it was beginning to be distributed fairly, with safety nets for those in need. Now modern market society seems to be going backwards: less distribution of wealth, less welfare, more competition, lower quality of life for many. Things that we won, such as the welfare state and National Health, are being eroded so that a few can become obscenely wealthy.

3. In *The Insatiabilty of Human Wants*, you talk about the homeless in America in the 1980s and 1990s, which reveals the scholar's concern about reality and social problems. When I was in America, that was during 2012-13, I went with some American friends to 'Feed the Hungry', that is, to distribute food and fruits to the homeless. Some of us wondered: US is

a rich country. Why are there so many homeless? I asked the man who was responsible for this charity work. He said: 'There are some people who like this life style; and there are some people the charity policy does not cover.' And here, in Exeter, I can also see some homeless people who just curl up by the stores, lying or sitting on some used cardboards. But at the same time we can see charity everywhere. The charity organizations, charity shops, even near the toilet there are boxes for people to donate extra cosmetics. Is homelessness a big problem in the US and UK? 'The Theatre of the Homeless' you describe in *Insatiability* is a good idea. Give them a space/stage. Let them be visible, let people listen to their stories.

Usually there are two kinds of scholars in China. One only focuses on the latest development of their research field, and does not care about what is happening around the world, as the Chinese saying goes: '两耳不问窗外事，一心只读圣贤书' (He that can hear nothing out of the window can read nothing but the sages.) The other are those who not only care about their research work but are also concerned about what's happening outside. They take the world as their responsibility (以天下为己任) by pointing out social problems and trying to seek solutions. The demonstration in London last month [Extinction Rebellion, People's March] let me see the scholars' political enthusiasm and their concern about the nation's future. To what extent do British scholars get involved in politics?

> RG: The US is a rich country in terms of GDP [Gross Domestic Product], but this is by no means distributed evenly. We saw homelessness return to the US in the 1980s, when mental hospitals were defunded and many with mental illness were thrown onto the streets. Later, under globalization, many US workers were thrown out of work when firms relocated offshore. Wages were lower outside America, and so American workers were replaced. Many of them became homeless. This also happened in Britain, often when new technologies replaced industrial forms: de-industrialization with no plan to retrain the under-unemployed. Market ideology has flourished under neoliberal governments. When governments turned away from the welfare of the people as primary to the growth of GDP as primary (which says nothing about how wealth is distributed) and to wealth, rather than welfare, as the bottom line, then society as we knew it declined. Globalization in the West has meant that traditional jobs have been lost, yet these have not been replaced, so people suffer. When they suffer they also become angry and, if they are not well informed, they often blame the wrong agents. The current governments in the US and UK have turned from providing for the needs and desires of the people to profit for the few.

> You also bring up the distinction between experts and intellectuals. Terry Eagleton has rightly remarked that 'most academics hover an inch above their specialisms.' I have developed expertise in the political economy of modern literatures, but I pursued the profession of higher education in order to educate critical thinkers in democratic society. Without well-educated citizens, democracy is only rule by the mob, and that is what is currently happening in western democracies. China too has a history of debate between intellectuals and narrow expertise, from the Confucian literati through the Sino-Soviet cadre professionals, to the science and engineering of the

Opening Up under Deng Xiaoping. Many — but by no means all— British academics in the Humanities tend to have quite high social consciousness, again because they see education as crucial to a successful democratic society. We are often politically active outside the classroom, but rarely dogmatic in our teaching, rather preferring to foster the practice of open, reflective debate. This neutrality in the classroom, however, may now be under pressure from younger academics whose generation has been short-changed by neoliberal economic policies. Without hope for education, housing, healthcare, transport—and most importantly the earth itself as habitable—without hope, that is, for the previously hard won expectations of western societies, younger faculty may be less inclined toward neutrality. Add to this a generation raised on the polarizations of internet discourse, and we may see a more polarized youth.

4. Let's return to your books. They are capacious works. They require not only the solid foundation of theory and logical analysis but also very extensive reading. I am interested in your analysis of the working-class autobiographies and how women constructed their subjectivity in the long history in *Subjectivities*. While reading it, I imagined the piles of materials and autobiographies in front of you, and then you had to sort them out and give them the detailed analyses. It required a huge amount of reading, didn't it?

> RG: It did require extensive reading, but I was very fortunate in that just as I was undertaking the project the magnificent bibliography *The Autobiography of the Working Class* edited by John Burnett, David Vincent, and David Mayall, including the titles of over 800 working-class autobiographies, was published and I won several fellowships to research them in Britain. I travelled throughout the UK to find the autobiographies, and like Karl Marx, spent many hours reading them, the school memoirs, and the other, more famous, autobiographies that I analyze in *Subjectivities* under the legendary Dome of the old British Library.

5. In *Literatures of Liberalization*, you mentioned Chinese literature in every Chapter, from *Rickshaw Boy* (Luotuo xiangzi) by Lao She to *Rice* by Su Tong, and also you mentioned the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. You are very familiar with Chinese literature. How does it come that you are interested in Chinese literature?

> RG: I spent the first 25 years of my career intensely studying Britain since the industrial revolution. Since the early 2000s I have been interested in the interaction between Anglophone and other, especially Sinophone, cultures. Major authors like Darwin and Mill, and personalities like Wilde, have been used for purposes of liberalization in China; and, vice versa, contact with China has informed Anglophone culture in numerous ways. Youth in the San Francisco Bay Area when I was a teenager read Chairman Mao's *Red Book*, so while the PRC was closed to the West, we were reading about the PRC.

6. You told me that you like Mo Yan. Mo Yan's works usually reveal 'starvation', for example, in *The Transparent Carrot* and *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*. 'Food problem' has been a big problem in China. The memory of being hungry has always been narrated by Chinese writers because the memory is hard to forget. Some writers reveal this because people suffered from it. Some other examples are Su Tong's *Rice* and Hong Ying's *Daughter of the River*. I remember another famous writer in China, Eileen Chang, once wrote that in Hong

Kong during the war time, she ate a cake at the dead body of a stranger. No fear, no sorrow, no sympathy. Stuffing the stomach was the most important thing in the world. You pointed out the symbolic meanings of rice in *Rice*. This reminds me of *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood, in which food also has several symbolic meanings. Different writers have different descriptions of food. Virginia Woolf also described the food and dinner but paid much attention to the arrangement of table and the color of dishes. It seems no writers in other countries than China have concern about the food problem or give vivid descriptions of starvation. I wonder how western readers feel while reading them and whether they can understand them?

> RG: Although I have written about the Food Problem in China, hunger and starvation are not unique to China. See Britain in the 1840s, the Irish famines, the American Dust Bowl, drought and famine in India caused by a combination of Raj policy and climate. Literatures of famine and hunger run through global literary history, often with geopolitical commodities around which lives are built such as rice, maize, yams, or bananas I myself have never been hungry, but I (inshallah) have learned about the complexity of anthropogenic dearth in literature such as Mo Yan's.

> The point is that there is always food but it is not always distributed justly. When I was at university I had a professor of Greek who said that 'The sunlight in Greece is so bright that it is impossible not to see the truth.' There is a long tradition of British writers who understood it as a moral imperative that no one should be rich so long as anyone is hungry. The jurist Jeremy Bentham said: 'So long as any particle of the matter of abundance remains in any one hand, it will rest with those, to whom it appears that they are able to assign a sufficient reason, to show why the requisite supply to any deficiency in the means of subsistence should be refused.'

> And here is the political economist of art John Ruskin: 'Whether there be one God or three,—no God or ten thousand,—children should have enough to eat, and their skins should be washed clean. It is not I who say that. Every mother's heart under the sun says that, if she has one. Again, whether there be saints in Heaven or not, as long as its stars shine on the sea, and the [fishes] swim there—every fisherman who drags a net ashore is bound to say to as many human creatures as he can, 'Come and dine.' And the fishmongers who destroy their fish by cartloads that they may make the poor pay dear for what is left, ought to be flogged round Billingsgate, and out of it. It is not I who say that. Every man's heart on sea and shore says that—if he isn't at heart a rascal.' I think that the fact that people should be fed, housed, clothed, educated, and cared for if they are unable to care for themselves is as obvious as sunlight and sea, even if it means taking from the rich. The duty of care takes priority over the right to private property.

7. I also like the picture of the banyan tree on the cover of *Literatures of Liberalization*. 'To study a banyan tree, you not only must know its main stem in its own soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality.' In the book you said: the lessons of this book are not to assume separate epistemic, political or theological communities but rather to understand interaction and interdependence within uneven conditions. I admire that attitude. You know last seminar when we were asked if the world literature can be valued. I said it is difficult, because there is no set of rules, and no judge. For example, in the past we always believed that modernism came from Europe, especially from the UK. Scholars studied how western

writers influenced Chinese writers. For instance, the Bloomsbury Group's influence on the Crescent Group in China, such as Xu Zhimo, Lin Huiyin, etc. But recently, scholars find that early in Chinese literature, probably from the Ming Dynasty, there have been some modernist elements in novel writing. In addition, even without the influence from the foreign writers, literature itself has its own demand for change and innovation. Just as a Chinese literary critic said: 'All literary styles begin with victory and end with decline' (Wang Guowei). Do you agree ?

> RG: Yes, that's why I wrote *Literatures of Liberalization*. And particularly in the modern period, since, say, 1750, all cultures are struggling with the processes of modernization, all traditional cultures have been impacted by modern technologies, commodity trade, ideologies, and so forth, some very negatively (colonization, extermination) and others voluntarily in what we call opening up or liberal tolerance toward diversity, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism. In fact, most cultures were diverse, multiethnic, and multilingual until the age of nationalism, which we still inhabit. I like the definition 'A patriot loves her country; a nationalist hates everyone else.'

