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Endorsement

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It gives us very great pleasure to welcome and endorse this new issue of the Durham English Review. The Review is the work of undergraduate students who have enthusiastically supported the journal, commissioned the essays, and overseen the design and printing. In publishing high quality student essays in the field of English Studies, the Review has done much to promote undergraduate research. The ideal of research-led teaching is thoroughly embedded now in many university English departments, but the best research-led teaching is that which thrives on a continuing and dynamic exchange of ideas between lecturers and students. At Durham University, we believe that excellent research enhances teaching, but also that teaching, at its very best, enlivens and sustains research. Research is not the preserve of lecturers and postgraduates. Year after year, we see outstanding examples of undergraduate research in dissertations and special topic essays. Since its inception in 2011, the Durham English Review has clearly demonstrated that undergraduate research is a major part of the discipline and profession of English. It approaches English in a wide-ranging historical and international context, soliciting articles on all aspects of the subject, from undergraduate students around the world. Over the past five years, it has published high calibre essays on an admirable range of authors and topics, from Julian of Norwich to Toni Morrison, and from Old Norse literature to modernist poetics. The current issue continues this tradition of wide-ranging historical scholarship, with essays on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, on The Lover’s Watch by Aphra Behn, and on the novels of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot. Special attention is given in this issue to questions of influence and adaptation, including the impact of Sheridan Le Fanu’s Carmilla on Bram Stoker’s Dracula and the importance of Charles Baudelaire in Seamus Heaney’s writing of ‘The Digging Skeleton’. We are delighted to support this new issue of the Durham English Review, skilfully edited by Arya Shree Thampuran. We wish the journal well, and we encourage readers everywhere to support the Review and contribute to its lasting success.

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ELENA VIOLARIS

Imagining Imagination in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre, Shirley and Villette*

‘Imagining imagination’ suggests two lines of thought: imagining the mental images of somebody else, and mentally picturing the imaginative process. The vividness of Charlotte Brontë’s imagination, from childhood fantasies of Angria to her mature novels, prompted a self-reflexivity – she was interested not just in what she could imagine, but in the act of imagining. Brontë grew up in the wake of Romanticism, reading Byron, Coleridge and Walter Scott in childhood, and joined the Romantics in being, as put by C. M. Bowra, ‘inspired by [a] sense of the mystery of things to probe it with a peculiar insight’.¹ In various letters, she describes the ‘fiery imagination that at times eats me up’, the ‘strong, restless faculty which claims to be heard and exercised.’² For Brontë, imagination was constantly straining towards

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a transcendent truth, an inexpressible mystery. Jane Eyre’s paintings, Shirley’s inspiration and Lucy Snowe’s ‘strange, necromantic joys of fancy’ demonstrate different stages of the spectrum from inspiration to artistic production – unconscious perception to willed poetic synthesis – in keeping with emerging Romantic self-consciousness and the influence of Coleridge’s theories. By reproducing her own sources of inspiration in the imaginations of her characters, Brontë is attempting to understand the mystery of things. Her works see her phrasing and rephrasing the same aesthetic questions: why is inspiration stimulated, how does imagination react and how is this response communicated through art? Viewing these correspondences as simply parallels would miss the principle of levels that Brontë implicitly draws attention to: how every act of imagining can include another act of imagining in a potentially infinite series.

Brontë rarely represents the actual landscapes of her characters’ fantasy worlds. She suggests that Lucy Snowe possesses her own ‘still

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shadow-world’ and illustrates Shirley’s creativity through her devoirs, but does not depict the content of their solitary reveries.\(^4\) The few imaginative visions that are portrayed include Jane Eyre’s paintings and the seemingly minor passage when Martin Yorke is reading fairy tales in *Shirley*. As the imaginations of imagined characters, these fantasies are inherently self-reflexive, and Brontë makes the process of imagining visible by disrupting it; the fantasies are characterised by formlessness, shapelessness and incompleteness which ingrain an awareness of being imagined into the very texture of the visions. In *Jane Eyre*, the imaginative landscape of Jane’s paintings is imbued with cloud imagery – the Evening Star’s lineaments are ‘seen as through the suffusion of vapour’, hair streams ‘shadowy, like a beamless cloud torn’ and Death’s diadem is ‘vague […] as a cloud’.\(^5\) Nothing can be clearly discerned, everything is fluid and in a state of potential. Lyndall Gordon, commenting on the concept of ‘shadow’ in Brontë’s life, remarks that ‘gaps have the interest of suggestion; the


works can define their meaning’; in the hidden spaces of Jane’s paintings, the ‘meaning’ is precisely suggestion, as attention is drawn to unfixed potential.⁶

In *A Theory of Literary Production*, Pierre Macherey comments that a work can be ‘complete in itself’ when extrinsic ‘incompleteness, betokened by the confrontation of separate meanings, is the true reason for its composition.’⁷ This is the notion behind the Romantic fragment poem, which Marjorie Levinson describes as working with ‘determinate or shaped absence’.⁸ Percy Shelley in particular propagated the idea that the fragment is more powerful than supposed completion because it can ‘obscurely suggest to us the grandeur and perfection of the whole’.⁹ Disrupting the conventions of artistic production emphasises the ‘transformational act […] as opposed to product’, underlining the ‘dynamic, experiential nature of the

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artwork’. Jane’s paintings work in this spirit, as while she feels frustrated at having ‘imagined something which [she] was quite powerless to realise’, her paintings embody this very powerlessness; their characteristics of vagueness and hiddenness imply that they are only shadows of the secret ‘mystery of things’. In his *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge describes secondary imagination as that which ‘dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate’; something of that process is evident here, but the re-creation is incomplete. The paintings use art to depict the imaginative state which precedes art: the ‘twilight’ skies are ‘diffusion’ in action, the ‘eclipse’ of the first picture is ‘dissipation’ without re-coherence. Jane paints fragmented bodies – a corpse’s arm, the Evening Star delineated ‘to the bust’, the bloodless, glassy eyes of Death – yet the significance lies not so much in what is hidden as in the fact of hiddenness. The transcendent reality of her vision cannot be accessed, but the fact of transcendance can be

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made known. Formlessness suggests inaccessibility, such as the ungraspable nature of the visionary impulse or Death itself. In Jane’s Miltonic ‘shape which shape had none’ shapelessness is a paradoxically defining feature of the shape.\textsuperscript{15} Death, like the ‘mystery of things’, is represented more truly if it represents its own incomprehensibility and resists its own depiction – a resistance visually suggested by the obscure ‘folds of black drapery’ and ‘vague’ diadem.\textsuperscript{16}

The same principle is evident when Martin Yorke is sitting alone in the forest, reading – and imagining – fairy tales: ‘all around him is […] shapeless, and almost colourless’, with ‘formless folds of […] mist’.\textsuperscript{17} The act of imagination is taking place; possibilities exist in simultaneous flux without fixed definition. Debra Gettelman discusses how the book in \textit{Jane Eyre}, in instances such as Jane’s Bewick fantasies, is a ‘space of contest between the author’s and the reader’s imaginings’.\textsuperscript{18} In Martin’s case, this is taken a step further as the book

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p. 154. \\
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, p. 154. \\
\textsuperscript{17} Charlotte Brontë, \textit{Shirley}, p. 646. \\
\textsuperscript{18} Debra Gettelman, “‘Making out’ Jane Eyre’, \textit{ELH}, 74/3 (Autumn 2007), 557-581 (p. 559).
\end{quote}
of fairy tales is barely referenced, existing only as a point of inspiration. It stimulates, but does not seem to be entirely present in, a fantastical sequence which spontaneously unfolds from itself: a ‘green-robed lady’ appears, ‘arrests [Martin] with some mysterious question’, and convinces him that he ‘must follow her into fairyland’. Here the first fantasy ends, unfinished, its fragmentariness suggesting – in Coleridgean terms – the associative faculty of ‘fancy’ rather than the unifying and cohering act of ‘imagination’. Martin imagines characters whose background is not only unknown but non-existent as they are in the process of creation. When the fantasy ends, they disappear rather than living on like Jane and Rochester in the implied world of Ferndean. If the ‘green-robed lady’ were truly part of a story, ‘mystery’ as a concept would be replaced by ‘mystery’ as an actuality: her significance would lie in her unknown background and intent, rather than in communicating imagination’s possibilities. As it is, the lady hangs in a creational balance, suspended in a middle space as

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19 Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*, p. 646.
20 Ibid, p. 646.
something imagined whose meaning lies in the world of reality, in the fact of being imagined.

When discussing the principle of recursion – ‘nesting, and variations on nesting’ (such as parenthetical clauses or stories within stories) – Douglas R. Hofstadter uses the spatial language of computer science to demonstrate how these levels interact:

To *push* is to suspend operations on the task you’re currently working on, without forgetting where you are – and to take up a new task. The new task is usually said to be ‘on a lower level’ than the earlier task. To *pop* is the reverse – it means to close operations on one level, and to resume operations exactly where you left off, one level higher.21

This is evident literary texts, both narratively and thematically, in well-known frame stories such as the *Arabian Nights*. Although criticism has linked myth and fantasy to the politics of powerlessness in *Shirley*, imagination in the context of aesthetic discourse seems a minor theme

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in the novel, and Martin Yorke a minor character. Yet when he reads in the forest, Brontë is moving a level inwards; she conducts a ‘push’, not so much to tell another story but to consider how stories are formed. Just as the narrator’s ‘magic mirror’ embeds a depiction of Jessie and Rose’s futures within a description of the Yorke family at home together, so does Brontë momentarily suspend the plot of Robert Moore’s illness to focus in on Martin’s psyche. Thematically, she is briefly examining the activity of the individual imagination within the novel’s general attempt at ‘real, cool and solid’ condition-of-England omniscience. The pop back to the forest is initiated by Caroline’s footsteps and signified by Martin’s urgently shutting his book.

This navigation of levels is evident again within the inner space of Martin’s fantasies. In the second of his fairy tale visions, the ‘lone wanderer’ is ‘glancing down into hollows where the brine lies fathoms-deep’ and contains ‘wilder and huger vegetation, than is found on

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24 Ibid. p. 7.
land’.  

25 Martin’s imagination is working dynamically; looking closely at a detail means entering a new realm of vision. To see inside the briny hollows, small as they seem in the perspective of wild seas, is for the field of vision to be entirely filled and for further levels of depth to become visible. The ‘wilder and huger vegetation’ suggests a progression into increased strangeness which culminates in the ‘band of white, evanescent Nereides’.  

26 That Brontë envisioned the imaginative process as an unfolding of levels is evident from her own journal entries when, aged twenty, she was teaching at Roe Head. At any spare moment, Brontë would enter the fantasy world of Angria that she had been constructing with Branwell since childhood. One night, she describes how the storm ‘whirled me away like heath in the wilderness for five seconds of ecstasy’; etymologically, ‘ecstasy’ comes from the Greek ‘ek-stasis’, meaning ‘out of place’.  

27 The imaginative trance is a kind of transportation, a temporary suspension of the previous state by entering a new state. In her fantasy, Brontë

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25 Ibid, p. 646.
26 Ibid, pp. 646-647.
appears in a ‘trodden garden’, ‘ascended a great terrace’ and approaches a palace wall. She ‘glanced at what the internal glare revealed’ and enters a ‘room lined with mirrors’, which gradually fills with furniture and characters. This visual unfolding both adds dimension to the world of her characters and suggests a progressive immersion in the trance. The fantasy becomes more elaborate as she spatially moves deeper inwards (from stormy garden to palace to mirror-lined room) towards a core of information: the characters in the room. This is a more sophisticated fantasy than Martin’s; while Martin’s is the colourless world of germination, Brontë’s world of Angria had been gradually constructed over many years.

Both Brontë and Martin participate in their visions. Of Martin, Brontë describes how ‘(h)e reads; he is led into a solitary mountain region’, ‘he hears’, ‘he sees’, ‘he is spell-bound’. The imagining subject is part of the vision as Brontë makes no distinction between ‘he reads’ happening in the forest and ‘he is led’ happening in the mind. Participation, like translucency and vagueness, is another way

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28 Ibid.
29 Charlotte Brontë, Shirley, p. 646.
of disrupting the imaginative process. Including the imaginer in the imagining prevents the ‘suspension of disbelief’ which allows a temporary ‘forgetting’ that an imagined thing is imagined. In Martin’s case, not only does he imagine a solitary mountain region, but he imagines himself within it, interacting with the lady. The self who ‘hears’, ‘sees’ and is ‘spell-bound’ is the self that Martin imagines, and different to the self who ‘reads’. Martin’s imagined version of himself is simultaneously perceiving and creating, imagined and imagining, as the imagined Martin is the one on whom ‘dawns […] the brightest vision’ of the green-robed lady.\(^\text{30}\) Martin is imagining himself in a world of imaginative flux, in a world he is presently creating – he is imagining himself imagining, duplicating the self-consciousness present in Brontë’s conception of her own imagination. Brontë had herself participated in her earlier storm-inspired trance: ‘I went through a trodden garden’, ‘I ascended a great terrace’, ‘I glanced at what the internal glare revealed’. At its most complex possibility, the structure of layers can be unfolded thus: as readers, we imagine Charlotte Brontë’s imagination of herself imagining Martin

\(^{30}\) Ibid, p. 646.
imagining himself imagining. Brontë does not only imagine the imaginations of her characters, but provides them with a self-consciousness which suggests the infinite potential of imaginative levels.

In his work on narratology, Mieke Bal remarks that when an embedded text resembles the primary fabula, the process is comparable to infinite regress – a literary recursion. Martin’s woodland surroundings resemble his imaginative visions, producing a parallel between the landscape of imagination and the landscape for imagination. On another level, Brontë is constantly replicating her own objects of inspiration – twilight, storms, shipwrecks, clouds – in the surroundings that her characters are inspired by, and again in the things they imagine. They are simultaneously metaphors for imagination (the clouds and twilight of Jane’s paintings suggest the unfixed fluidity of imaginative potential) and objects of inspiration, as imagination is both represented and stimulated by their characteristics of mystery, transcendence and obscurity. When Martin is reading, the lighting

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reflects like ‘white, or violet, or pale green gems’; as the last of a triad, green receives a heavier emphasis and is the colour which reappears in his vision of the ‘green-robed lady’.\textsuperscript{32} The lady’s ‘gems’ suggest Martin’s ‘crystalline evening’, and the vision’s misty ‘solitary mountain region’ finds a counterpart in the forest’s ‘North Pole colouring’.\textsuperscript{33} Although the ‘clearness’ of Martin’s winter evening seems to contrast with the formlessness of the imagining, it is a shifting clarity of frosty sharpness which is still part of a flickering world where colours alternate (‘white, or violet, or pale green’) and light is liminal (the moon ‘dim and vague’).\textsuperscript{34} Martin’s surroundings participate in the twilight state of his imaginings, the twilight state similarly at work in Jane’s paintings. The day has ‘settled’, but into a ‘crystalline evening’ – like the paradox of the ‘shape which shape had none’, it has settled into something defined by a refusal to settle.\textsuperscript{35}

Not only does Brontë create vivid imaginations for her characters, but also plays with their awareness of being imagined. Heather Glen

\textsuperscript{32} Charlotte Brontë, \textit{Shirley}, p. 644.  
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, pp. 644-646.  
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, pp. 644-646.  
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, p. 644.
connects a self-reflexive piece of childhood writing called ‘Strange Events’ with the meta-awareness implicit when Lucy gazes at a chandelier during the concert with Graham in *Villette*.\(^{36}\) To Lucy, it ‘seemed the work of eastern genii’ as she ‘almost looked to see if a huge, dark, cloudy hand […] were not hovering in the lustrous and perfumed atmosphere of the cupola’.\(^{37}\) The aesthetically glittering chandelier, having no purpose in its extravagant structure beyond its own appearance, stimulates a sense of unreality. The chandelier’s elaborateness suggests its own process of creation – not just in terms of physical assembling, but as an object of fantasy, an unexplainable ‘mass that dazzled me’, ‘ablaze with stars’.\(^{38}\) It is unnerving because for a moment Lucy’s entire world feels fictional, constructed in some invisible outside frame which she has momentarily caught a glimpse of in the cloudy hand. As children, the young Brontës gave characters to Branwell’s toy soldiers, playing with them and writing them into stories. One of Charlotte’s was Charles Wellesley, based on the Duke

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\(^{38}\) Ibid, p. 209.
of Wellington’s brother, and this is the narrator of ‘Strange Events’. Brontë plays with his awareness of being an invented character; he suddenly feels like a ‘non-existent shadow’, ‘the mere idea of some other creature’s brain’. This state culminates in him being ‘raised suddenly to the ceiling […] in [a] hand wide enough almost to grasp the Tower of All Nations’ – this is the hand of the young Brontë playing with the soldier as ‘Charles’. More explicitly than Lucy Snowe, Charles’s frame of reality is momentarily torn and he sees outside it, convinced ‘of [his] non-existence’ and that his world is ‘nothing but idea’.

In one sense, Charles ‘sees’ directly into reality, watching Charlotte and her siblings play with their characters. At the same time, Brontë has written herself into the story, fictionalising her action. By drawing attention to frames, she has added another less obvious frame: the ‘real’ world of the Brontë children that Charles hazily discerns has itself been imagined by Brontë. This is the paradoxical predicament

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40 Christine Alexander, ed., The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë: 1826-1832, p. 258.
41 Ibid.
inherent in metafiction, as to make characters aware of being imagined is to construct an implicit reality that they can be aware of – which itself is fictional. Characters can never truly become aware of their outside frame, only of the fact of frames. While on one level Brontë is playing with the form of fiction, on another she is drawing attention to a more fundamental uncertainty. The point is not so much that Charles, the chandelier and Lucy are fictional, and briefly become aware of themselves as fictional, but that Brontë is exposing an innate sense of fictionality in real life experience. One can create infinite inward imaginative frames, but considering the possibility of frames behind them – the position of the imagined rather than the imaginer – feels jarring and unnatural. This chain is what distinguishes ‘imagining imagination’ from the flattened version of simply ‘imagining’. Hofstadter, discussing the reflexive drawings of Escher, comments:

[O]ne level in a drawing might clearly be recognizable as representing fantasy or imagination; another level might be recognizable as reality. […] But the mere presence of these two
levels invites the viewer to look upon himself as part of yet another level.\textsuperscript{42}

Whether expressed in mathematics, painting or literature, this is the principle that Brontë’s interest in the act of imagining evokes. It taps into a history of theories about literary composition, recalling the age-old association of poet as ‘poiein’: the ‘maker’ who duplicates in their work the process of creation that made them.