8. There is a strange phenomenon in China now. You know, this time Can Xue, a woman writer, was nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature. Most Chinese were surprized because she is not well-known in China. However, she got recognition in the foreign countries, the so-called 'flowers inside, fragrance outside' (墙内开花墙外香). How do you evaluate this phenomenon?

> RG: I haven't read Can Xue, but I gather that she writes autobiographical work about her experiences during the Cultural Revolution. The West at this moment seems to be both fascinated by and afraid of China, wanting to expose any perceived flaws while also wanting to exploit its markets. Since 1949, 700,000,000 have been lifted out of poverty, and the PRC now has a comfortable middle class of c. 400,000,000. Such massive achievement in such a short time rightly commands the world's attention as well as some resentment from western cultures that have failed to live up to their own claims for greatness. The question that particularly interests me is whether, now that the PRC has matched the West's economic growth and modernization, whether it will also match the West's mistakes. That is, whether it will retain its communist principles and lead in prosperity and dignity for all, or whether it will go the way of the West with gross inequality; earth-destroying environmental waste; shallow consumer culture; obscene displays of wealth; selfish individualism; ceaseless competition, stress, and anxiety; and meaningless self-serving political discourse.

9. In each book you thanked the family for their support. You have a very happy family. I know that your husband is a philosopher. Does he have any influence upon you in your writing? And did he read your books before they were published? Did he give you some suggestions?

> RG: My husband, the philosopher of biology John Dupré, and I met during the first week of our first permanent fulltime jobs as professors at Stanford University in California. We used to collaborate and publish together regularly, especially on the philosophy of economics and feminist economics, and although we haven't published together for a few years, we always read each other's work, give feedback, and we

talk all the time. Our children grew up with such talking over dinner, and now one is a professional philosopher and the other a professional chef. One feeds the body; the other feeds the mind.

10. You sit on the £1.5 Billion Selection and Interview Panels of Research Councils UK for Global Challenges Research Fund. Could you please tell us what it is about?

RG: Research Councils UK (RCUK, but now UKRI—UK Research and Innovation) is the umbrella government organization that funds research in the UK: AHRC (humanities), ESRC (economics and social sciences), EPSRC (engineering), BBSRC (biological sciences), NERC (nuclear energy), MRC (medicine), STFC (technology). In 2015 the government transferred a large chunk of its fund to Global Challenges in support of developing countries, encouraging collaboration with researchers in targeted countries, including the PRC. My experience as a panellist (where academics sit with stakeholders from governments and NGOs like the Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation) is that most of these funds go to sciences, engineering, and health, as building infrastructure and saving lives are perceived to be more urgent than the humanities in developing countries, but often proposals have humanities components particularly in dealing with languages, education, religion, cultural preservation, etc.

Associate Professor Yanli Duan 段艳丽

One or the Other? Or One and Another?: Exploring Borders, Boundaries and Margins in Charles Causley's poem 'On the Border'

Mike Cooper

On the Border

By the window-drizzling leaves,
Underneath the rain's shadow,
'What is that land,' you said 'beyond
Where the river bends the meadow?

'Is it Cornwall? Is it Devon?
Those promised fields, blue as the vine,
Wavering under new-grown hills;
Are they yours, or mine?'

When day, like a crystal, broke
We saw what we could see.
No Man's Land was no man's land.
It was the sea. [1]

Charles Causley (1917-2003)

It might be difficult to find a poem that offers a more concentrated, more multi-faceted exploration of the nature of borders, boundaries and margins – and what those can ultimately mean – than this short piece. It was written around 1973 or 1974 by the 20th century English poet Charles Causley, probably during the period that he was a Visiting Fellow in Poetry in the English Department of Exeter University.

The poem is a mere 66 words long. Remarkably, only a very few of those have more than two syllables. If the elision of spoken pronunciation normally used with a word like 'promised' (and arguably even with 'wavering', as well) is taken into account, and considered alongside hyphenated compound words such as 'window-drizzling' and 'new-grown', then it can be said that there is in fact only the single example of 'underneath' which is anything more than disyllabic. The diction Causley adopts for the poem is therefore very simple – and this relatively small number of straightforward words is then deployed in just 12 lines, arranged into three quatrains.

The relative general accessibility of the poem's style and subject-matter can be gauged by the fact that it has been set to music by Jim Causley, a distant relative of the poet and a successful young folk musician from the Exeter area. The setting was commissioned by the Charles Causley Trust in 2018.[2]

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[1] Charles Causley, *Collected Poems 1951-2000* (London: Macmillan, 2001), p. 245.
[2] Jim Causley, composer/performer. 'On the Border', in *Special Commissions* EP (Hroc Music, 2018).

Yet amongst all this brevity and simplicity, the reader is presented with a number of powerful concepts. In the process, we are also posed a set of intricately interwoven questions, quietly but insistently emanating from those thematic terms: borders, boundaries and margins.

At the very end of the poem, what purports to be 'the answer', supposedly explaining a commonplace and trivial mystery of sight and identification, only serves in the end to refract and intensify the ambiguities underlying these queries. Such a resolution does little or nothing to unravel the inherent issues that are raised along the way. They are a set of universal dilemmas, dichotomies and contradictions which do not permit easy solutions. The relationships and disjuncts here are manifold: inside and outside; light and shadow; land and sea; day and night; sight and visions; conflict and peace; inhabitation and possession. The oppositions and the continuums these pairings reflect all infuse this brief and ostensibly simple poem. Here, borders and boundaries are as much about the relationships between constituent, related elements as they are supposedly about making and keeping them distinct.

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At the centre of 'On the Border' is an issue of quite parochial, even prosaic, geography: a familiar matter of distinguishing between two adjoining territories in the South West of England: Cornwall and Devon. As well as sharing a border, this pair of counties has long been locked in a set of gentle but firm rivalries – and even jealousies. Nevertheless, they are at the same time also united. Most particularly, they share a mutual sense of alienation from the remainder of England (and indeed Britain), sited as they are at the far end of what is usually called 'the West Country'. Thus, there is simultaneously both a bigger boundary and a wider margin operating for each of them.

Yet however explicitly any idea of literal topography – not just on that political and administrative level of counties, but also in the smaller and more personal sense of local and private property – appears at first glance to be a tangible central focus for the poem, that is far from being its real (or at the very least, only) subject.

To begin with those larger geographical and regional dimensions, and their links to identity, it is important to know that Charles Causley lived for virtually the whole of his life in a kind of border post or frontier settlement: that is, the small market town of Launceston in North Cornwall. Neither rural nor urban, it looms high on a series of hills only a mile or so from the River Tamar, which forms most of the natural county boundary with Devon. That can be taken as the surface meaning of the 'river' in line 4; but by no means is it limited to such a literal identification.

Despite its ancient role as the county town until 1835, though, some Cornish purists further along the peninsula will often regard Launceston only reluctantly as being a proper part of Cornwall. In a somewhat sniffy manner, they can often see it instead as being 'nearly Devon'. Thus, to be frank, it is possibly even rather suspect – not least in the growing clamour of recent decades about Cornish separatism.

Devonians will have no truck with such a suggestion, however. For them, Launceston is Cornwall's alone. Native Launcestonians themselves, it is worth noting, mostly consider their identity as thoroughly Cornish. Yet it is clearly not quite as simple and clear-cut a matter as that. It certainly wasn't for Charles Causley, at any rate.

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Such an ambivalence about local and regional identity certainly also applies to the poet himself. Despite almost rigid pigeon-holing by some readers and critics as a – sometimes even 'the'? – Cornish poet, Causley himself regularly balked at such a label, actively expressing his distaste for that kind of unhelpfully narrow classification. Not only did the strongly universalist part of him rebel at the suggestion of such a limited compass ('provincial', in both the literal and metaphorical senses), he also knew it to be dubious in terms of biographical fact.

His father and all his known ancestors on that side of the family were 'deeply Devon' in their identity. That term 'deeply' is very much in the geographical sense, too – given the isolated position of the small hamlet of Trusham, where the Causleys had lived for generations. It lies a dozen miles south-southwest of Exeter and is therefore relatively far from any boundary with Cornwall.

On the other hand, his (Canadian-born, but Trusham-raised) father had died young after settling with his wife and her family in Launceston, and when his only son Charles was just seven years old. By contrast, Causley's mother and her large extended family were Cornish through and through. The child seems only rarely to have returned to Trusham and his relatives there in his younger days. Thus, his early life was centred on, even largely limited to, Launceston and its Cornish surroundings.[3]

Yet it would be true to say that his Devon connections continued and even broadened in various ways throughout his life. Not the least of these new Devonian links came through his naval service, with a number of poems stemming from those of his wartime experiences which were firmly rooted in that county. Poems like 'Yelverton', 'Plymouth', 'Devonport' and 'Tavistock Goose Fair' capture this connection, as well as the powerful poem narrating a return to the ancestral village entitled 'Trusham'.[4] Indeed, he gave a further collection of new poems published in 1957 the title *Union Street* – a famous thoroughfare in Plymouth.[5]

Causley himself has therefore to be understood in a personal sense as straddling inheritances, identities, locations. He himself clearly came to feel like that, even if such tensions of the self weren't explicitly felt or articulated in his childhood. If he doesn't fully personify the ideas of borders or boundaries in his private nature, he can certainly be seen to move amongst such characteristics. In the sense of his local origins and regional identities, though, Causley is at least to some extent a figure who personifies the idea of inhabiting the 'marginal'.

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The deceptively simple title 'On the Border' is a somewhat ambiguous choice for the poem. This arises first and foremost from that apparently inconsequential, initial word: 'on'. In the context of literary titles, it would usually be read instinctively or consciously as a preposition, taken to be descriptive of a physical or temperamental position astride the said

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boundary – whether precisely or in broad terms, and whatever spheres that particular border delineates.

At the same time, however, it could equally well be the alternative literary use of 'on' – as with John Keats's 'On First Looking into Chapman's *Homer*' and 'On a Grecian Urn'. It that sense, it acts as a synonym for 'about' or 'concerning', with regard to a specific topic.

This might be considered as somewhat far-fetched parsing, but for two points. First, Causley himself wrote some half a dozen other poems beginning with 'On…'. All of them allow that *à propos* sense of the word, to some degree. Some also have that additional suggestion of a purely physical location in the same way as 'On the Border', such as the poems 'On Launceston Castle' and 'On the Eastern Front'. Others, like 'On Seeing a Poet of the First World War on the Station at Abbeville' (which of course employs both glosses of the word at issue, within the one title) and 'On Being Asked to Write a School Hymn' carry the temporal idea of 'following the occasion of'. There are also those that mark a specific point in the calendar, like 'On the 13th Day of Christmas' and 'On All Souls' Day'.[6]

So, in every use of the word 'on' within his poems' titles, Causley plays with the boundaries of its meaning. Moreover, as we will see, the rest of the poem juggles with those ideas of borders, boundaries and margins. The idea of a title balancing multiple meanings of such a simple word is therefore wholly plausible. Do we take 'on' literally, to mean the exact sense of 'at the borderline'? Less precisely, but still plausibly, is it the sense of existing at or within a marginal gap, an uneasy frontier or a 'periphery'? Or even less particularly so, do we read it as suggesting 'about'? Indeed, what in the end separates all those senses? Are they always completely different? Being present in a physical location will sometimes provoke reflection on the nature or essence of such a place, after all.

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As well as playing with those ideas in its content, 'On the Border' manipulates its own structure to similar discursive purpose in a number of ways. The poem's purported quandary, its intellectual territory, is fully established by the end of its first five lines. Unexpectedly, though, this bursts through the boundary between the first quatrain and the second. Any unconscious expectation of an 'introduction' is challenged by this spilling-over across the separation of a line-space into that fifth line:

'What is that land,' you said 'beyond
Where the river bends the meadow?

'Is it Cornwall? Is it Devon?…'

The ostensible topic of the conversation and the poem only appears there with those second and third spoken queries. They are addressed to the narrator/author by 'you', an unidentified external character. As is often the case with such literary conventions of grammatical 'person', however, both these voices are proxies for the reader. We ourselves are invited to hover over the borders of dramatic character.

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[6] Causley, *Collected Poems*, pp. 286, 393, 53, 255, 44 and 265.

Those stark if tentative enquiries: 'Is it Cornwall? Is it Devon?' are brief, and simple – in the end, even deliberately simplistic. A writer's multiple adopted *personae* can discourse not only amongst themselves, but also between the author's genuine self and one or more of those figures. Ultimately, of course, they will also function as a dialogue between the author and the reader. Here, and especially given their specificity of place, these questions in line 5 neatly lure us into a very straightforward first understanding of what the piece is pursuing. The whole of the poem, however, presents an agenda which is both more wide-reaching and more nuanced. It treads softly and carefully along many lines of demarcation – some of which are far less clear-cut than they first appear.

The poem's opening image: 'By the window-drizzling leaves' is one of water deposited by leaves on glass. We are somewhere on the edge between mist and full-fledged rain, which streaks a near-invisible wall of light separating outside and inside. Further, that drizzle is associated with the counter-intuitive idea of a 'shadow' mysteriously produced not by solid objects or cloud, but by rain. Meanwhile, just where are the two characters whom we are given in this first stanza? We are told 'by' and 'underneath'; but whether they are inside looking out, or already outside to whatever extent, is unclear. This not only renders the sense of position and perspective ambiguous, but teeters between emotional states – those of vulnerability and security. Several other boundaries are also clearly in play here, as well. They lurk somewhere amongst differing degrees of rain, levels of transparency; between sky and cloud, sun and shadow, shelter and exposure, comfort and discomfort.

These initial doubts then extend to what immediately appears in the far distance. The land in question – is 'land' here merely meant as earth, or as a territory that is possessed and enclosed? – comes with a subtle paradox. Does a river indeed 'bend' a meadow, or is it the other way around? Both interpretations have some validity. Each feature surely impacts and defines the other with their respective margins, in any case.

In the hesitant ambiguity of the first six lines, we can hear something of the opening of a much-loved earlier poem. That comes from A. E. Housman's collection, *A Shropshire Lad,* published around a century beforehand. The 40th of the 63 pieces that Housman assembled there begins:

> Into my heart, an air that kills
> From yon far country blows.
> What are those blue remembered hills,
> What spires, what farms are those?[7]

The Causley poem's indeterminate landscape echoes Housman's own plaintive questioning about his faraway, vanished 'land of lost content'.

The similarities continue with Causley's 'those promised fields, blue as the vine', echoing the earlier poet's phrase 'those blue remembered hills'. The blue fields are also 'wavering' (an adjective not entirely unconnected in its sound and meaning with the sea that emerges as the final word of the poem). They are also inconclusively poised near subsequent hills, which here are impossibly, disconcertingly, 'new-grown' – a description which also carries a subtle association with 'promise'. Moreover, that 'blue', a slightly unexpected colour in the context of vines (which otherwise would usually be perceived as green), can also hint

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[7] A.E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1896), poem XL.

at their fruits: grapes and even the 'promise' of their traditional ultimate product, wine. The tone Causley achieves at this point recalls the evident oxymoron of Housman's 'air that kills', alongside his vision of phantom spires and farms. There is a kind of anticipation of a promise to be fulfilled in each piece, but that is soon replaced by something different.

That predecessor poem is grounded in a wistful consideration of time and emotions – rather than Causley's more practical, even ontological, musings. The two pieces however attempt a kind of personal 'location', for the purpose of resolving slightly uncomfortable questions about their differing varieties of supposed boundaries.

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The third and final quatrain opens, slightly surprisingly, with the dawn. We are now poised at the boundary of the preceding evening with a new day, and of an awkward darkness (whether partial and crepuscular, or the near-total absence of the night-time) with a clearer, fuller morning light. This revelation of the time thus adds some retrospective clarity, or at least some new dimensions, to two of the poem's earlier images. The 'shadow' of the rain in line 2 can now perhaps be understood to be a matter of moonlight on a clouded night, with the 'blue' tint of the fields in line 6 similarly so. Where Housman's 'blue' is a matter of recalled personal history combined with a distant vista, Causley's physical distance is melded with the ambient light at that time of day. In each case, that 'blue' exists in the margins of several domains: not only of time, place, light and colour, but also of memory, understanding and reality.

For the modern poem, the near-cliché of 'the break of day' is joined with the kind of clarity of light signalled by the idea of 'crystal'. It is a punning simile, one that can also be associated with visions, and fragility: the sense almost of a crystal ball. What turns out to be a mistaken initial image of something only dimly-perceivable in the far distance is now effectively shattered by the fresh light, and a kind of 'breakage' brings with it a new certainty of vision.

That image of crystal is also redolent of one in Robert Frost's 1916 poem 'Birches'.[8] The sun thawing trees after an ice-storm 'makes them shed crystal shells/Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust…' These 'heaps of broken glass' make the poet 'think the inner dome of heaven had fallen'.

A further comparison to Causley's imagery might even be made with the souvenir snow-globe, a very different sort of crystal ball, that is crucial to the opening moments of Orson Welles' 1940 film, *Citizen Kane*.[9] What seems in each case to be something that is superficially quite clear, and literally or metaphorically graspable, nonetheless still holds something of an enigma. Resolving the perplexing central question comes only when the crystal, or day, breaks.

More immediately related is a recurring pattern of images to do with crystal, glass and windows throughout Causley's poetry. In the moving description of his dead parents, 'A Wedding Portrait' (written roughly at the same time as 'On the Border'), Causley refers to passing a photograph of them:

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[8] Robert Frost, *Mountain Interval* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1916).
[9] *Citizen Kane*, dir. by Orson Welles (RKO Pictures, 1940).

> …A small surprise of sun, a ruse
> Of light, gives each a speaking air,
> A sudden thrust, though both refuse
> – Silent as fish or water-plants –
> To break the narrow stream of glass
> Dividing us…[10]

Although a different element, literally, of a watery world (which itself is a powerful thread elsewhere in Causley's poetry) is present in this other piece, the sense of dividing glass and breaking light here link it to the way that 'On the Border' works.

A phrasing redolent of a traditional and guileless childhood song ('A sailor went to sea sea sea…'), yet profound in its intimations here, now follows. What could not be understood at first can now be revealed beyond any doubt. The sense of 'could' refers to a capability that was previously constrained until this moment. It is a case of 'only now can it be seen that…'. That auxiliary verb 'could' underlines that what was only understood eventually was always there in principle. The obstacle to knowledge is dismantled, the border of understanding breached. The difference separating what might be seen from what is seen is marginal; yet the distinction is there, nevertheless. This seemingly artless repetition delivers a strong moral tenet about the nature of our vision, and the boundaries that are used to define territory and possession.

Equally, the contrast brought about by the capital letters of 'No Man's Land', when juxtaposed with the same words, uncapitalised, is a subtle but ultimately clear one. There are distant yet undeniable echoes of trench warfare in the first version of the phrase. That is a particular sort of unpleasant 'void'. The associations it brings of disputes over borders and boundaries of all kinds – whose lands, possessions, interests and powers are whose? – take the poem briefly into a new kind of landscape, where no single person has dominion or control, and one that edges into the political and the historical. Attempting to take No Man's Land will come at a price.