Brontë held a Romantic notion of genius as, in Sue Lonoff’s words, ‘an overwhelming force, mysterious yet living’, a power ‘instinctual, not studied’.\textsuperscript{43} For Brontë, form was the secondary embodying of a primary impulse, in a similar vein to Shelley in \textit{A Defence of Poetry}:

[W]hen composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Hofstadter, \textit{Gödel, Escher, Bach}, p. 15.
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Brontë’s emphasis on imagined scenes that ‘pen cannot pourtray [sic]’ similarly implies that as it approaches expression, the initial vital poetic impulse is translated further and further from its original significance.\textsuperscript{45} From this notion of the creative imagination in potential as the essence of art follows the question of what constitutes an artist: whether the term ‘artist’ can be applied to somebody who perceives the world as art, seeing the ‘poetry’ in nature, or whether they must actively produce work which has communicable form. Martin and Shirley fall into the first category. Martin ‘professedly […] tramples on the name of poetry’, while Nature ‘unfolds a page of stern, of silent, and of solemn poetry beneath his attentive gaze’.\textsuperscript{46} When Shirley is inspired on a warm summer evening, in typically dim and moonlit surroundings, Brontë suggests that if she were not ‘an indolent, a reckless, an ignorant being, she would take a pen at such moments’ and so ‘possess what she was enabled to create’.\textsuperscript{47} This state, of experiencing inspiration without the impulse to ‘fix the apparition, tell the vision revealed’, is closer to

\textsuperscript{46} Charlotte Brontë, Shirley, pp. 646-647.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, pp. 437-438.
the transcendent ideal; in Brontë’s philosophy art is a translation which must re-stimulate the formless impulse of inspiration in its perceiver.\textsuperscript{48} For Shirley, the ‘ingredients’ of inspiration remain unmixed as twilight and moon are not reconfigured in an attempt to understand their mystery, but simply recognised as objects of mystery. No separate poem is produced, but the experience has something in common with poetry; Shirley is not an artist, but there is something of the artist in her perception.

Lucy Snowe is also an artist of experience, despite her insistence on an innate ‘diffidence’.\textsuperscript{49} Lucy’s passivity is often noted, as Heather Glen compares Jane’s active artistry to the way that Lucy ‘prefers to approach her life as a construct, and herself as an aesthetic creation’: ‘where Jane paints visionary watercolours, Lucy makes […] painstaking copies of engravings.’\textsuperscript{50} Although Lucy does not, within the novel, translate her imagination into concrete form through craft (although, as a fictional autobiography, the novel itself is her artistic craft) she is an artist in the same sense that Martin and Shirley are. This

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, p. 438.
\textsuperscript{49} Charlotte Brontë, \textit{Villette}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{50} Heather Glen, \textit{Imagination in History}, p. 5.
is illustrated in her fascination with storms, as she describes her habit of creeping outside:

[T]oo resistless was the delight of staying with the wild hour, black and full of thunder, pealing out such an ode as language never delivered to man – too terribly glorious, the spectacle of clouds, split and pierced by white and blinding bolts.\textsuperscript{51}

The calm moonlit night makes ‘life a poem’ for Shirley, nature unfolds ‘a page of […] poetry’ for Martin and the storm is an ‘ode’ for Lucy. As with Shirley, the reader is not presented with an ode, but with the ‘ingredients’ of a potential ode: the imaginative stimulants of clouds, bolts and sharp piercing movements. The position of Lucy’s ‘ode’, as opposed to Shirley’s more general ‘poem’, is difficult to pin down: what exactly is praising and glorifying, and what is being praised and glorified? The storm is described in language suggesting something greater than that which Lucy can perceive; human vision blackens before it can take in the ‘blinding’ bolts and awe falls short in appreciating the ‘too terribly glorious’ scene. It praises some transcendental experience inaccessible to Lucy, demonstrating the

upper limits of her comprehension and imagination by flashing glimpses of things that her sight can no longer follow. Lucy’s response to the storm indicates the dynamism of her imagination as something always actively experienced and never translated. Lucy desires to be, not to replicate, wishing she had ‘wings and could ascend the gale, spread and repose my pinions on its strength, career in its course, sweep where it swept’.\textsuperscript{52} If she sees herself as an ‘aesthetic creation’, this is not entirely passive; Lucy does not want to become art in its static form, but to become the ‘poetic’ impulse which precedes form.\textsuperscript{53}

Charlotte Brontë’s attitude to imagination is ambivalent partly because ‘imagination’ cannot be thought about in a unified way. To trace Brontë’s Romantically-inspired line of thinking backwards is to arrive at the imaginative philosophies of Coleridge and Wordsworth, and Mary Warnock notes that it was through Coleridge that many subsequent English writers were introduced to theories of German idealism.\textsuperscript{54} In this chain of associations, Immanuel Kant formed part of the intellectual atmosphere that Brontë also participated in – and Kant’s

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, pp. 163-164.
\textsuperscript{53} Heather Glen, \textit{Imagination in History}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{54} Mary Warnock, \textit{Imagination} (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 72.
transcendental idealism provides a useful conceptual framework for considering Brontë’s view of imagination, particularly in the distinction between beauty and sublimity. Kant describes how the aesthetic experience of the ‘beautiful’ happens when imagination is used in the service of cohesion, reducing chaos to order in appreciation of a satisfying pattern; pleasure stems from the creative exertion of freely framing an image, of imagination in harmony with understanding. The sublime is felt when the imagination is bewildered, when something is ‘unsuitable for our faculty of presentation, and as it were doing violence to our imagination’.\textsuperscript{55} No images can be produced to shape this formless sensation, but there is a pleasure in apprehending something inherently contra-final; Warnock remarks that ‘it is our own very inadequacy to form an image of the idea suggested by the object which constitutes our sense of the sublime’.\textsuperscript{56}

Shirley’s creative imagination is described in the language of beauty: active, harmonious, satisfying. She senses the ‘mystery of


\textsuperscript{56} Mary Warnock, \textit{Imagination}, p. 57.
things’ but feels no burning urge to discover them; she is inspired but enjoys inspiration for its own sake, spared the dissatisfactions of attempting to ‘tell the vision revealed’, the fragmentations of translation. Imagination is stimulated (‘the swift glory spreads out, sweeping and kindling, and multiplies’) but satisfied (‘a still, deep, inborn delight […] unmingled – untroubled’).\(^57\) However, Lucy’s ‘strange, necromantic joys of fancy’ suggest something more powerful than Shirley’s experience. Imagination is at its most intense in *Villette*, and its extremes are made visible. For Lucy, the exercise of imagination in formulating the aesthetic response of beauty feels false and illusory because she sees herself as detached from the beautiful: regulating chaos to harmony reminds her of her own alienation from harmony. Returning from her stay with the Brettons, Lucy praises imagination as an ideal ‘spirit, softer and better than Human Reason’, a ‘divine, compassionate, succourable influence’\(^58\). Glen remarks that the terms Lucy uses to describe imagination are similar to those applied to the world of Dr John, who is also associated with harmony, a fondness for

\(^{57}\) Charlotte Bronte, *Shirley*, p. 437.

sweets, and ‘perfect happiness’. When Lucy later cancels her praise of imagination as illusory (‘that manna I drearily eulogised a while ago’), she is suggesting that imagination in the service of beauty – the pattern of Dr John – is poisonous to her, concluding that ‘the love born of beauty was not mine; I had nothing in common with it.’

Lucy’s ‘joys of fancy’ are not romantic, but, in her own words, ‘necromantic’; she receives a perverse but more sustaining pleasure in the frictional exercise of imagination against its own incapacity, in the sensation of sublimity. The use of imagination in this way feels more violent, but more her own. Either way there is pain; while Dr John is alluring but illusory in his beauty, M. Paul is perversely alluring but inaccessible in his sublimity. He is the stormy counterpoint (he ‘might storm, might rage’, ‘fumed like a bottled storm’) to beauty’s cloying sweetness. He participates in the inaccessibility of the sublime, dying and so unable to be completely realised, but exciting in Lucy something which her imagination has an affinity with. It is not just that Lucy’s perspective of imagination changes throughout the text, but the faculty

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59 Heather Glen, *Imagination in History*, p. 239.
60 Charlotte Bronte, *Villette*, pp. 239, 468.
of imagination manifests in different forms which demand different responses. It is not the universal ‘imagination’ which she eulogises and then dismisses, but imagination used in the harmonious framing of the beautiful. Imagination used in the framing of the sublime – or, more precisely, imagination’s incapacity to frame the sublime – produces a different kind of pain. This is accompanied by the suggestion of a heightened experience, thrilling in its locked potential, a pain not of illusion but of inaccessibility.

The creative imagination is the image-making faculty stimulated by something ‘poetic’ to produce something ‘poetic’. Differences between the imaginations of Jane, Shirley, Martin, Lucy and Brontë herself demonstrate the multiple processes at work here. There is a distinction between the initial impulse of ‘inspiration’, the free, inconclusive framing of images in a way akin to ‘fancy’, and the conscious production of art. These processes interlink; Jane’s paintings are a result of conscious artistic production, but her desire to communicate formlessness is a self-reflexive attempt to depict the transcendence of the original visionary impulse which stimulated the framing of the images she portrays. The free play of ‘fancy’ is evident
in Martin, Jane’s Bewick imaginings and Brontë’s storm-inspired Angrian visions, while the examples from Lucy and Shirley illustrate inspiration. Having no ‘content’ in itself – as in, framing no images – this feeling must be described from the outside in terms of its imaginative stimulants. While Brontë and Jane are artists, Shirley is a pre-artist of beauty, and Lucy a pre-artist of the sublime.

These processes can be dissected further: what exactly is this ‘poetic’ impulse which both stimulates imagination and is communicated by art? What is it about these common stimulants (storms, moon, stars, twilight…) that activates the faculty of creative imagination? Why does the imagination play by framing further images of these elements, and translating them into ‘art’? Kant discusses the intangibility of aesthetic ideas:

[T]hat representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.62

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This is the ‘ode without language’, the thing beyond expression. According to Kant, objects which stimulate a sense of the sublime – the storms, shipwrecks and moons of Brontë’s imaginative landscapes – do so because they ‘become symbols, standing for something different from and beyond themselves’, suggesting ideas which the mind can form but not express. Creative genius lies in the ability to find some kind of expression, albeit never complete expression, for these transcendent ideas.

The ‘poetic’ impulse accordingly stems from the mind encountering ideas which it cannot imaginatively frame, and certain objects stimulate these ideas by suggesting transcendence: vastness and hiddenness, the permanence of the moon, the power of the sea. Imagination reconfigures and frames these stimulants in an attempt to represent the ideas, and Brontë’s parallels across imaginative layers can be read in this light. Brontë is inspired by twilight, stormy environments (described in her Roe Head journals) to imagine similar atmospheres that characters are inspired by (Shirley’s twilit surroundings, Lucy’s storm), and characters in turn imagine these

atmospheres again (Jane’s twilit and stormy paintings). She is constantly duplicating inspiring objects through further levels of imagination in an attempt to fathom the mystery of the ‘poetic’.

Brontë’s attitude to imagination has long been discussed in the language of binaries: passion and reason, delusion and reality, temptation and resistance. Angria was her ‘infernal world’, seductive but dangerous in its removal from reality. Yet alongside its ethical ambivalence and frictions with Victorian society, Brontë’s imagination was profoundly interested in itself. The imaginative self-consciousness of Brontë and her characters extends into a long sequence of levels, an infinite regression straining towards the ‘mystery of things’. Although when Brontë was writing she was the supreme imaginer of her characters and their imaginings, the embellishments of what Lucasta Miller terms the ‘Brontë myth’ have distorted her almost to the status of an imagined character. This is to some extent inevitable – after death one can only be ‘imagined’, not ‘imagining’ – but the Brontës were particularly mythologised; in the last chapter of Kathleen

64 Charlotte Brontë, ‘All this day I have been in a dream’, ca. 14 October 1836, in Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. by Richard Dunn, p. 413.
Wallace’s *Immortal Wheat*, life-sized marionettes of Charlotte, Emily, Anne, Jane Eyre, Cathy and Heathcliff dance on an imaginary stage with no distinction between real and literary characters. Miller comments that ‘nothing could better illustrate the way in which Brontë worshippers had taken possession of their idols and were pulling the strings’. Brontë’s imagining of imagination suggests a somewhat darker antithesis: being imagined by something imagined.

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KARA ROSS

‘After Baudelaire’: What can a re-evaluation of ‘The Digging Skeleton’ tell us about Seamus Heaney’s *North*?

Seamus Heaney’s *North*, published in 1975, is well known for being among his strongest and most provocative collections. Written in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday and some of the most violent years of the Troubles, it has received an extremely varied response from critics and its public. Notable negative reactions to the collection included critics such as Edna Longley and David Lloyd, who objected to his portrayal of death and violence. However, whatever misgivings people have had with this collection, it is undoubtedly the most clear and systematic engagement with the Troubles of Heaney’s career. Yet, while *North* concerns politics, that is not the extent of its scope. In *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney*, Neil Corcoran outlines a long – though not exhaustive – list of intertextual references and allusions that feature in the collection, illustrating the range of ways in which Heaney engages with

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68 Elmer Kennedy-Andrews observes that these critics ‘accuse Heaney of simply and unquestioningly repeating old myths’ (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney*, p. 54).
other writers and texts in his poetry.\textsuperscript{69} According to him, *North* is a highly intertextual work because it ‘is a book almost as much about poetry as it is about Northern Ireland’.\textsuperscript{70} *North* is a book about poetry: above all, a book which considers the remit of poetry in response to political turmoil.

Translation and intertextuality are two aspects of Heaney’s work that have been thoroughly canvassed in recent criticism. Heaney is as much translator as he is poet; he has received credit for his modern translations of medieval literature, as well as a number of classical texts. Moreover, intertextual allusion is rife in his poetry and formal translation occupies an important space in many of his collections. Throughout *North*, Heaney alludes to texts by other writers, renders passages from other texts, nods to his predecessors and contemporaries. However, one poem that has been largely ignored in criticism surrounding the collection is ‘The Digging Skeleton’, subtitled ‘After Baudelaire’. This poem is most accurately described as a version of Charles Baudelaire’s ‘Le Squelette Laboureur’, which features in the

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid, p. 57.
‘Tableaux Parisiens’ section of his infamous collection *Les Fleurs du Mal*.

At first glance, it seems perfectly reasonable that this poem has not gained much attention from critics. It is a fine version-translation that presents a variation on the necrophilic theme of *North*, but without further attention does not appear to be a pivotal poem. Heaney does not overtly reference Baudelaire elsewhere in the collection or indeed, it would appear, anywhere else in his poetic works. Yet, as we have already noted, in a book so concerned with intertextuality and poetry itself, it seems unlikely that the poem is merely an incidental interlude. Through a discussion of the nature of translation and intertextuality in the work of Seamus Heaney, and analysis of this poem, it will be argued that intertextuality performs a number of complex functions in his poetry and that a more nuanced approach to this than is often applied is crucial to understanding his work as a whole. Through such attention, it is possible to suggest that the appearance of ‘The Digging Skeleton’ is a critical moment in *North* that addresses some of the most contentious issues that surround the collection: voyeurism, mythologising and martyrdom.
Firstly, it is important to stress that translation in the poetry of Seamus Heaney’s is an expensive subject. This introductory section will merely address some of Heaney’s uses of translation and some of the techniques he employs before considering whether it is possible to argue that ‘The Digging Skeleton’ distils previously overlooked significance. There is only one poetic influence it is necessary to acknowledge for these purposes and that is the American poet Robert Lowell, Heaney’s mentor and friend. Lowell’s collection, *Imitations*, was published in 1961 and featured stylistic renderings of poems by a number of modern European poets including Rilke, Pasternak, Rimbaud, and crucially, Baudelaire. Although it has been noted in the criticism surrounding Heaney’s translation work that there are broad differences in the technique of the two poets, there can be no doubt that Lowell held an important place Heaney’s literary landscape. There are references to Lowell, as well as essays and lectures devoted to him, in Heaney’s critical prose. That Heaney was familiar with *Imitations* is

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almost certain, and that this book partly inspired Heaney’s venture into Baudelaire translation in *North* is distinctly possible.

Having acknowledged Lowell’s work on Baudelaire and his influence on Heaney’s career, and ignored a discussion about the differences between the two poets’ styles, we can proceed to base an argument on the ways in which Heaney uses translation rather than how he translates. One critic who will be central to this argument is Connor McCarthy, who has written about Heaney’s diverse engagement with medieval literature in his poetry. In doing so, McCarthy offers a compelling theory for a complex form of intertextual allusion in Heaney’s work. This idea is first approached while he considers the figure of Sweeney, the guiding character of the Old Irish poem *Buile Suibhne*, of which Heaney’s *Sweeney Astray* (1983) is a modern translation. McCarthy says that the figure of Sweeney is ‘elsewhere reminiscent of the figure of the Wanderer… of Ulysses, of Icarus, and of Heaney himself’, suggesting that Sweeney distils multiple meanings in Heaney’s poetry and recurs in many different forms as the poet
revises the ideas he encapsulates.\textsuperscript{72} McCarthy compares the intertextual ‘process of creating compound allusions’ to Heaney’s revisionist tendencies in his work as a whole, arguing that it ‘produces complex layers of comparison’.\textsuperscript{73}

Having first established this idea in relation to Sweeney, McCarthy continues it in a discussion of the significance of Dante within \textit{Station Island} (1984). Louis Simpson has referred to Dante as the ‘guide’ of \textit{Station Island}, noting that Heaney employs Dante’s \textit{terza rima} in five of the eleven sections of the collection and that there are strong similarities in the poets’ tones. He calls Dante ‘the literary model [who] helps Heaney control his subject’, an assertion that suggests that Heaney searches for literary guidance through his use of intertextuality.\textsuperscript{74} McCarthy concurs with this idea, but he goes further than Simpson in his reading of Dante’s influence on the text. According to him, the text of \textit{Station Island} is imbued with Dante through ‘echoes’

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\item Ibid, p. 18.
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of the poet which are ‘complex and layered’, and which interact with one another.\textsuperscript{75}

McCarthy suggests that Heaney employs ‘compound allusion’ throughout his poetry; that is, he constantly alludes to certain figures or ideas through others, revisiting and revising as he goes. He posits the apparition of Joyce at the end of the ‘Station Island’ sequence as an example, arguing that he is an echo of Dante, but is also reminiscent of Sweeney, T. S. Eliot, Osip Mandelstam, and Heaney himself.\textsuperscript{76}

Adopting this theory, Heaney’s collections become complex webs of literary deference and allusion. McCarthy argues that through this technique ‘Heaney creates multiple, complex evocations of resonances between figures from the past and those of the present’, an observation which is extremely pertinent to a reading of \textit{North}.\textsuperscript{77}

The theory that McCarthy’s book develops is a convincing one, which reinforces that searching for intertextual links is not as simple as studying oblique translations and references. However, it is important to also consider more fully why Heaney uses translation or techniques

\textsuperscript{75} Connor McCarthy, \textit{Seamus Heaney and Medieval Poetry}, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, p. 85.
of allusion such as the one described above. In his Oxford lecture, ‘The Redress of Poetry’, Heaney states that the activist will always be disappointed by poetry because ‘it does not intervene in the actual’, but ‘offers a response to reality that has a liberating and verifying effect on the spirit’.\textsuperscript{78} He endeavours to write poetry that offers imagined alternatives rather than concrete solutions, yet this does not negate the idea that his poetry is sometimes political. In his essay, ‘Heaney in Public’, Dennis O’Driscoll discusses Heaney’s most overtly political work and how this relates to his role as a public figure. He suggests that during his career Seamus Heaney became trusted as a measured voice in the public sphere because he was an ‘inclusive, non-factional poet of the “in-between” and the undogmatic’ and most importantly because he spoke in his ‘own tongue’.\textsuperscript{79} Thus, he argues that Heaney was generally trusted to comment on political and civil matters precisely because his voice was neutral – a tricky ground to tread.