The revelation of the final line, with a power reinforced by its truncated length and its few fundamental monosyllables, furnishes the climax of this commonplace yet freighted situation of ambiguous identity and location. It is one worthy of an ancient parable or folk-tale. There is no doubt that the sea can undoubtedly form borders of all kinds; it is a boundary. These things have their own margins, too – whether with other seas, or with the land. At the same time, though, all such features are malleable, mixed, mutable. From one minute to the next, one period to the following, one place to another, all of these edges can and do alter. They can even vanish altogether. 'Where does one end, and the other begin?' is a phrase that can crystallise a common quandary that goes well beyond the merely physical. It is one which is revealed here to be ultimately unanswerable, and indeed even possibly quite absurd.

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With his short poem 'On the Border', therefore, Charles Causley encapsulates many inherent subtleties and contradictions about all kinds of borders, boundaries and margins. Remarkably, this occurs within a plain and lucid telling of a familiar, everyday and

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[10] Causley, *Collected Poems*, p. 271.

uncomplicated moment that any reader can recognise: just where and what and whose exactly is that?

In doing so, he briefly embodies universal problems about the truths of perception, the genuineness of possession, the distinctiveness of identity, and the realities of knowledge and understanding in one extended metaphor.

Along the way, too, the multiple boundaries, borders and margins of these very ideas themselves are encountered and examined. At times in the poem, as so often in the wider world, such concepts are shown by Causley to be real, unambiguous and permanent. Elsewhere, and even simultaneously – with a delicate but powerful irony – his poem reveals the paradox that their artificiality, permeability and fragility are also clearly all there to be seen.

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Mourning the Present: Towards a Quantum Elegy

Claire Cox

Science and poetry have long enjoyed a problematic co-existence within Western culture. Aristotle tussled with the niceties of differentiation in his *Poetics,* offering the following demarcation:

> [e]ven when a treatise on medicine or natural science is brought out in verse, the name of poet is by custom given to the author; and yet Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common but the metre, so that it would be right to call the one poet, the other physicist rather than poet.[1]

More recently, Peter Middleton has mapped the shifting complexities of cross–disciplinary relations by drawing attention to tensions in the perceived status of poetry and science during the heyday of the atomic bomb. He shows how the American poet Charles Olson actively embraced scientific methods, while W. H. Auden's English class sensibilities ensured that he felt, when in the company of scientists, like 'a shabby curate who has strayed by mistake into a room full of dukes'.[2] Olson's deep engagement with the science of his time and his 'literary response to quantum ideas'[3] have also resonated with the recent theoretical developments in ecocriticism and new materialism, since all three share a philosophic repositioning away from anthropocentrism. Given the slipperiness of the science/poetry interface, this essay seeks to situate itself firmly within the parameters of literary criticism, specifically through examining two examples of elegy written in the twentieth and early twenty-first century by British poets Mario Petrucci and W. H. Auden. The grief and loss intrinsic to elegy will be theorised using Kübler-Ross's five stage model of bereavement to structure and facilitate a quantum reading of those elegies. This reading, in distinction from Daniel Albright's historicised analysis of Yeats, Pound and Eliot's engagement as individuals with science and the resulting 'quantum poetics' discernible in their works, will offer an approach through which we can examine the text of elegy from a quantum perspective, in order to determine what those texts can yield from this approach (if anything) in terms of new knowledge. This is not an exercise in science/poetry equivalency: attempting to synthesise scientific and poetic methods of enquiry is not the objective here. Rather it is an attempt to triangulate epistemologies arising from those points at which words fail us: approaching the shock and grief of loss through the strangeness of quantum theory, and the problems both create 'for perception and language'.[4]

Quantum theory involves an exploration into subatomic dimensions where the classical Newtonian laws of physics that pervade our everyday understanding of matter and the laws of nature are completely overturned. In this quantum world we are required to

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[1] Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle,* trans. by S. H. Butcher, <https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/1812/The%252520Poetics%252520of%252520Aristotle%25252C%252520by%252520Aristotle.pdf> [accessed 11 June 2020] p. 4.

[2] Peter Middleton, *Physics Envy: American Poetry and Science in the Cold War and After* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 38.

[3] Sarah Daw, 'If he chooses to speak from these roots': entanglement and uncertainly in Charles Olson's quantum ecopoetics', *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, Vol 23, No. 4 (2019), pp. 350–366.

[4] Middleton, p. 75.

grapple with what John Polkinghorne calls an entirely 'different kind of reality',[5] one that is uncertain, disorientating, counterintuitive and, of course, invisible to the naked eye.

Those of us who have experienced a significant bereavement might readily recognise that moment when we are propelled from an existence we had previously assumed was governed by order and predictability into 'strange realms'[6] and 'something of a parallel world'.[7] This is the private world of grief and loss, of pain and absence; a world that can move keening poets to create elegies as forms of externalised, often public, declarations of their mourning. The tension between finding an appropriate public (and publishable) form through which to express deeply personal emotions is the inherent challenge of elegy. Indeed, Mark Strand claims: 'The best elegies will always be sites of struggle between custom and decorum on one hand, and private feeling on the other'.[8]

Jahan Ramazani's earlier interdisciplinary approach to elegy in his *Poetry of Mourning*: *The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney*, is both literary and psychoanalytical. Basing his argument on Freud's interpretation of mourning and melancholia, he contends that numerous modes of modern elegy (by which he means those written by twentieth-century poets such as Wilfred Owen, Wallace Stevens, Langston Hughes and Sylvia Plath), resist the generic form to become anti-elegiac. Furthermore, '[s]corning recovery and transcendence, modern elegists neither abandon the dead nor heal the living'.[9] For Ramazani 'modern elegists tend to enact the work, not of normative but of 'melancholic mourning',[10] a term he has adapted from Freud 'to distinguish mourning that is unresolved, violent, and ambivalent'.[11] The modern elegy, for Ramazani, is not necessarily a route to consolation but can testify to the ceaseless work of grief: an ongoing state of suspension in the parallel world of mourning. However, the propensity of modern elegy to maintain grief rather than to resolve it is increasingly in danger of being diagnosed as indicative of unhealthy or unsuccessful mourning. More recently, Leeat Granak has traced the evolving professionalization of the treatment of grief from psychoanalysis to psychiatry up to its current status as a 'pathological entity'[12] in what she calls 'the widespread phenomena (sic) of turning everyday problems into psychological disorders to be managed and treated by mental health professionals';[13] an evolution she identifies as being increasing influenced by scientific methods driven by data collection and measurement.

From Sigmund Freud's assertion that successful grief work frees the ego from attachment, so enabling new attachments to be formed,[14] to George Engel's positing of grief

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[5] John Polkinghorne, *Quantum Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 86.

[6] Kevin Young, *The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief and Healing* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. xviii.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Mark Strand and Eavan Boland, *The Making of a Poem, A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms* (London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd, 2001), p. 168.

[9] Jahan Ramazani, *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 4.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Leeat Granek, 'Grief as Pathology: The Evolution of Grief Theory in Psychology From Freud to the Present', *History of Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (2010) p. 66.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Sigmund Freud 'Mourning and Melancholia' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914–1916)*, trans. by James Strachey <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_MourningAndMelancholia.pdf> [accessed 14 June 2020], p. 245.

as a disease[15] (and the profound ramifications of that definition for the medical profession), the effects of loss have been, and continue to be, theorised with varying implications for clinicians, researchers and the bereaved. Several influential models seeking to theorise the grieving process as having identifiable components or stages have been developed over the twentieth century, including A. F. Shand's[16] four types of grief reactions, and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stage model as described in her 1969 publication *On Death and Dying*. However, as Douglas Davies[17] points out, while stage theories have gained wide attention in contemporary society (with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stage model becoming 'popularly canonical'[18] throughout the 1980s and 1990s), caution needs to be exercised over an uncomplicated acceptance of such stages. Kübler-Ross's *On Death and Dying* was written as an account of how some terminally ill people in Chicago responded to the news of impending death. It was in this context that Kübler-Ross theorised grief as having five stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. Thereafter, in her later book *On Grief and Grieving*, she went on to reframe these five stages as applying to the bereaved rather than the dying. Davies correctly highlights issues around the notion of 'stages' as fixed blocks which need to be passed through sequentially. Rather, he renames these stages as 'symptoms' and maintains that not all people experience each symptom, and that symptoms may occur together or in varying patterns.

While we should, therefore, be mindful not to over-simplify our understanding of Kübler-Ross's stage theory, nor to accept it as a clearly-marked set of steps, the symptoms it describes can offer useful parallels between the experiences of grief and loss, from which elegy arises, and certain characteristics of the quantum dimensions. For example, Kübler-Ross's first stage of 'Denial'[19] where '[l]ife makes no sense'[20] and where '[t]he denial often comes in the form of questioning our reality'[21] could be said to resemble our first encounter with the quantum world. Grief is chaotic and is, as Kübler-Ross points out, despite her seemingly sequential stages, in fact non-linear. Experiencing the turbulence of grief challenges our preconceptions in a way that Kübler-Ross describes as: 'the shattering of many conscious and unconscious beliefs about what our life is supposed to look like'.[22] Grief disrupts our sense of the world. Similarly, in the first part of the twentieth century, developing theories of quantum mechanics, most notably from Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, shattered the classical preconceptions of how our physical world works. This new and destabilised state of affairs left some eminent physicists deeply perplexed, and engendered in Einstein an abhorrence of 'the cloudy fitfulness that Copenhagen orthodoxy assigned to the nature of the quantum world'.[23]

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[15] George Engel, 'Is Grief a Disease?: A Challenge for Medical Research' *Psychosomatic Medicine*, Volume 23, Issue 1 (1961), pp. 18–22.