In light of this fact, O’Driscoll argues that Heaney’s translations – which ‘often resonate with contemporaneous public significance’ – take on a prosopopoeial and political dimension. O’Driscoll strengthens this argument through a discussion of ‘Mycenae Lookout’, published in *The Spirit Level* in 1996. It is a disturbingly violent and palpably political poem, which – like *North* – was written in response to shifting political tensions in Ireland, namely, the ceasefire in 1994. O’Driscoll acknowledges that the poem is not a formal translation but a ‘dramatized sequence’ which ‘uses a classical text to comment indirectly, but unmistakably, on the troubles’. The classical text in question is *The Oresteia*, a fifth century trilogy of Greek tragedies written by Aeschylus, which are set in the aftermath of the Trojan War. Interestingly, Robert Lowell was also working on a translation of these plays in the years before his death.

To explain Heaney’s objective in ‘Mycenae Lookout’, Elizabeth Lunday uses T. S. Eliot’s theory of the ‘mythic method’, arguing that through the act of translation, the poet creates a temporal continuity

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80 Ibid, p. 60.
81 Ibid, p. 62.
between past and present. In these terms, she discusses the two central figures of the poem: Cassandra, a victim of war in its most violent and depraved forms, and the Watchman, who, like Tiresias, oversees all. The critic argues that the latter figure is the central achievement of the poem; unlike in most translations of the plays, Heaney develops him as a character with depth and humanity. He has overseen the bloody entirety of ‘that killing-fest’ and the psychological horror of his experience is revealed when he confesses ‘I’d dream of blood in bright webs in a ford,/ Of bodies raining down like tattered meat/ On top of me asleep’. The focus on characterisation of the Watchman coupled with the intense grotesqueness of the imagery in the sequence suggests some measure of biographical parallel in the poet’s conscience.

In this sequence, we observe the poet pushing the artistic objective of North to extremity. Lunday draws a link between the mingling of sex and violence in ‘Mycenae Lookout’ and ‘Punishment’, published in North. She notes that Heaney uses the same clipped line-length in

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‘Punishment’ and in section two of ‘Mycenae Lookout’, but the line is even shorter in the latter; more abrupt and more aggressive. In ‘Punishment’, Heaney stares at the fossilised corpse of a girl apparently murdered in a sacrificial ritual for sexual misconduct and reproaches himself as ‘the artful voyeur’: reproach for the poetic voice which aestheticises and sexualises these victims of horrific (and male perpetrated) violence. Yet the language of ‘Mycenae Lookout’ is even more violent: the experience of Cassandra, ‘little rent/ Cunt of their guilt’, expressed without reservation.

In tandem with this unrelenting portrayal of violence, Heaney forces the reader to question the Watchman’s implication in it. He denounces the Watchman’s passive role, stating obliquely that there is ‘no such thing/ as innocent/ bystanding’, and thus implicates himself, the poet who has watched, recorded and aestheticised the Troubles. We are witness to the full frustration of Heaney, not only with the situation in Ireland, but also with his role in it, his impotence to

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87 Seamus Heaney, Opened Ground, p. 417.
88 Ibid. p. 415.
challenge the sequence of events which led to such waste and destruction. Here, Heaney uses translation in an almost cathartic way; he exploits the ancient text in order to condemn the atrocities he has witnessed and to express a factional, politicised position.

The Watchman figure in ‘Mycenae Lookout’ reflects a deep unease with the role of the poet, one that we observe Heaney grapple with throughout his career. It is famously visible in ‘Digging’, where Heaney compares his vocation to that of his father and his ancestors who work the land, lamenting the fact that he has ‘no spade to follow men like them’.89 He attempts to reconcile his choice of the pen over the spade, resolving ‘I’ll dig with it’, yet this resolution never feels wholly certain.90 Thus, although it is clear that Heaney often proselytizes through adapting the work of others, some suggest that it is a means through which he searches for a poetic model that will help him to overcome his discomfort with his vocation. One such critic is Michael Parker, who has written about Heaney’s exploitation of different modes of intertextuality in Human Chain (2010). He writes

89 Seamus Heaney, Opened Ground, p. 4.
90 Ibid. p. 4.
that the deep intertextuality of the collection attests to ‘the poet’s strong sense of kinship with his literary predecessors’ who are ‘invoked, like a communion of saints, to watch over and guide his vocation’. 91

In the context of Heaney’s final collection, this statement has a kind of definitive, concluding air to it, almost as if the entirety of his poetic work, so permeated with intertextuality, is part of this trajectory. However, the same theory can also be applied to earlier collections on their own, such as *Station Island* (1984). In the ‘Station Island’ sequence, Heaney is visited by a series of apparitions, including notable figures of Heaney’s literary heritage. The first ghost of Ireland’s literary past to appear in this tragi-comic sequence is Sweeney, followed by those of William Carlton and Patrick Kavanagh, the tone of the three encounters ranging from playful mockery to derision.

The final apparition to come to Heaney is James Joyce, mocking him for his existential poetic deliberations. He speaks to Heaney in imperatives, telling him to ‘cultivate’, ‘let go’, ‘let fly’, ‘forget’, and to

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‘strike’.\textsuperscript{92} He demands dynamism from the poet, imploring him not to become stuck in the mires of factional and fruitless contentions, and to ‘write/ for the joy of it’.\textsuperscript{93} In this sequence as a whole, we observe Heaney consider his career and his actions in relation to his country, to men killed by the violence that his accredited poetry observes, to the Catholic Church, and to his literary heritage. Most importantly, we see him look to his literary forefathers for guidance and assurance – though it is questionable whether he receives the latter.

That Heaney was somewhat haunted by Joyce’s example is also evident in his critical writings. In ‘Feelings into Words’, he discusses a shift that occurred in his poetic conscience after 1969, when he grasped ‘a tentative unrealised need to make a congruence between memory and bogland and…our national consciousness’.\textsuperscript{94} This phrasing is highly reminiscent of Stephen Daedalus’ famous epiphany at the end of \textit{A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man}. Interestingly, where Carmen Bugan has argued that Heaney engages with East European poetry in

\textsuperscript{92} Seamus Heaney, \textit{Station Island} (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1984), p.93.  
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, p. 93.  
order to articulate a ‘poetics of exile’, ‘in which exile…is embraced as part of the creative process’, she has linked the naissance of this poetics to Heaney’s sense of his Joycean burden.\textsuperscript{95}

The influence of East European poets on Heaney’s work is one which has been well represented in recent criticism. Justin Quinn has noted that his interest in such writers became more profound during the early half of the 1970s, coinciding with the years immediately preceding the publication of \textit{North} and one of the most violent periods of the Troubles.\textsuperscript{96} In an interview with Dennis O’Driscoll, when asked if he would have been the same poet without the East European exemplars, Heaney replied: ‘probably not all that different in what I had written, but not as convinced about the worthwhileness of writing itself’.\textsuperscript{97} This suggests that Heaney’s interest in these poets reflects a search for a poetic model that would enable him to engage meaningfully with political turmoil. It is telling then, that the final

\textsuperscript{97} Dennis O’Driscoll, \textit{Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney}, p. 297.
poem in *North*, a collection that self-reflexively agonises over the poet’s political remit, contains an evocation of the Russian poet, Osip Mandelstam. In ‘Exposure’, we see Heaney refer to himself as an ‘inner émigré’, aligning his move from Northern Ireland to Co. Wicklow in 1972 with Mandelstam’s period of political imprisonment.\(^98\)

One interesting aspect to note in ‘Exposure’ is an incident of intertextuality, where Heaney refers to his ‘responsible *tristia*’.\(^99\) As Neil Corcoran remarks, the term is a reference to the title of one of Mandelstam’s collections of poetry, which is taken from Ovid’s work of the same title, composed while he was living in exile from Rome.\(^100\) Carmen Bugan also notes that this reference ‘has been linked by various critics to Heaney’s placing himself in Mandelstam’s, Dante’s and Ovid’s great tradition of exile’.\(^101\) These observations are redolent of Connor McCarthy’s theory of compound allusion discussed earlier: the reference to Mandelstam’s text also evokes an allusion to Ovid, which reinforces the potency of the initial reference. However, it is

\(^{98}\) Seamus Heaney, *North*, p. 75.
\(^{99}\) Seamus Heaney, *North*, p. 75.
\(^{100}\) Neil Corcoran, *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney*, p. 80.
possible that this allusion can be extended further than either Bugan or Corcoran realise. Ovid is also famously referenced in one of Baudelaire’s most celebrated poems, ‘Le Cygne’, which features in ‘Tableaux Parisiens’, the same section of *Les Fleurs du mal* as ‘Le Squelette Laboureur’.

‘Le Cygne’ is concerned with the poet’s feeling of alienation from his city, following the structural reformation of Paris in the latter half of the 19th century. Throughout the poem, he deploys various images of dispossession to reinforce his own feeling of marginalisation: the eponymous swan, far from its maternal lake; Andromache, forced from her home and mourning the death of her husband; orphaned children; a marooned sailor; and the exiled Ovid. If we accept McCarthy’s theory of compound allusion, we may argue that Baudelaire and all his figures of exile can be traced in Heaney’s fleeting reference. Admittedly, this is a somewhat tenuous link, but it does merit consideration if we acknowledge that Baudelaire is considered a figure of alienation, who would no doubt have self-identified as an ‘inner émigré’. He is also one of the first truly modern poets who struggled to reconcile the poetic impulse with the desire to effect change, which can be traced in his
move in later life towards prose poetry that he felt to be a more concrete, social form.

Having discussed some of the poetic and political implications of translation in Heaney’s work, we must now consider whether it is realistic to argue that ‘The Digging Skeleton’ occupies a more important place in *North* than previously thought. First, it is crucial to note that *North* is a highly structured collection. In discussions of *Field Work*, both Neil Corcoran and Elmer Kennedy-Andrews note a sense of relaxation from *North* to the succeeding volume, both in terms of structure and self-consciousness.102 These assertions speak of the level of intent that drives *North*: it is a zealously organised book, which attempts to weave together a number of very complex ideas.

One of the most complex and contentious ideas in *North* is the representation of myth. Without going into detail, Corcoran suggests that Heaney ‘synthesises’ many different sources of myth in *North* in order to produce ‘a form in which the confusions of the present may be articulated and understood’.103 While not inaccurate, this statement

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suggests a degree of clarity that is not necessarily felt when reading the 
collection. At times, it appears the myth is designed to confuse the 
reader, which is why critics find such ample room for contention within 
it. The most obvious starting point for addressing this multifaceted 
issue is in the two poems that bookend part one, ‘Antaeus’ and 
‘Hercules and Antaeus’, which recount the mythic struggle between 
these figures. Henry Hart identifies an apocalyptic impulse in *North* 
that owes much to Yeats, arguing that, in such terms, Heaney’s 
treatment of history and myth is best defined by the image of the two 
mythological figures wrestling. He says that because that which they 
represent ‘victory and defeat, light and dark, reason and instinct, fact 
and fiction…are merely transitional phases in a continuous dialect…his 
apocalypse seeks to reveal history for what it is rather than to wholly 
transcend it’.\(^{104}\)

Dillon Johnston agrees that there is a Yeatsian debt in these 
poems.\(^{105}\) Yet, he does not read the same apocalyptic strain that Hart

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\(^{105}\) Dillon Johnston writes ‘as in the concepts fundamental both to Ireland’s ancient burials and to Irish modernism, based by Yeats on cyclic history and the return of heroes, resurrection – the tomb becoming womb – is at least implicit in
does. He argues that it is what could be described as the opposite of apocalypse, resurrection, in the same vein as that which is ‘fundamental to both to Ireland’s ancient burials and to Irish modernism, based by Yeats on cyclic history and the return of heroes’, which is most significant in a reading of these poems. According to Johnston, it is the image of ‘the tomb becoming womb’, which provides the most enlightening foundations for understanding Heaney’s ‘northern’ mythology.

However, both Neil Corcoran and Elmer Kennedy-Andrews contend that to understand the myth that Heaney attempts to articulate in North, we must look to his earlier writing. In response to

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107 Ibid, p.156.
108 Both critics suggest that we must look to Wintering Out (1972) in order to establish the roots of the myth. Kennedy-Andrews suggests that ‘when myth enters the poetry, in Wintering Out (1972), the process of politisation begins… Heaney, drawing on the work of the Danish archaeologist P. V. Glob, began to explore the repercussions of the violence on himself, and on others, by transmuting all into a marriage myth of ground and victim, old sacrifice and fresh murder’ (Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, The Poetry of Seamus Heaney, p. 10); while Corcoran argues that ‘an extension and elaboration of the relationship between Ireland and Jutland proposed by ‘The Tollund Man’ provides Heaney with the basis for such a myth of Northern Ireland’ (Neil Corcoran, The Poetry of Seamus Heaney, p. 55).
intensifying violence in Ireland, Heaney declared that in 1969, ‘the problems of poetry moved from being simply a matter of achieving the satisfactory verbal icon to being a search for images and symbols adequate to our predicament’.¹⁰⁹ This search was fulfilled by the publication of The Bog People, by the Danish archaeologist, P. V. Glob. In this book, Glob suggests that the bodies preserved in Danish peat bogs were ritual victims of sacrifice to the Goddess Nerthus, to whom a bridegroom was sacrificed each year in order to ensure the fecundity of the following year’s crops. According to Kennedy-Andrews, when the images and symbols proposed by Glob’s book first enter Heaney’s poetics in Wintering Out (1972), ‘the process of politicisation begins’, thus creating a poetic dialogue between politics, myth, and bogland.¹¹⁰

Corcoran concurs with this idea in geographical terms, suggesting that in ‘The Tollund Man’, Heaney proposes an analogous relationship between Ireland and the Jutland, which provides the foundations for the

northern myth. In this poem, Heaney examines one of Glob’s bog victims and presents the Tollund man, victim of ‘the old man-killing parishes’, as a figure of martyrdom by sanctifying the bog:

I could risk blasphemy
Consecrate the cauldron bog
Our Holy ground and pray

In these lines we see the naissance of what Heaney calls ‘an archetypal pattern’, through which he aligns the sacrificial victims to the Goddess Nerthus with ‘the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that cause whose icon is Kathleen ni Houlihan’, which we see throughout North. Yet this is not the only link between ‘The Tollund Man’ and the later collection. In response to what she reads as a crisis of belonging that is treated in both ‘The Tollund Man’ and North, Magdalena Kay argues that Heaney attempts to assert ‘control over space by creating three tropes of mastery’, which are excavation, ritual and the use of myth. Kay suggests that North is written in response

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113 Seamus Heaney, Preoccupations, p. 57.
to the sense of dislocation that Heaney feels when he writes in ‘The Tollund Man’:

Out there in the Jutland…

I will feel lost,

Unhappy and at home\textsuperscript{115}

Echoing Corcoran’s observation of the geographical alignment of Ireland and the Jutland soil, she suggests that Heaney attempts to re-mythologise the space ‘so that the self is both creator and object of discovery, creating a closed epistemological loop that may preclude the discovery of alterity altogether’.\textsuperscript{116} Thus, we can trace from ‘The Tollund Man’ to \textit{North}, a mythologising intent inspired by the post-colonial politics of reclaiming land. In ‘Bone Dreams’ of \textit{North}, Heaney finds ‘a cauldron/ of generation’ within ‘the coffered/ riches of grammar/ and declensions’\textsuperscript{117}. The ‘cauldron bog’ of ‘The Tollund Man’ is the landscape of memory which Heaney refers to in ‘Feelings

\textsuperscript{115} Seamus Heaney, \textit{Wintering Out}, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{117} Seamus Heaney, \textit{North}, p. 28-29
into Words’, a fertile ground in which Heaney can reimage the consciousness of his community.\textsuperscript{118}

The links between the ‘The Tollund Man’ and \textit{North} can also be traced in the language of the poem. The sensual descriptions in the former anticipate the sexualised gaze of the poet in ‘Punishment’ and ‘Bog Queen’, and the gendered depiction of the colonised state in ‘Acts of Union’. Crucially, the language of the verse which reads ‘The scattered, ambushed/ Flesh of Labourers,/ Stockinged corpses,/ Laid out in the farmyards’, seems to pre-empt ‘The Digging Skeleton’.\textsuperscript{119} This poem also employs images of the mistreated remains of agricultural labourers, whom Heaney asks ‘What farmer dragged you from the boneyard?’, suggesting that the poem is as much born in Heaney’s imagining of the myth as it is in Baudelaire’s poem.\textsuperscript{120}

Yet, this is a link that is largely unconsidered in criticism that attempts to account for the inclusion of ‘The Digging Skeleton’ in this highly structured collection. Neil Corcoran says that ‘the myth finds

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Seamus Heaney, \textit{Wintering Out}, p. 48 / Seamus Heaney, \textit{Preoccupations}, p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Seamus Heaney, \textit{Wintering Out}, p. 48.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Seamus Heaney, \textit{North}, p. 25.
\end{itemize}
room’ for the poem, but does not state that the poem actively contributes to it.\textsuperscript{121} Brian Donnelly suggests that it is the ‘qualities of otherness and immediacy’ of the original poem and the notoriety of ‘the weird, the exotic, even the outrageous’ author that led Heaney to include a translation of ‘Le Squelette Laboureur’ in \textit{North}.\textsuperscript{122}

Both these critics read the treatment of the decaying figures in the poem as a reversal of traditional Christian ideology, recognising Heaney’s direct translation of Baudelaire’s assertion that these apparitions function to show us that ‘tout, même la Mort, nous ment’.\textsuperscript{123} Donnelly argues that ‘the vision is of an eternity of suffering that mocks both Christian consolations and the secular security of total annihilation after death’.