[16] Granek, p. 50.

[17] Douglas Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites, Third Edition* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 72–73.

[18] Ibid., p. 73.

[19] Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying, What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy & Their Own Families* (New York: Scribner, 2014), pp. 37–47. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler, David *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2014), pp. 8–11.

[20] Ibid., p. 10.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 78.

[23] Ibid., p. 77.

Returning to Kübler-Ross's five stage model, once we, the newly bereaved, have experienced the first shock of 'Denial', we will begin a process which will eventually reach a stage of healing. This fifth and final stage, which she terms 'Acceptance' is where '[w]e must try to live now in a world where our loved one is missing'[24] and experience this presence and absence as a simultaneous actuality. This is the stage where we 'learn to live with the loss and not forget the person'.[25] This simultaneous state of presence and absence so characteristic of grief has parallels at the quantum level, where particles are neither 'here' nor 'there' in the binary sense, but 'here' and 'there' concurrently. Indeed, they are mathematically probably 'everywhere', behaving both as waves and as particles and evading any simplistic attempt to be located.

A useful thematic entry point for exploring ideas around elegy and the quantum world is scientist and poet Mario Petrucci's collection *Heavy Water*. Published in 2004, *Heavy Water* is an extended series of poems which conveys the effects and aftermath of Chernobyl's 1986 nuclear disaster on the people caught up in it. The collection is permeated with references to the invisible and lethally invasive properties of radiation as experienced by the victims and survivors of that devastating incident.

Reading the collection from our human-scale at a non-quantum level, it stands as a powerful elegy to the dead, both collectively and individually, from its opening poem 'The Man Buried with Chernobyl'[26] to others, including 'Directive 1 A'[27] (entitled after the Soviet order to remove and bury the contaminated topsoil around Chernobyl), a poem which also references the burial in sealed coffins of the irradiated dead. In addition to elegising the dead, the collection also conveys the experiences of the living victims of Chernobyl, describing their existence in a limbo of radiation and uncertainty. This ambivalent, disturbing state draws upon the poet's own experience. In a research interview with him in 2017, Petrucci explained that he had previously worked in laboratories and had been irradiated himself to an unknown level. This experience, he felt, had given him a personal connection with the 'Chernobylites', as the survivors of the Chernobyl disaster are known. 'There was probably some alignment here,' he said, 'between my lab exposure and their exposure from the Chernobyl accident. For instance, of not knowing what had happened, or to what degree it had happened, or what the consequences might be. Those are fundamental archetypal fears that I shared with these people'.[28]

From *Heavy Water's* outset, Petrucci utilises various poetic devices to transport the reader into the subatomic world of nuclear radiation and to evoke its effects. The opening poem, placed even before the dedication ('for all the bereaved') and entitled 'Chain of Decay', is a list of the elements through which uranium-235 transitions to become lead-207. The poem also itemises the types of radiation that are released at each stage of that process. Significantly, uranium-235 is the enriched form of uranium used in nuclear reactors and for weaponry. From this starting point, Petrucci signals the commencement of a journey into the quantum dimension that the reader is invited to undertake either through their own scientific knowledge or their poetic imagination.

To immerse the reader fully in this subatomic world, Petrucci draws on the visual language of concrete poetry in many of his poems by showing the serpentine helix of DNA on

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[24] Ibid., p. 25.

[25] Ibid., p. 10.

[26] Mario Petrucci, *Heavy Water: a poem for Chernobyl* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2004), p. 15.

[27] Ibid., p. 34.

[28] Mario Petrucci. Personal interview with author. 11 July, 2017.

the page. For example, in 'Box' Petrucci incorporates a very strong spiral shaping, and again, in 'Shadow', a section of the helix pattern can be seen. In 'The Chapel of the Virgin Mary' and 'Breathing', the DNA shaping becomes more diffuse, acting as a visual echo of DNA, but now discernible as a broken helix. In these concrete poems Petrucci is directly referencing the more sinister effects of radiation. By arranging the lines as spliced and fragmented he is visually demonstrating the results of radiation on living tissue. All three types of nuclear radiation: alpha and beta particles and gamma rays, are potentially fatal in high enough doses. Their invisibility adds to the level of uncertainly and anxiety Petrucci expressed at interview. These radioactive properties are the subject of the poem 'α – β – γ', perhaps his most direct reference to quantum science in *Heavy Water.* Here, DNA is visually denoted in the poem's form, while the text concurrently describes how alpha, beta and gamma radiation were discovered in laboratory conditions. The poem also mentions the scientific equipment – cloud chambers, Geiger-Müller detectors and scintillators – that were essential in proving the existence of quantum particles through the beguilingly beautiful traces they left behind.

Chillingly, Petrucci describes what all three types of radiation do within the unintended laboratory of our own bodies. For example, gamma, he says:

        is a rapier
    of radiation that runs clean

    through a spine – several
            layers of steel – it will

    find a way through – its
            wriggle of quantum
    world always out
                to lance an egg

    or top and tail a gene[29]

For Petrucci, it seems, the ghostly beauty and slightness of the quantum world should not fool us into under-estimating the deadliness of its physical consequences at our every-day, non-quantum level.

So far I have investigated the idea of quantum elegy through poems which explicitly engage with the sub-atomic by using an example from a poet who was also a professional scientist. At this point I want to consider what insights might be gained by using this quantum approach to read an elegy which was not overtly written with reference to quantum theory.

For this example I turn to W. H. Auden, whose elegies have been described as 'among the best poems of the twentieth century';[30] and specifically to one of his best-known elegies 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats',[31] which was published in 1940, the year after Yeats's death. Auden, in his essay 'The Public v. the Late Mr William Butler Yeats',[32] albeit writing in the persona of the Public Prosecutor, contends that 'there is usually a close connection between

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[29] Petrucci, p. 79.
[30] Ramazini, p. 176.
[31] W.H. Auden, 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats' https://poets.org/poem/memory-w-b-yeats [accessed 3 March 2019].
[32] W. H. Auden, ed. by Edward Mendelson: *The Complete Works of W.H. Auden: Prose, Volume II, 1939–1948*, 3-7 <http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/s7272.pdf >[accessed 18 June 2020].

the personal character of a poet and his work'.[33] As such, a brief contextualization of Auden, the man, shows us that, despite Auden's professed insecurity among scientists (as cited by Middleton), the poet demonstrated an engagement with the scientific developments of his age. Indeed, Auden's own double-edged tribute to Yeats postulates the need for '*great*' poets to have 'a working knowledge of and sympathetic attitude towards the most progressive thought of his time'.[34] Later in the essay he specifies this as 'physics and chemistry'.[35] Furthermore, Daniel Albright, in his *Quantum Poetics*, a study of the elusive 'poetic atom',[36] claims that Auden knowingly appropriated scientific metaphors derived from quantum physics to, among other things, conceptualise the visible world as a form of 'sociophysics'[37] where people, as elementary particles, collide randomly as they float on quantum waves. Auden, then, was aware of the need to have a working knowledge of the science of his day, and was conversant with concepts and terminology associated with quantum mechanics.

In taking a quantum approach to Auden's elegy for W.B. Yeats, we can readily situate the elegist as an observer to the passing of the deceased. In her recent ecocritical appraisal of Charles Olsen's work,[38] Sarah Daw traces the philosophical 'new materialist' turn which has flexed Niels Bohr's theory of 'complimentarily' into a 'fundamental principle of an inherent inseparability between observed and observer'.[39] If we take this position, then the observed Yeats, and the observer Auden become mutually entangled in a quantum parallel to the bereaved person's inability to accept separation in death. Olson, in his essay on 'projective verse',[40] which clearly draws on his understanding of contemporary science, famously emphasises the mediating role of the poet's body in the transmission of energy into the poem. 'The poem is therefore a translation of energy from world into poem, by way of the physical processes of the poet'.[41] The resulting method of poetic composition, as Daw contends, is based on the fundamental inseparability of the observer and the observed 'or, in Olson's translation, the poet and the world'.[42] Razamani notes something similar from a non-quantum perspective in describing Auden's elegies as 'linguistic bridges between the living poet and his dead heroes'.[43] Additionally, in Ramazani's interpretation, this elegy is a site whereby Auden bridges the political gulf between himself and Yeats: 'Auden from the left, like Yeats from the right, uses the elegy to articulate but override difference'.[44]

The poem itself presents firmer opportunities for quantum reading. We find from the outset there is an eerie non-locality of the deceased poet: '[h]e disappeared in the dead of winter'.[45] The chill numbness of wintery loss felt by the elegist continues with the matter of

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[33] Ibid., p. 3.

[34] Ibid.,

[35] Ibid., p. 5.

[36] Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

[37] Ibid., p. 89.

[38] Sarah Daw, "if he chooses to speak from these roots': entanglement and uncertainly in Charles Olson's quantum ecopoetics' *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, Vol 23, No. 4, (2019) pp. 350–366.

[39] Ibid., p. 355.

[40] Olson, Charles, 'Projective Verse' http://writing.upenn.edu/~taransky/Projective_Verse.pdf [accessed 25 September 2020].

[41] Daw, p. 356.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Razamani, p. 178.

[44] Ibid., p. 189.

[45] W.H. Auden, 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats' https://poets.org/poem/memory-w-b-yeats [accessed 3 March 2019].

fact statement: '[t]he brooks were frozen'.[46] Auden goes on to describe the physical world, simultaneously fulfilling its self-interested state while Yeats is experiencing the last afternoon 'as himself'[47] before, at the point of death, he is transmuted into another state, one of absence and invisibility. It is here, Auden declares, that Yeats 'became his admirers',[48] and now exists in a transmuted form that is 'scattered among a hundred cities'.[49] In his new form, as Auden describes it, we cannot know for certain if Yeats is 'here' or 'there'; moreover, in an interpretation of quantum theory's superposition principle, there is a probability that Yeats, in death, is everywhere.

For Auden, Yeats's 'disappearance' needs some sort of scientific measurable proof, so much so that he repeats the lines 'What instruments we have agree/ The day of his death was a dark cold day.'[50] For Auden the 'disappearance' was so profound that only a scientific measurement could gauge the fact of that loss. However, here we encounter the intrinsic difficulties of measuring at the quantum scale; it is only the trace, or the bleep of the detector which evidences the quantum entity as opposed to the entity itself. For Auden, too, the instruments are insufficient; all they can prove is that the day of Yeats's death 'was a cold dark day'. It is ultimately this failure of instrumentation to find whatever it is that constitutes Yeats, or to register his passing on that day, that serves to heighten the sense of being unable to locate him and which makes Yeats's death so profoundly difficult for Auden to grasp.

In Part II, Auden again goes into the realms of the invisible. Yeats's 'gift'[51] is unfettered by the classical rules of a physical dimension: it is beyond 'physical decay'. He follows this with a reference to Yeats's nationalist convictions declaring '[mad] Ireland hurt you into poetry'.[52] Olson's theory is doubly performed here, once in Yeats's energetic transference of Ireland's revolutionary energies into poetry, and again though Auden's transmission of the loss of Yeats into this poem. In the second case, however, the energy derives from a disappearance, an absence, something which cannot be measured. Finally, in Part III, Auden seems to be arguing that only by allowing the poetic imagination to be counterintuitive can we be liberated from what, in our non-quantum dimension, would be mutually exclusive opposites. Only in the poet's world can we rejoice in darkness, make wine from a curse, find joy in failure, rapture in distress, fountains in the desert. Only there, despite the ravages in the classical Newtonian world, which is blighted by frozen pity, nightmares, barking dogs and hate, can we learn to enjoy our freedom.

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A New Life

Tanya Banerjee

I.

It was their first time on a plane. Rani, with Minni and Babu, aged four and ten, was more lost than ever. She hadn't slept at all before their 5 A.M. flight, packing throughout the day and into the night until their taxi came to take them to Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport. The entire week was a blur of shopping, packing, closing her flat, and saying goodbyes. Although it was all so draining and stressful, the goodbyes were the worst. Goodbye to all her neighbours. Goodbye to Mrs. Singh, Babu's tutor for Marathi. Goodbye to Rekha, her friend since high school. Goodbye to Joshi Uncle, her father's close friend from when they worked in the textile mill together. Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.

Thank goodness Joshi Uncle had helped Rani with everything. Otherwise, she would've still been in her flat and missed their flight. Uncle had even paid for some of the shopping despite Rani's protests, but they both knew Rani barely made it every week and certainly did not have enough money to buy curtains, pillow covers, bundles of string, and an assortment of other items that Sobuj had asked her to purchase. She wondered why these miscellaneous things were needed. Didn't America have all of them and much more?

Closing her flat was especially difficult. She had been living there her entire life. Thirty-five years. So when Rani had wrapped the first teacup in a newspaper and placed it into a suitcase, she couldn't help but cry silently. All her kitchen utensils, some with her mother's name engraved on them, had made their way into suitcases. Most of their things stayed behind. Minni's toys—stuffed animals, dolls, blocks, miniature kitchen set, and colouring books—didn't make it. Neither did Babu's cricket bat, puzzles, or airplane models. Only essential items were packed because the more suitcases there were, the more it cost. Rani couldn't even bring her wedding photo album or the video cassette. They just wouldn't fit.

The last time Rani saw her flat, layers of tarpaulin covered everything but the floors. This was not how she wanted to leave her home—blue tarp suffocating every piece of furniture. But there was no telling when she would be back again. The mounted frames of her parents' photos had remained uncovered. A single flower garland hung around each frame. How long would it be until the flowers wilted?

II.

In all his fantasies of riding on an airplane, Tarun never imagined it would be *this* painful. He was dreading the moment when he'd have to tug on Ma's elbow again. The last time she had taken him to the toilet, the old man in the row next to theirs shook his head at him. The old man looked scary, with yellow teeth and tufts of white hair protruding from his nose and ears. Tarun was glad Ma's body was blocking the old man from view. If he had to go vomit one more time, he was sure that the scary man would say something mean to him.

Apart from his stomach upset and the tiredness that came with it, riding on the airplane was very exciting for Tarun. First time in the air! *Flying!* In between retching during take-off, he had caught glimpses of the ground leaving them while they flew higher and higher into the sky. Buildings had become stationary ants, smaller by the second, surrounded by the ocean's blue. It was such a thrill that he'd almost forgotten he was vomiting into a paper bag. Soon, even the ants and the blue had disappeared. From there on, they were flying among clouds—actual clouds!

Tarun couldn't suppress a different kind of feeling in his stomach, either. It was an empty feeling—not of hunger. He felt so small, tinier than the ant-buildings, in the middle of

all the plane's whirring and strange strangers. If this were how he felt on the very first step of the journey, how would he feel during the rest, during the biggest part—a new country? It would be filled with nothing but strange strangers. Everywhere he'd turn, a new face, a new building, a new everything. "America" was just a word volleyed from one school textbook to another. Sometimes, he would watch American movies and shows with Ma and his little sister, most of which he wouldn't understand. Mainly because he was far too interested in the next rerun of *The Jungle Book* or *Duck Tales* episodes, which were in Hindi anyway. The last American movie they watched was a frightening one that Tarun was consciously trying to forget—*The Bare Witch Project* or something. Luckily, the name of the movie was already fading. No, "America" held no meaning for him.

The only reason why Tarun wasn't crying and hadn't cried was because of who waited for him at the end of the journey, in America: his father. Baba had travelled to America two years ago for work. When he was still with them in Bombay, they were a family. Since leaving, things had changed.

He knew about Ma's friend. The man. He would come to their flat several evenings a week for tea with Ma. The man was very tall, at least a foot more than Tarun's father. He had no glasses like Baba, no twinkle in his eyes, no kindness, but Ma treated him in the same way. Making jokes, watching television together, even eating dinner some days. He used to work with Baba before Baba left for America. At first, the man would visit if he were passing by their complex. Then, his visits became routine. Ma would act surprised each time she opened the door to find him waving at her. Tarun knew they were planned visits. Ma had sometimes picked up the ringing phone the day before and told him and Manisha to go to the bedroom while she took an important call. He and his sister would be in the bedroom for a while, hearing Ma speaking in uplifted tones and laughing and giggling through the thin walls. The same way she talked to the man every time he would come.

Ma had instructed Tarun and Manisha on what to call him and how to act around him. Raj Uncle, they were supposed to call him, but Tarun didn't bother addressing him at all. He hated when the man would ask him about school or try to give him a hug. He couldn't ever be his Baba. No matter how friendly he was with Ma.

Tarun saw them hugging once. Right in their flat. Ma had thought Tarun was still taking his evening nap in the bedroom, but he had been awake. Peering through the crack in the living room door, he could see the two of them tightly holding each other for a few moments before they broke apart. He had never told Ma what he had seen.

Now in his plane seat, he felt defeated. Tarun jabbed at a few buttons on his little screen and navigated the menu using his remote, which Ma was having trouble with before. He put his headphones on. He had only seen headphones on television advertisements, so this was quite the treat. Ma said they didn't have enough money to buy headphones, so Tarun kept his mouth shut as he always did when it came to money. He was happy enough when Ma let him buy a few packets of Maggi noodles every week.

He chose to play a video game, one with a maze and monsters. He let it distract him.

III.

Manisha rubbed her eyes and yawned. She'd had a nice, long nap. Pushing the window shade up just a little, she drew back as the sunlight hit her eyes. As she adjusted to the new brightness, she opened the shade halfway and took in the wonderful sight. She pressed her face against the cold window and marvelled at the hundreds of clouds. They looked like soft beds she could sink into and sleep on properly, better than the plane seats. Who really needed good sleep was her brother. Dada was very sick. Ma kept leaving her alone while she took

Dada to the toilet. While they'd be gone, she would have a full view of the monster man. He was like a ghost. An ugly one, too. White, leathery skin and horrible, yellow teeth. Hair that looked like millions of white spider legs. Manisha couldn't help but stare at him, and when he saw her looking at him, she would whip around in fear and pretend to be sleeping.

Now he was fully blocked by Ma, at the end, and Dada, at her left. They hadn't noticed she was awake. Dada was concentrating on his video game, and Ma was reading a magazine. On the cover of the magazine was a pretty woman with an airplane behind her. Since Manisha didn't know how to read yet, she couldn't figure out the title. She knew the alphabet and all one hundred numbers, of course. Ma helped with her Small Smiles Pre-School homework. Every evening, Manisha would write all the letters and numbers very neatly in her small notebook. Using her Mickey Mouse eraser, she would perfect every pencil line. Then Ma would say in Bengali, "Very good!" At school, Miss Agarwal would write, "Excellent!" and give her a beautiful sticker.