\textsuperscript{124} Corcoran considers the translation of the word ‘foçats’ which Baudelaire employs to label the dead as ‘hard-labourers’, but Heaney translates as ‘Death’s lifers’.\textsuperscript{125} He observes that this

\begin{enumerate}
\item Neil Corcoran, \textit{The Poetry of Seamus Heaney}, p. 55.
\item Brian Donnelly, ‘‘The Digging Skeleton After Baudelaire ’’, Seamus Heaney’, \textit{Irish University Review}, 39/2 (2009), 246-254 (p. 256).
\item Brian Donnelly, ‘‘The Digging Skeleton After Baudelaire ’’, pp. 2-48.
\end{enumerate}
translation is ‘chillingly appropriate to the bodies preserved for so long in the Danish bogs’, tracing a thematic link between the ‘ambushed/ Flesh of labourers’ in ‘The Tollund Man’, the bog bodies of North and ‘The Digging Skeleton’. 

One of the most rigorous and compelling arguments regarding the appearance of the poem in North is offered by Michael Cavanagh, who touches upon the poem during a discussion of Heaney’s debt to T. S. Eliot. He suggests that the presence of ‘The Digging Skeleton’ may attest to Heaney’s familiarity with Eliot’s essay ‘What Dante Means to Me’, in which Eliot says that he learned from Baudelaire’s treatment of the modern city to find poetic matter in that which is not traditionally considered poetic. There is an echo of McCarthy’s theory of compound allusion in Cavanagh’s argument where he describes a tangled lineage between the three poets. In Heaney’s sexualised corpses, Cavanagh reads an anarchic impulse that draws him to Eliot, suggesting that his admiration of the modernist poet stems from a desire

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‘to carry poetry into darker corners than civilised custom would permit’, and that Heaney, like Eliot, sometimes ‘resents humanitarian decorum’. In linking these three writers, Cavanagh is able to assert that the cadavers in *North* are Heaney’s version of the ‘Baudelaire Machinery’. He identifies a tradition running from Baudelaire through Eliot to Heaney that is born out of an impulse to find beauty in dark or perhaps even unsavoury places, and argues that ‘The Digging Skeleton’ is the link that proves this.

However, for further guidance on how to assess the importance of ‘The Digging Skeleton’, we may look at some of the critical contention surrounding another intertextual poem in the first section of *North*. At the end of ‘Funeral Rites’, Heaney places a poetic rendering of a passage from *Njal’s Saga*, a thirteenth century Icelandic text which tells a violent story of blood feuds. In this passage, Heaney says that in the collective imagination, we view ‘those under the hill’ (in this case those dead by sectarian violence in Ireland) as the Icelandic hero Gunnar, ‘who lay beautiful/ inside his burial mound,/ though dead by violence/

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128 Ibid, pp. 84-85.
and unavenged’. Many critics have explained these lines in a romantic light. Maurice Harmon writes that Gunnar ‘stands for peaceful co-existence, for the avoidance of sectarian feuds, and for the liberation of a people from self-perpetuating hatreds’, and Neil Corcoran suggests that ‘the possibility of reconciliation is imaged, finally, in an allusion to that pacific moment.’

This image of peace and reconciliation is exactly what a superficial reading of the poem, which ends with Gunnar turning ‘a joyful face/ to look at the moon’, would elicit. However, looking at the entirety of *Njal’s Saga* and considering how these two texts interact, Heather O’Donoghue argues that we would be wrong to accept such a simplified view. She writes:

Heaney’s use of Njáls saga is intertextuality of a very high order. In ‘Funeral Rites’ he presents, with masterful ambiguity, an imagining of what might have been, allowing the reader to suppose

that the vision of Gunnarr offers hope and affirmation following violence, while Njáls saga demonstrates exactly the opposite. Indeed, the longer-term prospects in the saga are desperately bleak: though the violence set in train by the death of Gunnarr does finally wear itself out, this does not happen until the killings have engulfed the lawyers and the politicians, a shockingly pessimistic analogy to the Troubles in Northern Ireland.\footnote{Heather O’Donoghue, ‘Heaney, Beowulf, and the Medieval Literature of the North’, ed. by Bernard O’Donoghue, The Cambridge Companion to Seamus Heaney, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 200.}

Connor McCarthy, who also studies the source text in a more holistic way, similarly argues that Heaney’s rendering of the passage of Njal’s Saga speaks of the cyclical (and therefore ceaseless) nature of unrest in Ireland.\footnote{Connor McCarthy, Seamus Heaney and Medieval Poetry, p. 104.} In these readings of the poem, we are informed that understanding the short passage rendered in Heaney’s poem necessitates an awareness of the entirety of the source text: we must consider that which he omits as well as that which he writes. This corroborates the earlier point that reading Heaney’s usage of intertextuality is a task that demands subtlety and depth. It also lends
precedence to an argument that ‘The Digging Skeleton’ is an underappreciated poem because critics have failed to engage fully with the original text.

Thus, by looking at ‘Le Squelette Laboureur’ and Heaney’s imitation of it in tandem, we may argue that some consequence of this poem to the meaning of North has been overlooked. The first verse of Heaney’s poem is quite a straightforward translation of the source text. In the second and third verses he begins to drift more into the realm of ‘rendering’ and it is through these two verses that we will contend that the poem is more significant than once thought. To contextualise the argument, it is necessary to consider other translations of Baudelaire’s poem as well as Heaney’s but first we must consider the original. In the source text, Baudelaire’s lines read:

Dessins auxquels la gravité

Et le savoir d’un vieil artiste,

Bien que le sujet en soit triste,

Ont communiqué la Beauté,

On voit, ce qui rend plus complètes

Ces mystérieuses horreurs,
Bêchant comme des laboureurs,

Des Écorchés et des Squelettes ¹³⁵

In a formal translation of the entire text of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Richard Howard calls his translation of ‘Le Squelette Laboureur’ ‘Skeleton Crew’ – which might tell us something of his style of translation: this title reflects the theme of Baudelaire’s poem but the title of Heaney’s poem is actually a more direct translation. In Howard’s version, these two verses read:

illustrations which the skill
and rigor of a master hand
have made, however grim the theme,
incontrovertibly beautiful,
often – crowning horror! – display
anatomical mannequins
all vein and muscle, or skeletons

¹³⁵ Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, p. 276. This translates (without versification): ‘In unspeakable sad drawings, which the solemnity and skill of the aging artist have communicated beauty, we see that which renders these mysterious horrors, - digging like labourers, skinless bodies and skeletons – more complete’. Where he writes ‘aging’ artist, I would argue that this also implies ‘knowing’.
digging, bone on naked bone 136

Here we see the dramatisation of what Michael Cavanagh has said attracted Eliot to Baudelaire and thus, what attracted Heaney to Eliot: a poetic fascination towards subjects that are conventionally repulsive. 137 We may then compare this with Heaney’s lines:

Drawings touched with an odd beauty
As if the illustrator had
Responded gravely to the sad
Mementos of anatomy
Mysterious candid studies
Of red slobland around the bone.
Like this one: flayed men and skeletons
Digging the earth like navvies 138

Staying true to the rhyme scheme and the tone of Baudelaire’s imagery in these verses, Heaney does not fully convey their meaning. He only implies what Howard’s translation quite overtly states: that is,

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the allure that these grotesque drawings hold for the poet. However, there is something yet more important missing from both these translations, particularly in the third verse. This problem is also evident in James McGowan’s translation. Adhering to both the rhyme scheme and the rhythm of Baudelaire’s octosyllabic verse, he writes:

One sees, which renders more intense

The horror and the mystery,

Like field-hands working wearily

Some skeletons and skinless men

Without commenting on the quality of this translation – which this essay in unqualified to do – it is important to note the impact of McGowan rendering ‘mystérieuses horreurs’ as ‘The horror and the mystery’, and omitting Baudelaire’s concrete noun. McGowan’s line captures the sense of Baudelaire’s image, but it does not evoke his ‘mysterious frights’ in their corporeal form. Neither McGowan nor Howard properly address Baudelaire’s meaning in the third verse, and indeed neither does Heaney. Without the constraints of versification

and rhyme, he is simply saying that these drawings render their dismembered subjects more complete. Thus, more abstractly, he suggests that the artistic process allows ‘mysterious horrors’ – here, the remains of victims of violent deaths – to be more fully understood, or perhaps even restores something of their humanity. This idea feels highly relevant to North, a collection whose treatment of the dead has evoked so much controversy.

Only ‘Bone Dreams’, a poem which serves to explain the lexical objective of Heaney’s excavations, stands between ‘The Digging Skeleton’ and the sequence of bog poems, where Heaney interrogates his own myth of northern violence through preserved bodies. It is not extravagant to propose that this poem serves to introduce us to his poetic objective in the controversial poems that follow. The language of Heaney’s version, which we have shown to have links with the language of ‘The Tollund Man’, suggests that the poem is as much an extension of the myth proposed through the equivocation of the Jutland and Ireland as ‘Bog Queen’, ‘Punishment’, or ‘The Grauballe Man’. Yet, if we follow Heather O’Donoghue’s reading of ‘Funeral Rites’, we may be able to argue that a more in depth understanding of the
source text for ‘The Digging Skeleton’ not only leads to a shift in how we perceive this poem, but could fundamentally change how we read the entire collection. Through exploiting Baudelaire’s text, it is possible that Heaney means to explain that his treatment of the sacrificial victims found in peat bogs is actually an attempt to remove the mystique that surrounds them and by extension, to challenge the culture of mythologising and martyrdom that surrounds the victims of the Troubles.

As we have observed, the nature of intertextuality in the poetry of Seamus Heaney is an extremely wide-ranging subject. Here, it has been sufficient to identify two central tendencies in its use which are relevant to a reading of ‘The Digging Skeleton’: the first being that it is often exploited in order to assert a factional or political position; the second, that it is often a means by which Heaney may evoke a poetic guide or attach himself to a certain tradition. We have acknowledged that it takes on many different forms, paying close attention to other critics who assert that intertextual allusion in Heaney’s poetry is a complex, multi-faceted process. Through reading such arguments, it has been possible to suggest that though Baudelaire is not overtly cited
elsewhere in Heaney’s work, his influence or presence may still be traced. Yet, as we have seen, this suggestion does not adequately explain the appearance of ‘The Digging Skeleton’ in North. A discussion of the development of Heaney’s northern mythology has suggested that this version-translation was both inspired by and contributed to the myth. However, this essay has ultimately contended that the appearance of the poem is best explained through discussing it in tandem with its source material, which brings us to the conclusion that this poem is not only part of the myth, but is also crucial to its understanding.
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RONIT WINEMAN

Aphra Behn’s *The Lover’s Watch*: An Exploration of Femininity, Authorship and Translation

Aphra Behn’s move from playwriting to translation has been characterised as an attempt to carve out an authorial voice; her great fame, however, as ‘only the third fully professional dramatist, male or female, to establish herself since the reopening of the theatres’ predates her transition.\(^{141}\) The drastic reduction of opportunities for playwrights in 1682 with the amalgamation of the only two theatre companies better explains her move; ‘market considerations’ being always visible in her choice of popular, and therefore lucrative, material to translate and adapt.\(^{142}\) The centrality of monetary gain is displayed in her prefaces to her translations of Fontenelle’s *L’Histoire des oracles* (1687) and *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686) which mention the ‘great

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[...] noise in the World’ made by the former and the ‘General Applause’ of the latter.\footnote{Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}, ed. Janet Todd, 7 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1993), pp. 73, 171.} However, her complex treatment of her source texts forces the reader to see them as more than a vehicle to financial gain, but as giving a ‘fascinating insight into her mind and politics’ as well.\footnote{Line Cottegnies, ‘Aphra Behn’s French Translations’ in \textit{The Cambridge Companion}, p. 222.} In the majority of her translations, Behn remains close to her original: Todd assesses Behn’s rendering of \textit{Seneca Unmasqued} as ‘a fairly literal translation’; her \textit{Discovery of New Worlds} as being ‘an almost literal translation’; and \textit{The History of Oracles} ‘provides a very faithful translation’.\footnote{Janet Todd, quoted in Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}, pp. xxiii, 70, 169.} \textit{The Lover’s Watch} (1686) – from Balthazar de Bonnecorse’s \textit{La montre d’amour} (1666) – marks a deviation from her characteristic use of Dryden’s ‘paraphrase’ or ‘translation with latitude’ and is described as an ‘imitation’ rather than a translation by Todd.\footnote{John Dryden, Preface to ‘Ovid’s Epistles’ in \textit{The Poems of John Dryden}, ed. John Sargeaunt (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), p. 9. / Janet Todd, quoted in Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}, p. 278.} Whilst Behn never responded directly to Dryden’s translation theories – her own theoretical work, ‘An Essay on
Translated Prose’, counterpointing Roscommon’s *Essay on Translated Verse* – she contributed to the volume containing, as a preface, Dryden’s famous analysis.\(^\text{147}\) Her *Discovery of New Worlds* is a text which, as Dryden prefers, ‘endeavoured to give you the true meaning of the Author’ but her looser style in *The Watch* indicates the adaptability of the second text’s themes for her own purposes.\(^\text{148}\) The text is an extended letter from a woman to her absent lover, and consistently emphasises the importance of the act of writing, allowing Behn to renegotiate the conjunction between female control and female authorship. Elizabeth Spearing, along with many others, has explored the reclamation by women writers – including Behn – of discourses surrounding authorship, and concludes that these authors were able to harness the feminine metaphors in these discourses to privilege their own writing over that of their male peers.\(^\text{149}\) However, the form,

\(^{147}\) See Aphra Behn’s ‘Essay on Translated Prose’ is the preface to *A Discovery of New Worlds* (Todd, *Works*, pp. 75-86) which counterpoints Earl of Roscommon’s *Essay on Translated Verse* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1684). Behn’s translation of ‘Oenone to Paris’ is found in pages 97-117 of *Ovid’s Epistles Translated by Several Hands* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1680) to which Dryden’s text is the preface (unnumbered pages).

\(^{148}\) Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p. 76.

\(^{149}\) See, for example, Hero Chalmers’ *Royalist Women Writers 1650-1689* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) in her section on Katherine Phillips (pp. 66-104); Tina Krontiris’s *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators*
materiality, and scope of *The Watch* problematise Spearing’s vision of an uncomplicated statement of feminine power, and undermine Behn’s own idealised gender politics with an awareness of its impracticability. This undercutting is visible throughout the text and every device used to assert female control is then either pushed beyond its natural limits or already carries with it connotations of instability. Behn’s female narrator also bears on the general evolution, and the greater awareness of, female voices which marks a step towards the proto-novelistic style adopted by Behn in *Oroonoko*. Furthermore, her approach to the uniqueness of both the source text and her own adaptation poses a challenge to current conventional translation theories, and presents a new possibility of classifying translations.

*The Lover’s Watch* is an adaptation, or ‘imitation’, of de Bonnecorse’s *La montre d’amour*, in which the temporarily absent Iris creates a timetable for her lover Damon, regimenting what he must do

in each and every hour of the day. His proscribed activities range from melancholically reflecting on her absence (nine o’clock) to writing letters to her (eleven o’clock), and even include instructions for his dreamed experiences – imagining ‘quarrels in dreams’ at five which resolve in ‘accommodation in dreams’ at six. The original manuscript was sent by the author to Madame de Scudéry – the well-known salonnière and author – accompanied by an actual, physical watch and was published by her on his subsequent departure to Egypt. Fewer than ten copies of this original edition, or any pre-1712 editions – in which there was a radical, posthumous reworking of the text, exist today worldwide despite La Montre being initially very successful – a characteristic necessary for Behn’s adoption of the project. Its financial reception was, however, markedly different from the derision it received at the hands of the public literary figures of the day, encapsulated in Boileau giving de Bonnecorse ‘l’immortalité de

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ridicule’ in his 9ème Epitre.\textsuperscript{153} Her deviation from her closer and preferred translation method could, therefore, be attributed partly to the original’s poor reputation which required a more radical, rehabilitatory approach, with Behn praised by Charles Cotton for ‘making an author who was none’.\textsuperscript{154}

However, her descent from keeping ‘as near [the author’s] Words as was possible’ cannot be a compromise between keeping the original popular elements and removing those which led to its poor literary regard; all her changes can rather be seen to accord with what she keeps, and the text produced is coherent in its many self-conscious literary references and the strong awareness of its own craft.\textsuperscript{155} Her reorientation of the work towards an exploration of textuality, instead

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[153]{Gaston de Flotte, \textit{Essai}, p. 60. / Nicolas Boileau Despreaux, \textit{Œuvres de Boileau Despreaux} (Paris: Librairie Firmin Didot Frères, 1844), p. 138. It is important to note here that the edition used postdates both Bonnecorse and Boileau but they were contemporaries and engaged in fierce literary debate, as is clear in the \textit{Epitre} and in Bonnecorse’s response with his poem \textit{Lutrigot}.}
\footnotetext[154]{Quoted in: Pierre Bayle, John Peter Bernard, John Lockman, Thomas Birch, George Sale, \textit{A general dictionary, historical and critical: in which a new and accurate translation of that of ... Mr. Bayle, with the corrections and observations printed in the late edition at Paris, is included and interspersed with several thousand lives never before published. The whole containing the history of the most illustrious persons of all ages and nations ...} Volume 3, Pierre Bayle, John Peter Bernard, John Lockman, Thomas Birch, George Sale, London, 1735, p. 144}
\footnotetext[155]{Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}. p. 76.}
\end{footnotes}
of being just an amatory piece, is highlighted in keeping the striking prosimetrum form (the integration of prose and poetry), despite its absence from the ‘retouchée’ edition of 1712. Behn could never have seen this edition, but the later editor’s decision to versify the whole work demonstrates that not only was this a viable possibility for an adaptation, but one which was thought to be quite lucrative. The loose interpretation of other aspects of the text and the cause she had to distance herself from the original’s poor literary reputation renders this feature’s presence particularly surprising, given its strong visual allusion to La montre. The dense mixing of prose and poetry carries with it certain multi-faceted expectations: it is reminiscent of Boethius – one of the form’s most famous users, and thus links her with the tradition of ‘learned Latin writing’, which extensively used satura, the corresponding classical term. Her retention of the form therefore aligns her with a whole stylistic tradition to which she had no access, having no Latin, yet also draws her closer to her source text as the

format had become, in the three preceding centuries to her writing, ‘distinctively French’. The two almost mutually exclusive elements of popular French literature and learned classical studies unite her general financial motivation with an affirmation of her own authority. Behn does, however, refine the relationship between the poetry and the prose of the original text in giving a title to almost all of her poems, deviating from de Bonnecorse’s practice. Along with drawing attention to the change in medium, she also expands the poems considerably. In Iris’s opening words to Damon the two poems grow from four and seven lines in the French to eight and twenty-three in Behn, a trend which carries on for the whole work without exception. The clearer delineation between prose and poetry coupled with the linear expansion of the poetic content ensures that the text can be seen to contain both separate forms vying against one another, rather than prose interpolated with versified sentiments, a possible reading of the de Bonnecorse original. The attention to form fosters an awareness of Behn’s craft and gives her the space to explore, in using this particularly self-conscious

medium, questions surrounding writing which are ignored in her preface.

Her preface does belie the subsequent importance of textuality as it only contains relatively sparse self-consciously literary references, creating an initially surprising contrast with many other openings. In the beginning of *Seneca Unmasqued* (1685) she has ‘by chance met with a small Piece’ and, in ‘putting it into English’, considers along the way Dryden, the ‘Rule[s]’ of the Poets and the question of Art imitating Nature.159 *The Watch’s* preface chooses instead to focus on the dedicatee Peter Weston – one who earns his place by resembling Damon the most. Peter Weston is a person about whom very little is known; the Inner Temple records simply reveal him to have taken thirteen years to be called to the bench, indicating that he was likely to be a gentleman.160 He may well have shared in Behn’s Tory and pro-Catholic sympathies but he did not make his mark in doing so and there are no more records of him in other databases. Whilst this shift away

160 Peter Weston’s entry in the Inner Temple Archives <http://www.innertemplearchives.org.uk/detail.asp?id=5926> [accessed 17/03/16].
from the literary could be read as an obfuscation of the move to an inferior translation method – the description of which would normally form the content of the preface – the main body of the text reveals that Behn’s agenda for the work contains subtleties that require more space than the preface can provide.

The body of the text, however, constantly reminds the reader of its own craft and through this self-awareness explores the conjunction of female power and authorship. A secondary function of the prosimetrum form brings these concepts together in visually alluding to a prayer book – with its combination of psalms and hymns and prose – leading some to characterise Iris’s timetable as a ‘quasi-monastic regimen of dutiful love’. The power dynamic of worshipper and goddess is not borne out in the text itself and Behn instead balances a very assertive presentation of Iris’s power with an undermining of this control, partly through the highly self-aware nature of the work. This is clear from the very first poem of the work – which Iris insists Damon ‘will say in […] his heart’ – as Love is

The great Instructor of the Mind,
That forms anew, and fashions every Soul,
Gives Cowards noble Heat in Fight,
And teaches feeble Woman how to write:
That doth the Universe command;
Does from my Iris Heart direct her Hand.¹⁶¹

Behn has doubled the original four-line French poem which contains similar if reduced content:

Qu’Amour m’en fournit
de dessein,
Que du fond de mon Cœur
Il a conduit ma main.

The thematic commonality here is Love’s teaching and guiding of Iris to write, and both poems locate this force within Iris’s heart. Despite the identical locations, the intrusion of a necessarily male ‘Amour’ into the body of Iris is not replicated in the English with the automatically degendered concept of ‘Love’ in Behn. Her most significant changes are, however, those which consist of altering the poem’s vocalisation. De Bonnecorse writes the words which Iris speaks

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in the first person: Love ‘conduit ma main’ but Behn gives her words to Iris who then in turn commands Damon to speak them, literally ventriloquising him, as he describes love ‘guiding my Iris […] hand’. Additionally, the French gives Damon ‘la liberté de dire ce que vous plaira’ which starkly contrasts his enforced speaking of Iris’s poem in Behn, a change of delivery that also ensures a man has to affirm women’s power to write. The ability to write gives power and control, and crucially parallels Behn’s own achievements as a playwright who has made a career of writing the words that will be spoken, and will control, the actions of men.

Although this demonstration appears as simply a localised example, the pattern of self-conscious literary references and a constant emphasis on the importance of the act of writing is carried through the whole text. The hour of eleven is entirely devoted to Damon writing letters to Iris as this is ‘Serving me the most Obligingly, and Agreeably’ as he employs ‘the Force of Words’: a ‘Letter is ever the best’.162 Writing is elevated further through its juxtaposition with the ‘indispensable duty’ of prayer at twelve which attaches to it a ritualistic

quality by association. The personification of the text into an ‘Agent to a Mistress’ compounds its power, as ‘it almost always perswaydes’ – a bold claim for a love letter only validated by the contextual emphasis on the importance of writing in romance. Behn embellishes the art of letter writing even more in concluding that ‘it is [in fact] an Art too ingenious, to have been found out by Man’. Although the opposition of man to god becomes clear in the next line, the reader is given a moment of ambiguity in which women are given the crucial role in the inception of writing about – and when in – love.

The role of the female voice in writing is of great importance in Behn’s particular literary moment, and the emergence of epistolary fiction, in which The Watch forms a preliminary stage, is inextricably connected with the development of this female voice. Behn is most known for her proto-novella Oroonoko which uses a female narrative voice, and the privileging of this speaker in her movement from Restoration drama to prose can be framed by Ian Watts’s suggestion ‘that the feminine sensibility was in some ways better equipped to

163 Ibid, p. 298.
164 Ibid, p. 298.
reveal the intricacies of personal relationships and was therefore at a real advantage in the realm of the novel’. Behn’s ventriloquising Iris is, therefore, also an examination of the potential of the feminine narrative voice, whilst providing a commentary on the overall capabilities of the genre, achieved through the emphasis on the power of the text undercut by the limitations of this control to the realm of fiction. However, whilst the narrator is limited to the text, there is a possibility raised by Ros Ballaster that female narrators could exercise a seduction on their reader and could thus transcend the boundary imposed by the medium. This interpretation of Iris is problematised, though, in Ballaster’s categorisation of Behn’s oeuvre as opposing ‘didactic love fiction’, a group of texts of which The Watch is so clearly a part. The possibilities of seduction as a way to grow outside the bounds of fiction are, therefore, still limited here but Behn’s choice to write through Iris still must be seen against a background of these growing issues.

168 Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, p. 32.
Undermining the certainty of the feminism of her text, Behn specifically asserts the narrator’s ability to write, as Iris and Damon can ‘penetrate beyond the Vulgar and perceive the fine soul in every line’, thereby having a more refined understanding of words and expression.\(^{169}\) This modifies the general elevation of writing as the previously ubiquitous framing of the female ability to write when in love is shown to be restricted to lovers who are not ‘ill Judges’. Undermining Behn’s affinity to women is the ‘alliance’ analysed by Deborah Uman as being ‘not with other unlearned women, but other (male) poets’.\(^{170}\) This once again displays Behn’s elevation of female authorship with an accompanying and equally strong undercutting strand; the ability to write is restricted and so cannot represent the uncomplicated feminism so many purport her to be advocating. Furthermore, the text ‘almost always perswaydes’ which naturally invests writing with a great deal of power, but also contains a caveat of possible failure – however Behn attempts to build up the power of textuality, she cannot ignore that her power structures do not carry

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across to the real world, and, crucially, that although she can write instructions Iris cannot actually make Damon perform them, just as she cannot force her reader to be receptive to what she writes for them.

Whilst an emphasis on the power of authorship would not be unusual for a writer to maintain, and accords with the theme of control upon which Behn’s narrative centres, her other writing displays how idiosyncratic *The Lover’s Watch* is. Whilst *The Lover’s Watch* is an exchange of extended letters – which naturally fosters a preoccupation with writing – *A Discovery of New Worlds* is framed as a dialogue which has been written down afterwards. Preserved within it are injunctions to ‘Say no more’ and there are frequent references to the characters speaking rather than writing their words.171 This refocuses the written text on the fact of its oral delivery and its preface goes so far as to deride the written word in the opening as ‘what signifies the reading of so many vast Volumes over’?.172 *The History of Oracles* naturally concerns itself with the oral over the written – exploring the ‘Voice’ of the Oracle and ignoring the process that occurs in

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171 Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p. 115. /See, for example, in *Works*, pp. 115, 116, 120 etc.
transcription.\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Seneca Unmasqued} is similarly unconcerned with the written word; the body of the text containing no mentions of writing at all. Once again, Behn’s preface does contain self-consciously literary references but in describing herself writing ‘purely for Idleness, and our own Lazy Diversion’ she both invokes the convention of \textit{sprezzatura}, which places her in a specific written tradition, but also simultaneously undercuts the importance of her authorship with her blasé remark.\textsuperscript{174}

The importance of the text reinforces the power of authorship, useful for Behn’s exploration of specifically feminine writing, and is also revealed in the emphasis of the materiality of the text. The original \textit{La Montre} was sent accompanied by a real watch, as a gift for Madame de Scudéry, but Behn continually repositions the text as a replacement for, or improvement on, the historic watch. De Bonnecorse describes his invention as ‘ingenieux et gallant’,\textsuperscript{175} the former, although not relating exclusively to a mechanism, far more indicative of physicality than Behn’s rather surreal and ethereal substitute of ‘soft and gallant’

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{175} Balthazar de Bonnecorse, \textit{La Montre D’Amour}, p. 106.
for the watch. Her shift from the crafted and mechanistic emphasis, visible from her first characterisation of it as an ‘unlaboured Piece’, forms part of her rejection of this external object as she affirms that, unlike the original, ‘you shall find nothing here but the Watch’. Whilst the capitalisation here is solely due to the word being a noun, the choice to italicise the word results in the reference made being to the text itself and not the watch—asserting that the original object has been superseded by her written one. The feminine resonances of ‘soft’ also cannot be ignored, particularly with both its strong links to contemporary ideas of femininity and its ineptness in describing a real watch, which allow Behn to bring writing and her female status closer together. Seemingly contradicting herself and reinstating the object, she adds a few sentences visually constructing the watch, placing ‘naked Love, which you will find in the middle of it’, who is ‘fix’d and constant’ and ‘points you out’ the time, into a paragraph which is otherwise a very close following of the French. This

177 Ibid, p. 248.
179 Compare page 12 of La Montre with page 287 (Works).
completely new addition seems to refer back to an object – with its detailed description of its appearance – which would then problematise Behn’s emphasis on her own object. However, this description actually relates to the frontispiece of the original French text which demonstrates Behn harnessing the physical vocabulary of a true description of a watch but applying it to an image forming part of the text itself. The elevation of textual importance to the degree to which it can replace a physical object also extends to Iris’s placing of ‘her imaginary watch within the most intimate emotional and physical space of her lover – she wants the watch to become coequal to his heart’.\footnote{Roland Racevskis, \textit{Time and Ways of Knowing}, p. 46.} The text itself contains the injunction to ‘say in your Heart’ as Iris’s words are internalised not only through their expression by Damon but through their specified location in his body, echoing the pedagogic presence of Love in Iris’s heart earlier.\footnote{Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}, p. 285.} The extent to which the elision of the real watch’s materiality with that of the text can be used by Behn to comment on female writing now becomes clear as Behn can transcribe, and present a female speaker as transcribing, onto the body.
of a man, subverting the dominant metaphor of female bodies standing for books.\textsuperscript{182} The link between bodies and books is visible in the contemporary rhetoric discussed by Wendy Wall but can also be seen in more recent years in its most distilled form in Hélène Cixous’s writing which exemplifies its durability and ongoing pertinence.\textsuperscript{183}

Her subversion of power structures, and of the rhetoric connecting women’s bodies and books, is part of her general reclamation of the widespread feminine tropes used in contemporary discourses surrounding writing.\textsuperscript{184} Her prosimetric text, whose content is so preoccupied with femininity, suitably evokes satura’s link to fertility, ‘the well-filled fruit bowl’; but she also begins her play \textit{The Forc’d Marriage} (1670) with the epigraph ‘Va mon enfant! prends ta fortune’.\textsuperscript{185} The appropriateness of her usage of these tropes of fertility and birthing asserts her authorship as being inherently more ‘natural’ and, in some ways, superior to her fellow male authors, who were using

\textsuperscript{183} Hélène Cixous, \textit{Le rire de la Méduse : et autres ironies} (Paris: Galilée, 2010).
\textsuperscript{184} Wendy Wall, \textit{The Imprint of Gender}, p. 338.
these metaphors too. John Florio’s *Dedicatorie Epistle* to his translations of Montaigne states that ‘all translations are reputed femalls, delivered at second hand’, and ‘the translator and the author are often seen as “intimate” friends’ in other theoretical works, encouraging sexual connotations to the relationship and privileging a female translator.¹⁸⁶ Not only was translation linked to women – and was also a very prestigious occupation – but so was general authorship, as ‘textual and sexual politics’ were ‘intertwined’ too, explored by Wall in *The Imprint of Gender*.¹⁸⁷ Behn is therefore operating in a domain which provides her with much material to assert her identity as a female author and she certainly connects her writing and her femininity in exploring the extent to which her character Iris can actually control a man.

The extent to which Behn’s subversions or reclamations are presented as creating any more than an idealised status quo is contextualised by her more realistic depiction of love’s politics, which,

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together with the complications to Behn’s elevation of writing, encourage the reader to doubt the practicability of her gender politics. Her use of prosimetrum, for example, traditionally evokes a work, or, actually, a dish which is ‘full to bursting’ but this ‘abundance’ is said to create a ‘textual space characterised by its lack of a sure arbiter’ and ‘hodge-podge tendencies’.

Behn’s combination of prose and poetry both encourages a view of her mastery of the two media but also suggests that the combination does not internally cohere. Similarly, Iris’s imposition of rigour on all aspects of her lover’s daily life, even sleep, presents a vision of idealised gender politics giving control solely to women, with the clear, fundamental flaw that Iris’s voice has no power outside the text. Behn’s textual object tries too hard to combine too much and although this could be used to display the extraordinary power possessed by the writer to reclaim a form which naturally tends towards deconstruction, it is more probably an undercutting of the

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projected power structures within the text, given the undermining of the romantic tenor of the piece.

The difficulties of female control are implicit in the expansion of the scope of the lovers’ world in Behn’s alterations to de Bonnecorse. The time frame becomes more specific as the ‘voyage a la Campagne’ is changed to last ‘several months’, and the growing level of detail is replicated in a more realistic depiction of the concerns of the lovers.\textsuperscript{189} In the opening section, Behn adds a clause which is completely absent in the French, clarifying that ‘twas impossible for Damon to wait on her, he being obliged to attend the King, his Master’, removing the love affair from the rarefied realm of romance and contextualising it with political considerations.\textsuperscript{190} Also invoked here is a pre-existing power structure – one which will, despite Behn’s assertions to the contrary, always triumph over the feminine control of Iris. The danger inherent in the court setting is alluded to in another of Behn’s additions to the opening where, in closely following the French and describing the lovers’ beauty, she stops herself and adds ‘I dare not too nicely

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\item \textsuperscript{189} Balthazar de Bonnecorse, \textit{La Montre}, p. 2. / Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}, p. 283.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Aphra Behn, \textit{The Works of Aphra Behn}, p. 283.
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particularise, lest I should discover (which I am not permitted to do) who these charming lovers are’. \textsuperscript{191} Although this remark is delivered playfully with the reference to the ‘charming lovers’ undercutting the slightly more threatening tone, the increasing pressure from outside and the delicacy of court politics is certainly visible. Her naming of the protagonists in the work takes on this character too as she modifies their names with a detail again absent in the original French. She names ‘Damon, a young Noble-man, whom we will enter under that Name, languishes for a Maid of Quality, who will give us leave to call her Iris’ which suggests that even their first names cannot be revealed and adds a level of deception and artifice to the setting – appropriate given the subsequent elevation of the act of writing a fiction. Withholding the exact names of the protagonists evokes the \textit{roman a clef} genre which in turn relates to specific court politics. Later, in the hour entitled ‘Visites d’ami’ (three o’clock), Behn presents a geographical expansion as the French inward motion is reflected outwards to ‘visits to friends’. This tiny change from visitors coming in to the displacement and widening evoked by Damon now leaving to see his

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, p. 283.
friends opens up the scope of an otherwise controlled and restricted romantic world.

Although the increasingly dangerous tone is maybe only implicit in the widening of the scope of the work, other alterations clarify that the growing number of people and the pressures of society leads to an escalation in tension. This comes in Behn’s simple omission of the ‘peu’ of the ‘visites un peu dangereux’ occurring at five o’clock, and thus shifts the tone from rather cheekily warning against the flirtations of other girls to a more sinister injunction to beware of ‘dangerous visits’. The considerations of the outside world also become more urgent as Behn translates ‘demandes empressées’ as ‘impatient demands’, the activity given for Damon at eight o’clock. Although these look the same, the French ‘demander’ is much closer to the English ‘ask’ and Behn’s passages of technical and more difficult French translation reveal that she was familiar enough with the language to be aware of this basic difference.\(^{192}\) Her choice to render it as ‘demand’ changes significantly the character of the imposition, and

presents these requests as more urgent and more pressing forces on the lovers. Society invades Behn’s text and brings with it pressures which corrupt and undercut the romantic world of the narrative and demonstrate this purported piece of amatory fiction as unable to hold within it all that Behn desires it to contain.