School was not all that easy for Manisha. Every day, as Ma dropped her off at the gates, tears would dribble down her face. "Don't go, Ma, don't go!" she would scream at the top of her lungs until her throat hurt. Every time, the gates would close and Ma would be left on the other side, waving as one of the teachers took her into the building, telling her it was alright. A group of girls would make fun of her for crying. They would laugh and point at her, imitating her wails. Manisha hadn't told Ma about them; she always looked so worried and Manisha did not want to worry her more.

For now, Manisha waited for this long plane ride to be over. She reached across Dada, who gave a small start while playing his game, and tugged on Ma's salwar kameez sleeve.

Ma nearly dropped the magazine. "Oh! You're awake, Minni?" she whispered in Bengali.

"Just now!" Manisha responded, in Bengali as well.

Some passengers let out *shhh*'s. "Talk softly," Ma said.

"Just now," Manisha repeated in a dramatically softer voice. "When are we reaching?"

"Very soon. Then we must wait for an hour."

"Why?" Dada said, putting down his remote.

One hour sounded like a long time to wait somewhere. They had already been on the plane forever, even though most of the flight she had been sleeping.

"It will take a while to get our luggage and everything."

Dada grumbled and began to play his game again. Manisha watched in fascination as multi-coloured, furry circles chased each other in a winding maze. They seemed to be fighting over a pot of gold in the middle. The game reminded her of the times she and Dada's friends played hide-and-seek in front of her home. Whoever was found helped find the others. If you sneaked your way past the searchers and put your foot on the first stair leading to the first floor, you were safe and a winner. In Dada's game, once a furry circle reached the gold, it started dancing and Dada's face lit up.

IV.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Newark Liberty Airport. Local time is 10:33 A.M. and the temperature is 76°F…"

Rani had dozed off and awoke with a start. Everyone around them began rustling about, unfastening their seatbelts and retrieving their belongings from the overhead bins. They were here. This was it.

Thank goodness Babu's stomach had decided to let him be. Rani stood up and stepped into the aisle, bumping into the white man. "Sorry," she said, getting a look of disapproval and a roll of his bloodshot eyes. He muttered something under his breath.

She ignored his rudeness. There were more important things to tend to. Rani adjusted her dupatta around her neck and smoothed the kameez that was all wrinkled from sitting in the same position for hours. She unlatched the door to the overhead bin and struggled to heave the suitcase out. It had been stuffed as much as possible with their belongings, bulging so much that Rani had had a wrestling match with its zippers before. "Babu, could you help me please?" She didn't want to ask poor Babu—surely drained and tired—but she needed someone else to help her out.

Rani and her son managed to pull it out as the passengers—many Indian, many white—were forming lines along the aisles and slowly exiting the plane. Impatient ones pushed past Rani with their suitcases. The wheels hit her ankles and heels.

She swore silently as a suited white man almost knocked her into Babu. These foreigners! They were so rude and disrespectful. Then she realised that she was the foreigner now.

She swung her purse over her shoulder and took Babu's and Minni's hands. "Stay with me," Rani told her children sternly. She didn't want to take any chances at all. She gripped the handle of the overstuffed suitcase in one hand and Minni's hand in the other. They linked together—Babu was at the end of the chain, holding Minni's other hand. Rani hoped the others wouldn't topple little Minni over.

Her heart beat faster. She'd avoided thinking about it during the flight. It had been at the edges of her mind the whole time, threatening to take control. Now she couldn't suppress the thought any longer. Meeting him. Sobuj. Seeing him after so long. She was happy, but underneath that, she felt afraid. If he found out about *him*, she didn't know how he'd react. She'd done nothing wrong, of course. She reminded herself that Raj had been just a friend, nothing more. Just someone to get her through the two years.

She led her children down the aisle, wishing she had another hand to hold onto in front of her, someone to follow.

V.

Tarun tightly held his sister's hand as he followed her and Ma through the crowd. Among the lively, chattering strangers, he felt tired. He just wanted to lie in his bed in Bombay and sleep. Then, when he would wake up, he would eat delicious Maggi noodles cooked with two masala packets instead of one.

Ma led them to a line. "Immigration", a sign read. While they waited, Tarun thought about Baba. He would be here so soon. Finally, here. Together. The thought of them being a family again filled him with nervous excitement. What would be their first reaction when they saw each other? Who would hug who first? After so long, what would they say to each other? Would there be silence?

Something else made him more nervous than excited: Ma and the man. And the hug. Tarun knew Ma loved them very much, but could it be possible she loved the man too? More than Baba? The scene, that small instance, replayed in his mind. Could a hug be just a hug? Nothing more? Every time he saw the man reach over and wrap his arms around Ma's shoulders and Ma doing the same, he felt like tearing the memory apart with lion's claws. Roaring thunderously in the man's face, screaming, "*Let go*! *Let go of her!*" He felt betrayed by his mother. He felt she had betrayed them all.

"Ow!" Manisha yelped. She was frowning at Tarun's hand and trying to wriggle free.

He had unconsciously been crushing Manisha's little fingers in his anger. "Sorry, Mani," he said, loosening his grip but holding onto her nevertheless.

Ma looked too preoccupied, staring ahead at the man behind the glass partition, and hadn't heard Manisha. There Ma was—guiding them, maintaining a tight grip of Tarun's hand, protecting them. Keeping them safe.

It was their turn. "Next," the man barked.

Ma let go of Tarun's hand, stepping in front of the cubicle. He and Manisha followed, standing beside her.

She fumbled with papers and passports in her purse, before arranging them one by one on the ledge. "Sorry," she said.

The man, wearing a police-like uniform, didn't look pleased. "You should have your documents ready. There are many others waiting behind you."

"Sorry," Ma repeated.

Tarun could see she was nervous from the way she repeatedly smoothed her kameez and twisted the dupatta around her wrist. Sometimes she did that when the man used to come over.

Once, she had spilled his cup of tea, narrowly missing the man. Tarun wished she *had* spilled it on him. That way, he would think twice about coming over the next time. The man had jumped to his feet and hurried to their kitchen to get the rag, as if he lived there. He had gotten to his knees and wiped all the tea off the floor. He then had carefully picked up the shards of the teacup with their dustpan, making a show of how skilled he was at spotting tiny fragments. "The children will get hurt!" he had said in Hindi. As if the man cared whether Tarun or Manisha got hurt or not. It was all to please Ma, who had fallen for his trap. She had stood there, beaming at the mess disappearing before her eyes, not even concerned that she had dropped a cup from her mother's precious tea set. When Tarun had pointed this out later, Ma just said that there were more teacups left and not to worry.

"Enjoy your stay," the man behind the glass said reluctantly. "Next!"

VI.

Rani followed the signs and led her children to the baggage claim area. Heads turned and did double takes as Rani passed by. She knew her clothes looked strange to others and was not very welcome, especially as the terrorist attacks had taken place earlier that year. What these Americans did not understand was that wearing traditional clothing did not make her Muslim. She could have worn American-styled clothes—pants and a blouse—but she felt more comfortable in her salwar kameez.

People stood around an immense, oval conveyor belt, upon which were suitcases of all shapes, sizes, and colours. From time to time, the people, some Rani recognised from the flight, would spot their luggage and haul it out.

"Babu, our bags!" Conveniently, both of their bags, swollen as if stung by a thousand wasps, were about to swing past them.

Rani tackled the giant blue one, while Babu pulled the black one out. As Rani and Babu struggled with the suitcases, a loud, drawn-out yell came from right behind them. They got their bag to a standing position and turned around.

It was the old white man from the flight. He was livid.

"You don't have eyes?" he screamed at Babu, pointing to his own. "The problem with you people is you don't have brains. You come from foreign places and think you own America. You throw up the entire time on the plane and now you think you can step on me? Teach your piece of shit of a son a few lessons, woman!"

Others seemed to forget about their bags sliding along the conveyor belt and goggled at the scene before them. The American and the foreigner. The white man and the Indian lady. Rani stood frozen in front of him. She was not frozen because she was scared. She was angry.

A rage that turned her brown skin red. She could feel it: the heat kindling in her chest and burning her face. Hot to the touch.

"How dare you? How dare you speak to my son like that?" She took a step forward.

Everybody seemed to have forgotten how to speak, how to breathe. The man recoiled in front of her.

"You know very well that my son did not intentionally step on your useless foot. You saw us trying to get our suitcase. You know it was a mistake."

She did not know how, but she was now very close to him, her hand somehow raised, a few inches from his ugly face. She lowered her hand with great control. "Now," Rani said, her nose flared and her voice a whisper, "I think you should leave us alone."

He took several steps back, gaping at her as if seeing her for the first time, as if she were the monster. Without a word, he gathered his bags and walked in the opposite direction.

Rani stared after his hunched back, growing smaller every minute, daring him to come back and face her again.

Minni was close to tears, no doubt from all the yelling. Babu looked shaken. He wore an odd expression on his face—admiration mixed with what was it? Suspicion?

VII.

Manisha's stomach growled. After gathering their suitcases and scaring the ghost off, they had been standing right outside the airport, where taxis were lined up. The air smelled different. No traces of petrol or dust. The air felt different—it was not heavy with humidity. It was sunny and hot, but it was a dry heat. The strangest thing for Manisha was the silence. There were people, but no noise. No horns of rikshaws, no rumbling of Bombay traffic. A silence that rang in her ears.

"When are we eating, Ma?" she asked, tugging on Ma's salwar. Manisha hadn't eaten for a while now.

Ma said, "When Baba comes." She was looking ahead and kept tugging at her dupatta.

It had been an hour since they had landed, so shouldn't Baba have been here already? Manisha knew she was supposed to miss someone — her Baba — and that he existed, but she did not remember what he looked like. Only when she saw photos of him and Ma would say, "Look, your Baba!" would she realise that this was the Baba she was supposed to miss. When she heard his voice on the phone once a month, she was reminded of what his voice sounded like. She would forget until the next month.