Behn’s insistence on introducing the external into the narrative stretches the work at its seams, and displays her own undercutting of the generic uniformity of her amatory fiction. The undermining of the work’s ability to hold its contents accords with the self-deconstructing formal nature of prosimetrum and problematises the idealised, projected gender politics. The power Iris holds is only possible in the world of fiction and must rely on the compliance of Damon for the execution of her commands in reality, but most crucially only exists in a text which holds together internally. Her destabilisation of power structures is also a manifestation of her exploration of the doctrine of libertinism, an ideology interlinked with her well-documented Tory sympathies.\textsuperscript{193} Behn’s negotiation of libertinism from a female

perspective emerges in her adaptation of de la Rochfoucauld’s *Maximes* in which she ‘feminises’ the tone of many of the maxims in a ‘libertine way’ through reversing the gender of some of the pronouns. Although Behn is a libertine in theory, she struggles with the different and unequal practical ramifications such sexual freedom has for the sexes.\(^{194}\) *The Watch* therefore provides Behn with the opportunity to characterise the shortcomings of her own achievements as a writer but also the problems with libertinism itself.

*The Lover’s Watch* provides a rich insight into Behn’s worldview but also acts with more subtlety than has been attributed to it, possibly due to the extreme scarcity of her source text which has led to a dearth of comparative studies. Her stridency in asserting her ability to write and, more crucially, her natural propensity as a woman to be proficient at her task counterpoints a consistent undercutting of the conviction of her tone. Her choice of prosimetrum displays this text tending towards deconstruction as does the privileging of the text to a level which it cannot truly occupy. Behn stretches the work to encapsulate not only

the interaction of two lovers but the world which they inhabit, yet with
the awareness that the text’s scope is simply not large enough to cohere
with all the pressures to which she alludes. Similarly, her elevation off
the text to stand in for the actual watch of the original cannot be
sustained and her building up of her work is equally undermined.
Behn’s subtlety and nuance can also be seen in Venuti’s terms as she
certainly revises, not overturns, ‘dominant conceptual paradigms’.195
Behn’s refusal, however, to reject outright the conceptual paradigm
within which she works also presents a challenge to Schleiermacher’s
dichotomy of translations. His dichotomy posits a movement –
engendered by the translator – of either the audience towards the source
text or the source text towards the audience:196 Behn does not facilitate
such simple movement and she retains the complexity of her
philosophy which coincides neither with that of her audience nor that
of her source. Instead, Behn moves her translation away from its
original and its audience, forcing the reader to enter into Behn’s world

195 Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*
196 Friedrich Schleiermacher, ‘Über die verschiedenen Methoden des
Uebersezens’ (1813) in *Das Problem des Übersetzens*, ed. by Hans Joachim
where full expression is given to her own complex and highly nuanced worldview, whilst facilitating her exploration of narrative styles in the emergence of epistolary fiction.
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KELLY SCHWEIZER

Dracula, Camilla, and their Literary Afterlife

‘My own heart grew cold as ice, and I could hear the gasp of Arthur, as we recognized the features of Lucy Westenra. Lucy Westenra, but yet how changed. The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness.’

This description of the newly vampirised Lucy in Bram Stoker’s Dracula reveals the central anxiety of the gothic vampire. Recognisable but subject to uncanny changes, the vampire becomes something less than human. Everything about them becomes more bestial, more monstrous, while somehow retaining something of their old appearance. The Victorian vampire serves as a warning of the potential destruction of humanity, whether from sexual discrepancy or racial threats. The vampire is anxiety, about what humans have been or could be. That they are both metaphor and parody is undisputable, revealing hidden fears and altering the known. Dracula is a business man, but

also a monstrous distortion of our preconceptions, which can be either comic or terrifying. The question that remains unanswered is whether this is still the case, and if so, why? Does a twenty-first century audience share the same worries as those in the nineteenth century or have the vampires themselves shifted, their fluid shapes changing with the turning of the calendar page, into something new?

The name Dracula is imbued with such symbolic weight that he, the ‘awful creature’ who haunted Victorian London, lurks in every home of the twenty-first century. Between bookshelves, television screens and memorabilia, the vampire king is no longer relegated to the shadows. Reception of the text has gathered speed since its publication in the nineteenth century and Dracula has never been out of print. When considering this phenomenon it is important to remember that Bram Stoker’s infamous literary creation was not born in isolation. The 1897 novel has long been known to have been influenced by Sheridan Le Fanu’s 1871-2 vampire novella, Carmilla, as well as other established gothic tropes. This influence is most clearly seen in Bram Stoker’s Dracula’s Guest, a short story which was initially conceived

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198 Ibid, p. 53.
as an opening chapter to the novel, and shares the same setting - Styria, a mountainous region in Austria - as Le Fanu’s work and parallels between the vampiric characters can still be found. Both texts are set in distant, isolated lands where the feudal past has somehow survived to taunt the present. Carmilla and Dracula are both aristocratic ghosts of history, though they do not share the servants or high place in society that they did before their deaths. They live lonely existences, with followers such as Dracula’s brides lurking in their castles, but they constantly crave something more. The vampires are driven by a desire for an all-encompassing control over companions. Their victims are flattered under illusions of hospitality and friendship while desire bubbles beneath the surface and fangs are poised ready to penetrate. Dracula claims ownership over Jonathon Harker, telling his brides that ‘(t)his man belongs to me!’\textsuperscript{199} They must make do with feeding on a nameless child while the count keeps Jonathan as his guest and prisoner. Similarly, Carmilla does not just want to feed on Laura. She wants to claim the novella’s young heroine as her lover and companion. The text’s central conflict is this desire and the way that Laura’s

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid, p. 43.
repressed feelings shape her response to it. The novella is rife with conflicts between the traditional, nuclear family and sexual desire, a theme which is also apparent in *Dracula*. The vampire, with its apparent sexuality, heightens this conflict, by offering an alternative to the family and its structured roles.

Notably, both *Dracula* and *Carmilla* are missing mother figures. Laura’s mother, a native to Styria and distantly related to Carmilla, died when she was an infant, though she does have a governess ‘whose care and good nature now in part supplied to [her]’ the role of a mother.¹⁰⁰ Such a trope is well-established in Gothic literature, and can be traced back to Ann Radcliffe. Like Julia in *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), Radcliffe’s popular novel, Laura must navigate the world without maternal nurture, care and advice, other than that from her governess. Still, her life remains ‘rather a solitary one’, not unlike that of Carmilla herself, who is left by her ‘mother’ to worm her way into noble families and claim their eligible daughters as her victims, thereby denying them their own chance of heteronormative marriage and subsequent

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motherhood. Bertha, the first victim introduced to the narrative, is killed by Carmilla, who is parading under the name of Millarca at this point, and a similar fate is intended for Laura. And yet, Carmilla seems to recognise her prey’s potential for motherhood, feeding from their breast in a parody of maternity. Like an infant, she gains strength, her very semblance of life, from the blood she draws from them. When she is younger, Laura finds herself ‘wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into [her] breast very deep’, a precursor for the vampire’s sustained attack on her during her later years. She is fed on as if she were a mother, while Carmilla, her cared for infant, plots to deny her the possibility of a heterosexual relationship and, consequently, her potential status as wife and mother. In this sense, the vampire threat is not just to the individual, but to the family unit and its power in society. This is especially true when we consider the crucial role the nuclear family played in continuing and controlling the established order of things. From socially appropriate expressions of desire to inheritance, the family was the cornerstone of the Victorian world.

201 Ibid, p. 9.
Such an idea is expanded in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, when the newly vampirised Lucy becomes a grotesque inversion of the ideal Victorian mother. She is described animalistically, and spotted by the novel’s heroes with a child ‘clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone’.²⁰³ By aligning Lucy with a beast, Stoker creates a horrifying image, suggesting that she has somehow lost her natural behaviours and urges. Though she clutches a child to her, she does not show care, compassion or kindness towards it, simply growing possessive over her meal. The reader’s shock is only heightened when she flings the child aside, as ‘callous as a devil’ with Dr Seward, the narrator of the incident, noting a ‘cold-bloodedness in the act’ that causes a physical reaction in Arthur, the man she was once promised to marry.²⁰⁴ Lucy was changed by Dracula in the moment of transition; due to become a wife and, presumably, a mother to Arthur’s children, her new monstrous state has put an end to this. By trying to seduce Arthur, who ‘seemed under a spell’, Lucy also shows the

²⁰⁴ Ibid.
distance between the sexualised vampire and the ideal passive woman of the nineteenth century. Importantly, the seeds for Lucy’s subversion seem to have existed while she was still human, with Dracula’s ‘authorizing kiss’ only bringing to the forefront the dissent buried within the character. It is a common interpretation to see Lucy as a representative of the New Woman and her subsequent dangers, especially when she laments only being able to have one husband, asking Mina ‘(w)hy can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?’ Lucy is therefore a symbol of dangerous, female sexuality that is, luckily for society, vanquished in the first half of Dracula. Penetrated by Arthur, looking ‘like a figure of Thor’, the ‘nightmare of Lucy’, and her threat is extinguished, screaming and quivering like some sort of supernatural orgasm. With this marital consummation, order is returned and the creature in the

205 Ibid.
207 Bram Stoker, Dracula: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Reviews and Reactions, Dramatic and Film Variations, Criticism, p. 60.
208 Ibid, pp. 190, 192.
coffin again resembles ‘Lucy as we had seen her in her life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity’.\textsuperscript{209}

With the dangerous figure of Lucy under control, Stoker turns his attention to Mina, the chaste wife of Jonathan Harker. Any desire she may experience is rendered safe by her marriage, especially since her wedding night was spent in a nunnery nursing her sick husband. Devoted and scathing towards the New Woman, Stoker offers Mina as an admirable alternative to Lucy. Serving as a mother figure for the band of heroes who fight the vampires, she comforts and supports the men, holding Arthur to her breast and stroking his hair as if he was ‘[her] own child’.\textsuperscript{210} She even offers herself as a sacrifice when attacked by Dracula in order to prevent the disease spreading, declaring herself unclean. The desire and monstrosity that takes over Lucy are rejected by Mina. As Dracula closes, Mina is returned to his rightful place without her scar and mother to Harker’s child. In this way, she is an ideal model for readers to follow.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid, p. 203.
Although the ending of the novel leaves the vampire vanquished and the nuclear family triumphant, the events of *Dracula* are not resolved with the text’s close. The Harker’s child may be known as Quincey but ‘(h)is bundle of names links all our little band of men together’ and serve as a reminder of the evil that his parents vanquished.\(^{211}\) Not noted by Harker is the fact that his son is not only born on the anniversary of Quincey’s death, but Dracula’s too. While they hold out hope that their child is infused with their ‘brave friend’s spirit’, Mina and Jonathan forget that the younger Quincey could also have inherited Dracula’s spirit.\(^{212}\) Even with the Count’s death, there is an anxiety that permeates the text. The child’s mother may have been under threat but the actions of the count resulted in a need for multiple father figures, suggesting that the stability of the nuclear family has not quite been reclaimed by the last lines of *Dracula*. If nothing else, this multitude of names reveals an anxiety about the stability of the nuclear family, with two parents not being enough to raise a child.

\(^{211}\) Ibid, p. 326.

\(^{212}\) Ibid, p. 326.
The uncertainty that oozes from the two gothic vampire tales is due in part to the questionable and unreliable narration within. Though the prologue to *Carmilla* comments on the ‘conscientious particularity’ of Laura’s tale, her tendency to repress events means that the reader has to unpick the reality on the page, particularly with regards to the relationship between Laura and Carmilla.\(^{213}\) The repercussions of this are picked up by William Veeder in ‘Carmilla: The Arts of Repression’, who argues that Laura’s isolation, both geographically and in terms of her status as a woman, lead the character to try and deny the sexual nature of her friendship with Carmilla.\(^{214}\)

Interestingly, something similar happens with Carmilla, a character who is considered ‘a dual victim’ to herself and the world around her.\(^{215}\) Gentle and somewhat resembling the Victorian heroine, particularly at the novel’s opening, Carmilla is described as ‘in delicate health, and nervous’ by her mother and so conscribed to Laura’s

\(^{213}\) J. Sheridan Le Fanu, *Carmilla*, p. 5.


\(^{215}\) Ibid, p. 212.
father’s care. Similarly, she is victim to fits of hysteria, a characteristic commonly ascribed to gothic heroines, who commonly faint when confronted with the terrors of the genre. Despite these vulnerabilities, her predatory nature is also apparent, particularly when she mimics Laura to become closer. Her contradictory and unstable character is highlighted by her ability to shift into the shape of a giant cat, which also reminds readers of the bestiality that lurks beneath her face, no matter how beautiful Laura finds it. While Van Helsing sees Lucy’s newly animalistic state as monstrous, it is the source of allure and confusion to Laura and one of danger to the General. Seeing her cat-like form fills the man with terror and he tries to kill her by penetrating her with his sword. This is inadequate and it is only her later staking that vanquishes the vampires.

Carmilla’s contradictory nature is symbolised in Laura’s reactions to Carmilla, who gazes at her with ‘the ardour of a lover’. Confused by her own feelings, Carmilla admits to the reader that this behaviour ‘was hateful and yet overpowering’ to her and immediately tries to find

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a rational explanation beyond the desire that exists between the two.\textsuperscript{218} She even aligns these actions with male behaviour, revealing the heteronormativity that is so deeply ingrained in her. It is behaviour such as this, and the open nature of \textit{Carmilla}’s ending, when the protagonist admits that ‘the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations’ and that she fancies that she hears Carmilla’s footsteps, which encourage a discerning reader to unpick Laura’s narrative.\textsuperscript{219}

Similarly, the narration in \textit{Dracula} is far from complete. Notably, we hear little from Dracula himself, except through the reported speech of other characters, meaning that the elusive vampire leader remains mysterious, and therefore dangerous, to the reader. We are offered no insight to make the creature likeable or arouse our sympathy; he remains the monster confined to the shadows. The overlapping and epistolary nature of the narrative allows for individual weaknesses to be highlighted, with the gaps in each narrator’s tale becoming more apparent when the next character offers their interpretation. It is only when all of these narratives are subsumed into one by Mina Harker and

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid, p. 102.
her typewriter that the mystery starts to unravel and a solution becomes a possibility. As such, the narrative of *Dracula* is unreliable and fragmented to begin with in order to heighten the dramatic tension. When the narrative becomes whole, answers emerge and the elusive Count Dracula emerges from the shadows. From Mina’s compiled accounts, the men can form their ‘plan of battle with this terrible and mysterious enemy’. 220 The narrative is therefore another weapon in the fight against vampires. Its power lies in the technology it employs and the unity it brings to the characters, both of which were vital in defeating Dracula. Significantly, *Dracula* both begins and ends with entries from Jonathan Harker’s journal, adding a circular nature to the narrative. It also suggests that the final entry signals a return to the normality that is found in the first entry, when the narration is filled with recipes and remarks about the everyday population, rather than supernatural creatures.

While the similarities between *Dracula* and *Carmilla*, some of which are detailed above, are well noted in the relevant literary

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criticism, Carol A. Senf has argued for a direct interaction between the two texts. The argument in “‘Dracula’: Stoker’s Response to the New Woman” goes beyond the superficial similarities of geography, aristocracy and victim. Instead, Senf argues that Dracula was a response not only to the perceived dangers of the New Woman, but also her presence in Sheridan Le Fanu’s Carmilla. While Carmilla is shown as having certain vulnerabilities and offering friendship to Laura, no matter how homoerotic its undertones, Stoker’s women tend to be ‘aggressive, inhuman, wildly exotic, and motivated only by an insatiable thirst for blood’. As we have already discussed when examining Lucy, Stoker’s female vampires are monstrous, an inversion of everything a woman should be. It is not enough that Carmilla ends up staked as Laura’s own indecisiveness about her feelings reveal that the vampire’s influence remains. For Stoker, there must be a complete destruction and abandonment of the New Woman. Once Lucy is staked and thereby brought under control, the narrative moves away from her and all that she represents. Instead the reader is offered a new ideal:

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Mina. Mina with her devout and chaste personality, is allowed to survive since she is easily controlled by the men around her, as indicated by Van Helsing’s ability to hypnotise her and use her for information on their prey. Any skills that she has are put in use for the good of the men, and are therefore rendered safe. While Lucy’s body was a moral battleground for Senf, Mina’s is an ideal. Though tested, as indicated by the mark on her forehead and her ability to communicate to Dracula, she does not give into temptation and so is allowed to live, though her death is discussed by the men. Once her mark is removed and she becomes clean once more, she is allowed to live as the ideal wife and mother. The open-ended intrigue of *Carmilla* is finally closed by Stoker’s heteronormative finale. Stoker is aware of the dangers lurking in *Dracula* and so vanquishes them accordingly.

The author’s awareness of the world of literary terror and dissonance seems apparent when we consider the cover design of the first edition of *Dracula*: the yellow cover, with red writing, made less than subtle links with ‘the more adventurous and transgressive
elements of the Victorian fin de siècle’. As such, the design appears to have been a conscious decision on the behalf of the publishers, warning readers of the horrors that lie behind the yellow cover. By aligning the new novel with a tradition of transgression, there was an attempt to encourage a sense of suspense and mystery. Potential readers may not have known what exactly was hidden within the first edition of Dracula but it was more than likely something that their mothers would not approve of.

It did not take long for readers to discover the terrors that lurked in *Dracula*, with many contemporary reviews raving about the ‘lurid power’ of Bram Stoker’s creations.\(^{223}\) Many nineteenth century newspapers and periodicals were fascinated by the gothic novel, with *The Standard* even suggesting that *Dracula* ‘may possibly become a standing authority on vampires’.\(^{224}\) For a commonly available newspaper to make such a claim seems important as it suggests a widespread belief in the power of *Dracula*, which permeates into the common audience. While the Victorian journalist could not have imagined the hundreds of adaptations, both literary and cinematic, that have spawned from the count, his statement stands true. And yet, *Carmilla*, which inspired Stoker, seems to have been left in the shadows of gothic history. In the same issue of *The Standard*, it is noted that Le Fanu’s ‘ghastly story is almost forgotten’ and it seems like another prophecy has come to pass at first glance.\(^{225}\)

\(^{225}\) Ibid.
And yet, adaptations of *Carmilla* do exist. They may not be as numerous as Stoker’s antagonist, but they are there. From 2009, we have British comedy film *Lesbian Vampire Killers*. Beyond the repetition of same names (Carmilla and the Baron both appear in the film) and the sexuality of the vampires, most of the novella’s thrilling and mysterious features have been abandoned. Like most Gothic tropes, *Carmilla* has become a clichéd spoof of the horror genre. These vampires are no longer the home of anxiety but of comedy. The desire that the reader has to unpick, carefully navigating their way through Laura’s repressed sexualities, has been brought to the forefront, creating little more than a phallic punchline. While gothic originated as a safe means of exploring the hidden fears, the twenty-first century has made it a means of laughing at them.