So when a taxi approached them, and a man got out, Manisha did not feel anything. The man was smiling so happily that it was infectious, so Manisha returned it. She was not smiling because she felt like smiling; she did so for the man's sake.

Dada rushed forward with cries of joy. Ma approached the man too, leaving Manisha on the sidewalk. She did not want to stand there alone, so she followed them, stepping towards the man.

He crouched down in front of her with open arms. He was still smiling the happiest smile. "Will you come to me, Minni?" he said.

He knew her nickname and resembled the man from the photos Ma had shown her from time to time, yet Manisha stayed rooted to the spot.

"She's not smiling anymore," Dada said, concern in his voice.

That was true—Manisha's smile had vanished as she tried to make sense of the vaguely familiar man so eager to have her in his arms. He didn't look like the man she was used to. The man who came to their flat so many evenings a week for tea and more. This man was not as tall. This man had glasses.

"Raj Uncle?" she said, extending her arms for a hug but looking at Ma for help, for reassurance.

"No," Ma whispered. "That is not Raj Uncle."

VIII.

Rani wiped Minni's tears. She had repeated that this was her Baba, but it only confused her, until she had burst into tears.

Standing up, Rani couldn't help but look at her husband, and she knew he saw her fear.

"It is not true," she said.

Sobuj just nodded his head from side to side, unbelieving. His silence was far worse than if he were screaming at her. It was as if, in the absence of words, he accused her.

He did not speak, but Babu did. Barely audible, his head bowed, he said, "I saw you hugging him. The man."

Minni had stopped crying now. She was clinging onto Babu. The air hung heavy with silence.

"What about this? Is this true?" Sobuj said.

He did not say it as if he were angry. He did not say it as if he were afraid to hear the answer. He said it simply, like a fact. This scared Rani more than anything else today.

"Nothing more, Sobuj," Her voice quavered. "We were nothing more."

Rani waited for him to say something, but nothing came. The taxi driver beeped his horn, complaining that he had been waiting for a while now. None of them paid him any attention.

CONTRIBUTORS

Naomi Adam is a first-year Ph.D. student based in the Department of English at the University of Liverpool. They work within the sub-discipline of stylistics, also known as literary linguistics, a field on the interface between language and literature. They are particularly interested in the stylistic theories of possible worlds and text worlds, and in their MRes project sought to begin to develop a synthesis of the two. Their current research project is to investigate innovative, hypothetical focalisation in winners of the (Man) Booker Prize over the last thirty years.

Tanya Banerjee is a writer concerned with the intersecting themes of interculturality, ethnicity, gender, mental illness, and trauma. She writes to help destigmatize mental illness as well as centre on cultures and ethnicities—specifically Bengali-American—that are rarely represented in Western literature. She has a BA in Psychology and Communication from Rutgers University, New Brunswick. Currently, she is pursuing her MA in Creative Writing: Prose Fiction at the University of East Anglia.

Rachel Carney is an AHRC funded PhD student based at Cardiff University studying Creative and Critical Writing. She has had poems, articles and reviews published in a variety of magazines and journals including the New Welsh Review, Poetry Salzburg Review and Wales Arts Review, and one of her poems was shortlisted for the 2019 Bridport Prize. Her research examines the use of ekphrastic poetry as a tool for visitor engagement in art museums.

Ada Cheong (Assistant Editor) is a first-year PhD student in the Department of English at the University of Exeter. She completed her BA at the University of York, and then went on to do an MA in World Literature at the University of Warwick. There, her research took on an environmental tenor, and situated itself in the discourses surrounding resource cultures, the Anthropocene and the Environmental Humanities. Funded by the Global Excellence Studentship, her current project looks into food technologies of the contemporary world food system and their genric inflections in North and South American fiction.

Mike Cooper is an Exeter alumnus (BA English & Drama 1975), returning from autumn 2019 as a mature student to undertake a part-time Master's by Research (MRes) degree in English. His thesis concerns the impact of war on the writing of Charles Causley (1917-2003), using the extensive Causley archive preserved in the Special Collections section of the Old Library. He was born and brought up in the US, graduating from a high school in Manhattan prior to coming to Exeter. He has lived and worked in the UK ever since, primarily in tertiary education, and currently lives near Southampton.

Claire Cox is a funded part-time research student at Royal Holloway, currently researching her poetry-practice PhD thesis. She has a BA in Drama from Loughborough University and an MA in Creative Writing from Oxford Brookes University, where she was awarded the Blackwell's Prize for best student. Her poems have appeared in magazines including Magma, Lighthouse, Envoi and Butcher's Dog. Claire is co-founder and Associate Editor of ignitonpress, based at Oxford Brookes University's Poetry Centre. She was a successful finalist in this year's Primers Five competition and her first pamphlet will be published by Nine Arches Press in May 2020.

Professor Yanli Duan was supervised by Professor Gagnier and now works within the Department of Foreign Language Studies, Hebei Normal University, China.

Ash Gannicott (Co-Editor) is a third year PhD student studying English Literature at Exeter, and has previously served as Assistant Editor for English and Deputy Editor for *Exclamat!on*. With research interests focused around disability studies, deaf studies, and non-normative forms of language, his PhD thesis is looking at literary depictions of gesture and sign language within narrative encounters. As an advocate for the use of interdisciplinary approaches in order to explore and interrogate ideas and cultures, his role of Co-Editor at *Exclamat!on* is one in which he hopes to not only promote academic inclusivity and diversity, but to also promote *Exclamat!on* and the vibrant research culture of Exeter to other academics in the field of disability studies and identity politics.

Amber Hancock received both her BA in 2008 and MA in 2014 in English from California State University Fullerton, and is currently working as a PhD researcher at Bangor University in North Wales exploring the ways in which different types of borders (geographic, symbolic and linguistic) are represented within Contemporary Welsh and Scottish Literature written in English.

Joe Holloway (Co-Editor) is a second year PhD student studying English literature at the University of Exeter, is the Co-Editor for *Exclamat!on* and also the book reviews manager for Literature and History. He writes reviews for the British Society for Literature and Science and has been published by the British Council. He is in his second year of PhD study at Exeter University, exploring scientific and cultural representations of conjoined twins 1800- present day, analysing the interaction between these portrayals and constructions related to 'normalcy', 'personal agency', 'privacy', and 'the individual'. His research is broadly literary, but intersects strongly with disability studies, the history of ideas, and film studies. He completed an MA at the University of Exeter in Literary Studies and a PG-Dip in Mindfulness-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Depression. He previously achieved a first-class BA (Hons) in Literature and Philosophy at the University of Birmingham. Joe can be contacted on Twitter via @EngTwiterature.

Danny Lawson is an MA student studying English Literature at The Open University, where he also completed his BA in the Arts and Humanities (English Literature) with First-class Honours in 2018. For Danny, literature is a gateway subject that accommodates an interdisciplinary approach to the study of texts, contexts, and human insights. His literary interests centre upon subjectivity, considering: notions of time within narratives; the interplay between author, reader, and character; and intertextual and contextual considerations within the text. He is currently working to reconcile these interests with the intention to go on to PhD study.

Janice Lingley has degrees in English and Medieval English from the University of Bristol. Prior to going to university, she worked for five years as a children's journalist and freelance writer. She has had articles published in various literary journals on authors such as John Masefield, Edward Thomas, Rudyard Kipling and Richard Jefferies, and is also a creative children's writer. She is currently a postgraduate with the Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies of Essex University, reading for a doctorate on Kipling.

Atlin Merrick is acquisitions editor for Improbable Press, the author of two books, editor of a dozen more, and writer of hundreds of articles for companies as wide-ranging as WebMD and Powers of Expression, Irish Central and Screenspy. They are attending the MSc Digital Marketing Strategy at Trinity College Dublin.

Daniel Paul Marshall (Assistant Editor). After living in South Korea for almost 9 years, Daniel is now studying for an MA in English Literary Studies. He published poetry widely whilst living in Korea. His interests include Anthropocene Poetics, Object Orientated Ontology & Ecology. His thesis will look at John Wedgewood Clarke's poetry collection 'Landfill' and the landfill as a Hyperobject.

Elena Martin (Assistant Editor) is currently studying MA English with a focus on Victorian Studies. Her broad interests are the impacts of industrialisation on (and in!) 19th Century literature and culture as well as the representation of the working classes through their dialect. She completed her BA in English and Drama and is also interested in the performativity of literary works, particularly Dickens's Oliver Twist.

Vishal Ranjan (Assistant Editor) is currently enrolled in the MA English Literary Studies programme at Exeter. His primary research interests include Memory and Nostalgia, Dalit consciousness, Cultural Studies, and Magical Realism. He holds a diploma in Creative Writing from SCDL and a first-class Honours degree in English from Christ University, India.

Hannah Rudd (Assistant Editor). Following copy and bid writing stints in Peru and Bath, Hannah has returned to academia to continue her English and Creative Writing studies with an MA in Creative Writing. Her interests include literature of the fin de siècle, magical realism, the surreal and the absurd.

Sophie Smith (Assistant Editor) is currently a first-year PhD student studying English Literature at Exeter. Her PhD thesis is looking at the legacy of the fin de siècle and degeneration theory in the early twentieth century, specifically through presentations of pathological criminality and eugenics in Golden Age crime fiction. Her research interests include deviance, the Gothic, and social history.

Antonela Pallini Zemin graduated as an English Language and English Literature Teacher and began writing poetry back in secondary school. She writes both in English and Spanish and she is currently attending the MA in Creative Writing Poetry at University of East Anglia.