More recently, Kinda TV has released *Carmilla* (2014), a web series that has, like *Lesbian Vampire Killers* updated the story to exist in the modern world. Silas University, the new setting for the vampire tale, is home to all forms of weird and unusual events, but the simmering desire between Carmilla and Laura remains. Unlike Le Fanu’s novella however, this passion is not repressed or left behind. A
relationship between the two characters emerges, with Carmilla being cast as a character capable of redemption and Laura helping her on her journey to achieve this. Carmilla is no longer seen as a threat to Laura but a possibility of union, a powerful ally in her threat against a greater evil. The vampiress has been displaced as the greatest threat. She has become an alluring, Byronic hero to counter a morally upright heroine. Desire is no longer feared, but fear is part of desire for a dangerous partner.

From *True Blood* to *Twilight*, the vampire is no longer a source of social and cultural anxiety but a forbidden lover who adds just enough danger to be alluring. They have gained a new place in society, brought from the shadows to serve as lovers, and, in *Twilight*, as husbands. They are no longer a threat to heteronormative relationships, as Dracula was to Jonathan and Mina Harker, but a part of them. While Victorian depictions of vampires focus on their distances from humanity, the twenty-first century is seemingly trying to humanise the monster. In part, this may be due to changing attitudes to sexuality and desire, though we do need to be wary of accepting such a reductive explanation.
It is important to remember, however, that the threat of vampires has not been neutralised— it has just morphed into something new. They have been romanticised as desire made illicit rather than immoral but they are still kept on the edges of society. Though no longer kept in the shadows, they become victim to the light as later adaptations of the vampire myth make the creatures vulnerable to sunlight. By doing so, depictions limit vampiric ‘access to mortal society’ and give them new vulnerabilities by binding them to the night. Such a move suggests that fear still remains, even if this has shifted forms. In *Twilight*, for example, sunlight does not harm vampires but marks them as something ‘not-human’ and thereby liminal. Why is it that they still seem to be a source of fear, even in their romanticised state? Mathias Clasen has argued that many gothic creatures remain in our popular culture and nightmares because they do not just deal with Victorian anxieties. Their uncanny parody of humanity appeals to deeper lying fears that are buried within human nature, rather than just in a society.

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The vampire calls into question everything that we think we know by ignoring the strict binary between life and death. They crumple the distinction between man and beast, dance between attraction and repulsion. Their fluidity is the source of anxiety as it reminds us how little we truly know. They are familiar and yet unknown and that, at least in part, is why Dracula’s literary afterlife lasts long beyond his staking.

This is particularly apparent in Liz Lochhead’s Dracula, which adapts the nineteenth-century tale for a modern audience. First published in 1989, this adaptation brings the implicit sexual politics of Bram Stoker’s to the front of stage and is described as ‘a feminist critique of patriarchal repression’.228 Female desire is no longer condemned or hidden but explored. Even Mina, Stoker’s angelic ‘brave and gallant woman’ is allowed to exhibit desire in Lochhead’s play, with Jonathan remarking that ‘My wife is insatiable’.229 Unlike the

saint-like Mina in Bram Stoker, Liz Lochhead has reimagined female characters where sexual desire is not a sign of degeneracy or the dangerous New Woman, with the play drawing to a close with the ‘lovers entwined on Dracula’s cloak’.230

The parallels between the female characters and the vampire brides are made increasingly apparent with Lochhead’s decision to have the actors who play Lucy Westerman, Florrie Hathersage and Nurse Grice also play the vampire brides. In this way, the line between victim and villainous vampire is blurred; it becomes very apparent to an audience that it does not take much for any of the characters to become vampires and that nobody is safe from the attack, with servant and mistress alike also appearing as vampires. Suspense is therefore created. In the case of Lucy, it also serves to foreshadow her fate as the actor appears to Jonathan as a vampire bride before Lucy’s transformation has been achieved.

The influence of Bram Stoker’s original novel is apparent in Liz Lochhead’s adaptation, with many of the stage directions containing quotes from his work. For example, Jonathon’s encounter with the

230 Ibid, p. 147.
vampire brides is riddled with phrases taken from Stoker’s *Dracula*, with Vampire 3 emitting ‘a laugh of ribald coquetry’ and being described as ‘both thrilling and repulsive’ as they are originally described in Chapter Three of Stoker’s *Dracula*.\(^{231}\) Lochhead is careful to keep *Dracula* in the focus of her play and admit her reliance on it, making sure that audiences are aware of the conscious closeness of the texts.

So why is it that *Dracula* has spawned so many adaptations?

There are certainly key similarities between *Dracula* and *Carmilla*, particularly in regard to their portrayal of desire as somewhat subversive and dangerous, especially when it comes to the gothic heroine, who must resist the vampiric wiles. However, it is *Dracula* that has never been out of print since 1897 and it is *Dracula* that has permeated popular culture.\(^{232}\) Liz Lochhead did not decide to bring female sexuality to light by reimagining *Carmilla*, and *Dracula* is by

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\(^{231}\) Ibid, p. 100.

no means ‘confined to the classroom’.

It is everywhere. To quote Clive Leatherdale:

‘Dracula can be read as an instrument of sexual repression; it yields readily to Freudian psychoanalysis; it is a testament to the perceived arbitrary power of Christ; it pays homage to occult and literary myths in the shape of the Tarot and the Holy Grail; and it opens a window on the social and political tensions operating in late Victorian Britain.’

In part, this is due to the fluidity of the text with its elusive and alluring symbolism, which each reader can shape for themselves. By examining the fall of humanity into something bestial and monstrous, Stoker shifts the reader’s focus to something internal and about the very nature of mankind. Such a question survives changes in time, culture and location, potentially explaining the lasting popularity of Dracula. While Carmilla is primarily concerned with the sexual nature of this question, Stoker approaches the matter in a more multi-faceted model.

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234 Clive Leatherdale, *Dracula, the Novel and the Legend a Study of Bram Stoker’s Gothic Masterpiece*, pp.11-12.
Dracula embodies a fear of the past, of authority and of science ‘supplant[ing] ethical and religious values’ for Carol A. Senf, while Andrew Maunder discovers ‘fears of women, of sexual dislocation, of homosexuality disguised as homosociality, of disease, of the collapse of empires, of invasion, and of the past’.235

Clearly, Dracula was riddled with more anxieties than Lucy’s wandering eye and its repercussions for society. The Count, hailing from the East and its history, is more than just a commentary on the boundaries between man and animal. He is the Other, kept on the fringes of society and unwelcome in the Western world because of his differences. This divide between West and East, which signals a preoccupation with racial and imperial anxieties, is noted by Jonathan in the opening chapter of Dracula when he comments that ‘we were leaving the West and entering the East’.236 Such a statement creates a binary and consequently a sense of competition between the two states, revealing certain anxieties. Van Helsing’s decision to combine

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235 Carol A. Senf, Bram Stoker (Gothic Authors: Critical Revisions) (University of Wales Press, 2010), p. 57. / Andrew Maunder, Writers and Their Work: Bram Stoker, p. 5.

236 Bram Stoker, Dracula: Authorititative Text, Contexts, Reviews and Reactions, Dramatic and Film Variations, Criticism, p. 9.
religious and modern technologies in the fight against vampires, using crucifixes and stenographs alike, suggests a worry that religion will be displaced. Dracula is a warrior, a businessman and an invader of London. He is the embodiment of cultural, social and personal anxieties to a far greater extent than Carmilla, whose main threat is that of her sexual prowess and animalistic nature. Ultimately, this is why it is Dracula who is ‘part of the landscape of a universal culture’ and has a cultural currency that has spanned centuries.  

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EMELIA HAMILTON-RUSSELL

In what ways, and to what ends, does George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* explore the ‘function of knowledge’?

‘With dim lights and tangled circumstance they tried to shape their thought and deed in noble agreement; but after all, to common eyes their struggles seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness; for these later-born Theresa’s were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul.’

*Middlemarch* experiments with a narrative vision that reaches beyond the ‘inconsistency and formlessness’ of the ordinary human gaze, yet is not completely omniscient.238 The guiding voice of the narrator, at once closely empathetic and widely generalising, attempts to untangle the complexity of entwined fates and illuminate the viscerally human struggle for coherence amongst chaos. My reading will suggest that cultivation of the sort of intelligence literally embodied by the narrator, intelligence that is at once informed and transcendent, may surpass both science and religion in performing the ‘function of knowledge’ both for

the characters within the novel and the readers without.\textsuperscript{239} The essay will examine how the construction of the novel as a ‘study’ and the use of scientific analogy fulfil the need for formal clarity, yet the novel endorses a poetic rather than scientific view of how knowledge manifests in the world.

This vision for the manifestation of secular knowledge in the world, in order to be comprehended by the reader, is necessarily tempered by an organising structure. Levine observes how ‘science enters most Victorian fiction not so much in the shape of ideas, as quite literally, in the shape of its shape, its form’.\textsuperscript{240} The subtitle of the novel, ‘A Study of Provincial Life’, is strongly suggestive of the scientific and prefigures its divisive structure. The preface asserts that the study is intended for the person ‘who… cares much to know the history of man and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time…’.\textsuperscript{241} Thus, the novel can be understood coarsely as an experiment intended for the informed reader, in which strict

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid, p. I.1.
parameters are established and the conditions for the experiment are controlled.\(^{242}\) The scientist-narrator exposes familiar character tropes to the unique pressures of a particular age, examining intricacies of cause and effect. The book titles serve as dividers while highlighting the otherwise unapparent relatedness of various narrative strands. Chapter titles such as *Three Love Problems* (Book IV) explicitly link the three struggling romances while the title of Book II, *Old and Young* (Book II) most obviously points to Dorothea and Casaubon, yet also relates to the push and pull between Ladislaw and Casaubon, Lydgate and Bulstrode, Fred and Bulstrode. The young are reliant on the old for knowledge, money, validation; all are linked by a complicated system of dependencies. Just like various parts of an organism, the narrative strands are distinct yet interdependent, for they are all formed of the same tissue, human relations. They are parts of the great whole, bound by locale as Lydgate’s primitive tissue binds the organs. Indeed, the narrator is often associated with Lydgate’s ‘eye of research, provisionally framing its object and correcting it to more and more

exactness of relation’.\textsuperscript{243} The narrator achieves what Lydgate cannot - the imaginative ‘piercing [of the] the obscurity of those minute processes’\textsuperscript{244}

The fact that Middlemarch is the chosen locale for experimentation is significant. For a city dweller, these small midland towns would be seen as marginal, insignificant, unrefined: ‘provincial’ in the most derogatory sense. Thus, the illimitable vastness and variety of human feeling within the novel is contained within a vessel as mundane, functional and unremarkable as the thimble Dorothea might have used to do embroidery. In this way, Eliot has chosen to concern herself with the domestic, yet imbues the small achievements of certain characters with an eminence equal to the greatest scientific achievement.

Lydgate and Casaubon are engaged in a futile search for ‘what was the primitive tissue?’ the definitive unifier, the ‘key’ by which all else might be explained.\textsuperscript{245} They are hoping to attain a god-like status as eminent scientists and historians of the late Victorian era. However, Dorothea (despite her lofty idealism), Fred, Ladislaw and Mary have

\textsuperscript{243} George Eliot, \textit{Middlemarch}, p. II.132.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid, p. II.132.
\textsuperscript{245} George Eliot, \textit{Middlemarch}, p. II.119.ff.
more earthly concerns. All are looking for direction, or at least a noble-
seeming distraction that might bring meaning and significance to the
formless variety of experience. Empirical knowledge, as many of the
characters discover, cannot provide guidance for how best to live nobly
‘here-now-in England.’\textsuperscript{246}

\textit{Middlemarch} is set in 1829 and was published in 1872, dates
which bookend a period of radical destabilisation which seemed liable
to continue indefinitely. This sense of instability is pervasive both
within the cosmology of the novel and during the time of its release
into the public sphere. Radical religious and social reforms were
upending the supremacy of a unified social institution, an institution
that had previously brought order and coherence to the daily lives of
communities and individuals. Mrs. Cadwaleder, who ‘believed as
unquestionably in birth and no birth as she did in game and vermin’
satirically encapsulates one such outmoded world-view.\textsuperscript{247} The
uncertainty of the time is described by the critic Mathew Arnold in
1880, who says, ‘there is not a creed that is not shaken, not an

\textsuperscript{246} Ibid, p. I.20.
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid, p. I.45.
accredited dogma that is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition that does not threaten to dissolve’. 248 He presents a picture of gaping absence, of chaos waiting to be called into being. Thus, the restless urgency with which Middlemarchers struggle to find a grounding theory within a disintegrating cosmos can be understood as symptomatic of this societal malaise, a malaise whose relevance both informs and transcends the novel’s frame.

Before these 19th century reforms, religion had provided a mechanism, an organising force through which ‘thought and deed [were shaped] in noble agreement’. 249 Religion not only provided social stability, but also encouraged the expression of ineffable ‘divine mysteries’ through ritual, art and music. As religion declined, this sense of mystery was largely relegated to the cultural (Arnold) or disregarded by the scientific. 250 What culture and science lack, however, is a mode of integrating scientific or cultural revelations into

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the humdrum of daily life. The most learned characters fall due to their failure to bring their knowledge to bear on action. It is not the knowledge itself that is inadequate, but their lack of earthly insight that causes them to disregard the simplest facts of human relations. The sought after ‘function of knowledge’ in *Middlemarch*, then, is a practical means of bridging the gap between good intention and good action. This earthy, functional and deeply humane knowledge is elevated in the novel, as it is through the unheralded magnanimity of soul by which Fairbrother, the Garths and a wiser Dorothea come to attain figurative sainthood within the complex moral hierarchy of the novel.

Despite these didactic tones, *Middlemarch* is portrayed scientifically as an organic system, which ‘counted on swallowing Lydgate and assimilating him very comfortably’. 251 Lydgate arrives in Middlemarch believing he can remain self-contained, aloof from the milieu of Middlemarch life. However, when the political and romantic inevitably encroach on the scientific, Lydgate's resolutely single-minded notions render him incapable of avoiding entanglements of the

most brutally destructive sort; first, his marital attachment to Rosamond, and then his various affiliations with Bulstrode. These parallel narrative strands tug at Lydate’s sense of himself as a ‘medical man’. 252 He looses coherence as he becomes absorbed into the ideological tension between *Young and Old* (Book II) and his consumptive *Love Problem* (Book IV). His self-determined narrative in which he expects to ‘contribute towards enlarging . . . his profession’ and gain eminence as a scientist is entangled amongst other, more provincial narrative strands. 253 His fate becomes inextricably entwined with Rosamond Vincy’s and, by extension, the whole Vincy family and their wider connections. As the novel progresses, Lydgate is being gradually digested by and assimilated into Middlemarch. Engulfed by the organism he is examining, Lydgate can no longer remain in the objective, observant position of a scientist. The narrator, too, although she remains aloof from the plotlines, often becomes compassionately involved in her subjects of study.

\[252\ \text{Ibid, p. I.72.}\]
\[253\ \text{Ibid, p. II.118.}\]
The reading of the narrator’s role as scientist implies an overarching, generalising and impartial take on events. To Lydgate, a scientist's gaze must be ‘continually expanding and shrinking between the whole human horizon and the horizon of an object-glass’. Indeed, the narrator uses free indirect style to enter into the specificity of feeling within each individual consciousness, while still maintaining her unique capacity for overview. The subtlety with which the narrator moves between modes can be seen in her treatment of Dorothea as she describes her longing for ‘something...by which her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent; since the time was gone by for guiding visions and spiritual directors, since prayer heightened yearning but not instruction, what lamp was there but knowledge? Surely learned men kept-the only oil; and who more learned than Mr. Casaubon?’.

In the explanation of Dorothea’s motives and reference to the particular struggles of the time-period, we detect the wide-angled voice of the narrator. However, the delicate irony in the pair of rhetorical questions marks them as uniquely Dorothea's. Here we see

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how the narrator both enters into Dorothea’s experience while maintaining a judicious distance. Thus, by assuming a character of the sympathetic scientist, the narrator’s study is paradoxically both empirical and deeply humanistic. As conductress of an experiment, Eliot’s narrator-voice demonstrates how thought and action can be equally ‘rational and ardent’. 256

Henry James famously felt the sweep of the novel to be too broad, holding that Dorothea, the most interesting character, deserved more attention. 257 It is true that once the reader has become involved in the struggles of ardent Dorothea in Book I, the focus shifts abruptly to Dr. Lydgate and later the hapless Fred, muddling Dorothea's plight with a new set of problems and preoccupations. The narrator demonstrates a self-consciousness in her tendency to identify with Dorothea when she asks ‘(b)ut why always Dorothea?’. 258 The narrator-scientist attempts, but does not always succeed, to treat each character with the same explanatory wisdom and sympathetic fair-mindedness; ‘Casaubon felt,

258 George Eliot, p. III.223.
This equivalency is evident even within the confines of the individual phrasing such as the staccato jump in perspective in the exclamation ‘(p)oor Lydgate! or shall I say, Poor Rosamond! Each lived in a world of which the other knew nothing’. The novel is full of emotive, self-reflective interjections from the narrator and the use of the second person ‘we’, giving a sense of her humanity, her fallibility as both as scientist and author. Thus, the figuring of the narrator as an impartial scientist proves problematic. She does not presume to have an impartial understanding, nor a comprehensive view of reality. This presents an unsettling conundrum, as the reader is unable to find definitive authority either from within the characters, or emanating from the author. The omniscient narrator, the creator God of Middlemarch, remains resolutely absent from this secularised study.

The layering of distinct yet simultaneous narratives further problematises singular, empirical knowledge by forcing the reader to reflect on the problems of necessary limitation. The instruments of

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260 Ibid, p. II.133.
human perception cannot comprehend the uncontainable cacophony of sounds, images and feelings that ‘would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel’s heart beat’.\(^{261}\) They must be extracted, framed and worked into a mere representation of the ‘fullest truth’.\(^{262}\) The narrator admits, ‘I at least have so much to do in unraveling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web.’\(^{263}\) The narrator is limited by scope, but her ability to ‘feel with’ the other transcends the egotism and perceptual limitations that inhibit the ordinary human vista.\(^{264}\)

The metaphor of the ‘pier glass’ may be usefully examined in relation to the novel's treatment of knowledge as interpretation.\(^{265}\) The light shed by a candle determines a pattern of superficial, arbitrarily placed scratches on the polished surface. In the ardent pursuit of knowledge, central characters fail to recognise the falsity of assigning coherence to the scratches illuminated only by an arbitrarily placed

\(^{261}\) Ibid, p. II.156.
\(^{262}\) Ibid, p. II.162.
\(^{263}\) Ibid, p. XV, 126.
\(^{264}\) Ibid, p. VIII.662.
\(^{265}\) Ibid, p. III.211.
light. The image is applied directly to Rosamond, who possesses ‘eyes of heavenly blue, deep enough to hold the most exquisite meanings an ingenious beholder could put into them’. The ‘meanings’ held in Rosamond's gaze bear no relation to her inner reality, rather, what translates is not meaning but a reflection of the light emanating from Lydgate himself. Rosamond, like the polished table, has no interiority. Her eyes hold the illusion of depth, yet their reflective surface displays only the gazer. On the level of plot, Lydgate's inability to recognise his egotistical misinterpretation of Rosamond's character precipitates his downfall. He fails, firstly in assuming that he is immune to the entanglements of the great human web, and secondly in the assumption that his faculties of perception are reliable ways of knowing. Right knowledge, it seems, requires an understanding that each ‘self’, being integral to the web, can influence the other in profoundly powerful ways. Here we see how the language of science serves to elucidate some of the more complex, yet ultimately unscientific ideas in the novel. The narrator describes how, if Dorothea is to perceive Casaubon's ‘equivalent centre of self’, she must do so ‘with that

266 Ibid, p. 1.89.
distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling’. 267 Truth can no longer be revealed by traditional scientific means but demands a new organ of perception that sidesteps the interpretive limitations of the human senses. 268 This organ is Ladislaw’s ‘poetic soul’ which at times expresses itself through Fairbrother or Dorothea, but is most clearly embodied in the narrator’s commentary. 269

Charles Darwin’s The Descent of Man places sympathy at the crux of morality in secular human society, and the idea soon became a motif in late nineteenth century literature and philosophy. Eliot’s narrator seems to be echoing the Darwinian view that egoism naturally presides over altruism, in the phrase ‘all of us are born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves’. 270 Thus, the novel joins the contemporary debate regarding the evolutionary significance of sympathy, and this has implications for Eliot’s understanding of moral agency in a secular age. The idea of sympathy is central to Eliot’s

269 George Eliot, Middlemarch, p. II.180.
concept of morality, as it represents a middle ground between scientific rationalism and the vagaries of emotional response. The early psychologist Alexander Bain, who was Eliot’s contemporary, posits a definition of sympathy as ‘the tendency of one individual to fall in with the emotional or active states of others’.  

The modern critic Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth characterises this sympathetic state as a state of ‘double consciousness’. She argues that Eliot’s sympathy depends upon the cognitive ability to negotiate between self and other and that the presence of the authorial voice facilitates a division in the consciousness that allows two views to exist at the same time; the ‘I’ of egoism and the ‘Other’ of altruism. In a moment of crisis as Dorothea miserably gazes out of the window of her marital bedroom, she comes to the realisation that ‘she was part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining’.

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Eliot, the first stage of moving beyond egoism a sympathetic ‘double’ recognition of the other as an ‘equivalent center of self’ and the second stage is the objective understanding of the necessarily diffusive nature of individual action in the social milieu. In this sense, Eliot’s sympathy can be defined as the binding that connects the self to the other and thus weaves it into the organic texture of the community. Individuals can never stand apart from ‘palpitating life’, but neither can they be at its center. Dorothea’s experience is not a sudden conversion, but the finding of a middle way between two untenable modes of consciousness: the ‘selfish complaining’ of egoism and aloof spectatorship of ideal objective analysis.

Dorothea, talking cozily with Celia near the end of the novel, says that in order to understand her motives for marrying Ladislaw, Celia would have to ‘feel with [her]’. Art and sympathetic feeling both occupy a space in which the obscuring veil of egotistical preoccupation,

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275 George Eliot, Middlemarch, p. VIII.635.
276 Ibid, p. VIII.635.
The ‘wadding of stupidity’, temporarily falls away.\textsuperscript{278} The difference is that art, as the narrator and Ladislaw understand, can be comprehended ‘by fits only’.\textsuperscript{279} As Dorothea discovers in Rome, art cannot immediately and usefully be translated into principals, while experience, she will come to understand later with Lydgate, ‘is a powerful way of knowing’.\textsuperscript{280} Thus, ‘vivid sympathetic experience’ becomes ‘a new organ’ of perception, the missing component through which ‘knowledge passes instantaneously into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge’.\textsuperscript{281} The silent space between the separate worlds of Dorothea and Lydgate is traversed when Dorothea gathers all the ‘vivid sympathetic experience [which she had acquired through her own disastrous marriage, and which]...returned to her now as a power: it asserted itself as acquired knowledge asserts’.\textsuperscript{282} Dorothea the grown-up is able to imaginatively inhabit Lydgate’s world, and this allows her to finally answer the question that consumes

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid, p. II.156.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid, p. II.180.
\textsuperscript{281} George Eliot, \textit{Middlemarch}, p. II.180.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid, p. VIII.364.
\end{footnotesize}
her in book 1: ‘what ought she to do?’.

Thus, it is the guiding light of human sympathy fulfills the ‘function of knowledge’ in *Middlemarch*.

Virginia Woof famously wrote that *Middlemarch* was ‘one of the few English novels written for grown-up people’. Indeed, the narrator enforces an equivalency that disabuses readers of the pleasant egotism of youth. We may wish to idealise Dorothea, demonise Bulstrode and mock Casaubon, but to do so would be to disregard the delicate balance of irony and sympathy with which the narrator examines each center of self. We, like the newly wise Dorothea, are unable to ‘see as we saw in the day of our ignorance’ but must see by the narrator’s interpreting light. Thus, *Middlemarch*, rather than presenting a study designed for the mature reader who wishes to know the ‘history of man’ also contains a didactic thread which ‘changes the lights for us’. This construction of an aloof, yet resolutely human

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287 Ibid, pp. I.1, VIII.164.
narrator who diverts egotistical readings and guides towards ‘the truer measure of things’ is doubtless one of the most interesting formal experiments in nineteenth-century fiction.\textsuperscript{288}

\textsuperscript{288} Ibid, p. VII.634.
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EDWARD GRIMBLE

‘What would the world be, once bereft/ Of wet and of wilderness?’: Travel and the Natural Environment in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is surrounded by a wealth of scholarly material related to its portrayal of Arthurian chivalry, engagement with gender roles, or the nuances of the Gawain-Poet’s innovative prosody. However, attention to the poem’s role in the ecocritical canon is comparatively limited. 289 This essay will therefore attempt to investigate the poem’s depiction of travel and the implications of Gawain’s journey through the English wilds. Firstly, the essay will examine how the poem interacts with the real-world landscape in which it is located, followed by an examination of the relationship between humankind and the natural environment, through the depiction of both human interaction with animals, but also by 289 A sympathetic view is taken in a recent documentary in which poet Simon Armitage traces a proposed route for Gawain’s quest. More abundant are studies which see Gawain’s trip only as a near Promethean attempt to conquer the natural world, and which take as their central image metonymic figure of the Green Knight; for example M. W. George’s ‘Gawain’s Struggle with Ecology: Attitudes Towards the Natural World in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,’ in *The Journal of Ecocriticism*, 2/2 (2010), 30-44.
drawing attention to the ethics of cartography and navigating the landscape.\textsuperscript{290} Finally the wilderness, with regards to Gawain as subject to the effects of the sublime, will be discussed. Throughout, reference will made to the way the poem sits within Northrop Frye’s ‘green world’ paradigm, and more broadly the otherworld tradition which pervades \textit{SGGK} in its melding of natural and the supernatural; that ‘rhythmic movement’, writes Frye, ‘from normal world to green world and back again [which] makes each seem unreal when seen by light of the other’.\textsuperscript{291}

\textit{SGGK} is a poem which has an important relationship with its most visually obvious subject: the natural landscape both within and without the work. The Gawain Poet shows an aptitude in both French and Latin, given the frequency of loan words from both languages. The former is employed at once as a means of enlarging his vocabulary (a necessary

\textsuperscript{290} Integral to the examination of Gawain’s relationship with his environment, that is, an individual human being and the complex ecosystems through which he treks, are Ralph Waldo Emerson’s writings in \textit{Nature, Addresses, and Lectures}, from which this essay will draw—particularly when discussing the idea of reciprocity between man and nature.

endeavour given the demands of alliterative verse), where terms such as ‘fylyoles’, from the French ‘fillole’, meaning a column or pillar, and ‘blasoun’ signifying a shield but with specific attention to the coat of arms depicted (like modern English’s ‘blazon’), but also to stylistically enrich and ornament the verse.\textsuperscript{292} French idioms such as ‘graunt mercy’ (giving thanks) and ‘beau sir’ are introduced as the Gawain Poet embellishes his work with linguistic ‘frenkysh fare’.\textsuperscript{293} However, despite the frequency of these loan words, the language of the poem is fundamentally one rooted in a specific area of England. Ad Putter and Myra Stokes’s diligent examination of the language of the poem identifies crucial elements that give both an accurate north-south and east-west location, that of somewhere near the Anglo-Welsh border in the counties of Cheshire and Staffordshire.\textsuperscript{294}

This strong sense of a geographical identity to the poem is reinforced in its inclusion of specific place names, for instance ‘the

\textsuperscript{293} Ibid, pp. I. 838, 1222, 1116.
wyldrenesse of Wyrale’ and the ‘iles of Anglesay’.295 The parallels
drawn by Simon Armitage between the Green Chapel and Lud’s
Church, a deep chasm near Leek, Staffordshire, also reinforce this
authentic sense of place that the poem creates.296 John Charles Ryan
defines place as ‘the synthesis of culture and nature’, and this seems
apt when speaking of the way the Gawain Poet as author is able to set
up this delicate and harmonious relationship between a text and its
subject.297 There is no feeling that the landscape is fulfilling a purely
instrumental, anthropocentric role in enabling the creation of the poem,
but that there is instead an artistic quid pro quo wherein the poem
animates this wild and awesome landscape just as much as the latter
feeds the poet’s creativity. This instance of a lack of human imposition
is reflected internally in Gawain’s own movement through the natural
space.298 Indeed, the poem as a piece of art also has a synecdochical
function, that through it the reader can engage with the broader and

297 John Charles Ryan, ‘Humanity’s Bioregional Places: Linking Space,
(p. 97).
298 This issue is discussed further on p. 4 of this essay.
expansive subjects of natural beauty or, as Philip Godchild writes, ‘open […] thought onto the body and the landscape’ (emphasis mine).\footnote{Philip Goodchild, quoted in Siewers, p. 33.}

The treatment of animals is one of the most important aspects of the poem with regards to examining the relationship between humans and the natural environment. Indeed, the hunting scenes in the grounds around Hautdesert are crucial here; the poem’s focus on duality means that these are perhaps too often solely viewed in relation to the corresponding episodes in Gawain’s bedchamber.\footnote{Putter and Stokes, for example, are very keen to emphasise duality in aspects of the poem; be this in the symmetry of the interior and exterior scenes of the hunting game and the doubling of the two game-exchanges, or on a more micro level when assessing the effects of the Gawain-Poet’s bob and wheel (pp. 240, 243).}

\footnote{Simon Armitage, \textit{Sir Gawain and the Green Knight}, p. 1. 1151, 1153.} It is certainly the case that the image of the deer ‘doted with drede’, as they are chased by dogs is one tinged with cruelty, especially when one visualises the process of the hunt, wherein aspirant escapee does are ‘restayed with the stabyle’.\footnote{Simon Armitage, \textit{Sir Gawain and the Green Knight}, p. 1. 1151, 1153.} Man here is responsible for a deliberate curtailing of the freedom of movement that usually defines the natural space, and for a measured reduction of boundaries that produces feelings of entrapment
and claustrophobia. Simultaneously, however, details which the poet provides, for example the fact that ‘they let the herttes have the gate’, suggests that rather than a bloodthirsty or indiscriminate culling, this hunt has at its core an objective not dissimilar from our contemporary notions of conservation and animal population management. That these are the machinations of ‘the fre lord’, Bertilak, certainly suggests an attempt made by him to inhabit a role of environmental stewardship; this is a progressive move towards Aldo Leopold’s ‘land ethic’, which ‘changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community plain member and citizen of it’.302

This need to look beyond the apparently bloody-minded or visceral superficiality of the scene has its zenith in the 35 lines (ll. 1327-1361) of description of the ad hoc butchering of the deer carcass. Words such as ‘lystily’ (‘deftly’, or ‘carefully’), ‘graythly’ (‘neatly’) and ‘by resoun’ (‘correctly’, or perhaps suggesting doing something in a recognised fashion) all give the reader the sense that tremendous care and attention is being paid at every individual step of the procedure.

Comparison with texts like Edward of Norwich’s *The Master of Game* establish that the labour and craft shown here is indeed authentic.\textsuperscript{303} This apparent concern for not wasting any part of the animal implies sincere respect for the deer—its status as a gift to Gawain shows further the value attributed to the carcass—and an understanding that its killing is only justified if none of the animal is squandered.\textsuperscript{304} This idea of comprehensive butchery, and by implication a comprehensive inspection of the animal, can be linked interestingly to the behaviour Bertilak’s wife extends to Gawain during his sojourn in the castle. Her tempting of Gawain draws out his inner self; in a sense she too looks beyond the knight’s outward appearance.

The final instance that this essay will examine concerning the relationship humans have with animals in *SGGK* is the poet’s handling of the boar and the fox, wherein an authorial process approaching that of characterisation seems to occur. The boar’s description is

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\textsuperscript{304} Respect between members of the environmental ‘community’ is a cornerstone of Leopold’s ‘land ethic’, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, p. 204.
remarkably efficient; ll. 1439-1441 imbues the animal with the power to elicit a degree of wonder, even awe, from those who see him, given the links between ‘sellokest swyn’ and ‘selly’ (meaning marvel), as well as both a history—that he was ‘long sithen fro the sounder’—and a substantive and even superlative presence in the immediate moment by recognising the boar as ‘althergrattest’. In a poem with very few characters who are given expansive descriptions, or any real uniqueness, save for Arthur, Guenivere, Bertilak, Morgan le Fay, and Gawain, giving the boar some notion of a personal timeline and past is noticeable. This bestowing of what is approaching an idea of personhood is further developed in the naming of the quarry in the final hunt: the fox ‘Reynarde’.

Although the name of ‘Renart' had become archetypal for the cunning fox, the significance of this moment of characterisation, and almost anthropomorphism, must not be underestimated in creating a being with the capacity for clear individual agency.

Barbara Smuts, writing on J. M. Coetzee’s 1999 novella The

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305 Simon Armitage, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, p. I. 1439, 1340, 1441.  
307 The name occurs in numerous texts, for example the Roman de Renart, an 1174 text by Pierre de St. Cloud, and Heinrich der Glîchezäre’s Reinhard Fuchs, usually dated to c. 1180.
Lives of Animals, asserts that treating an animal as ‘an anonymous object’ and not recognising ‘its own subjectivity’, is a morally reprehensible act, the result of which is a relinquishing of the status of personhood in the overlooking observer rather than the aforementioned non-human being.\footnote{Barbara Smuts, in J. M. Coetzee et al., The Lives of Animals (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 118.} A crucial and uncompromising part of the relationship between human and animal must be a reciprocation of respect or, as Ralph Waldo Emerson writes, recognition that ‘I [the human subject] am not alone an unacknowledged. They [plants and animals] nod to me. and I to them.’\footnote{Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, Addresses, and Lectures (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1883), p. 16.}

Gawain’s mode of travel itself also raises interesting ideas about the ways in which we interact with the natural landscape. The modern idea of the scientific map has its genesis in the work of Gerardus Mercator, whereas medieval maps were far more akin to the symbolic ‘mappa mundi’, which in almost all cases dispensed with any set scale or reliability in form or depiction of space in lieu of embellishment and being able to place areas of the earth in a philosophical and religious
setting. However, artefacts such as the Gough Map, produced between 1355 and 1366, are testament to the fact that pictorial representations of routes and spatial understanding were not absent from the time in which the Gawain-Poet was writing. Furthermore, Norbert Ohler’s comprehensive assessment of the methods and practices of medieval journeying stresses repeatedly the preparation undertaken by travellers of the period; planning, mapping and foreknowledge of route and topography were crucial to just surviving a long trip.

Gawain’s journeying without any form of map (or even basic directions, for that matter), is therefore of great importance. Cartography is intrinsically linked to the insidious notion of conquest of the landscape. Indeed, J. B. Harley identifies the metonymic status that maps have as ‘statements of territorial appropriation’. Mapping an area of land is a reductive process: it takes a rich spiritual and

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physical space and levels it. The pluralistic environment becomes nothing more than what R. D. K. Herman calls a ‘mechanistic materiality’.\(^{314}\) This denial of the spiritual is also important when one views the Gawain-Poet’s landscape in light of Frye’s ‘green world’ and otherworld tradition. The ‘green world’ is an expansive realm wherein a realist landscape is distorted with a distinctly spiritual and supernatural overlay—a subtle example in the poem is the coexistence of Christian worship and ancient Pagan spirituality.

Gawain’s use of a guide, one who can ‘teche him to turn to that tene place’, rather than a map, then, represents a far softer approach to movement through the natural space. Gawain wishes to traverse the unknown, but not necessary to illuminate it permanently.\(^{315}\) His engagement with the creatures of ll. 720-723 also suggest a less overtly hostile traveller. The combination of the verb ‘werres’ (which has connotations of fighting in a martial, organised sense, rather than a common scrap) and the ‘etaynes that him anelede’ suggest that Gawain’s combat is distinctly defence-orientated. He fights to survive

\(^{314}\) R. D. K. Herman, quoted in Huhndorf, p. 50.

against hostility, rather than seeking out foes. The mention of giants also highlights the unheimlich of the otherworld, in that the limited human resemblance makes one more fearful that the wholly fictious ‘wormes’.\(^{316}\) This trope is not unique to SGGK, indeed the popular 14\(^{th}\) century travel book The Tales of John Mandeville makes reference to ‘a yule where are greater giaunts as xlv fote long’.\(^{317}\) Indeed, this notion of the unheimlich seems to hover behind Frye’s aforementioned identification of the ‘rhythmic movement' between the recognisable and the mundane, and the otherworldly—both exploit moments of dramatic intersection.\(^{318}\) Gawain’s apparent failure to plan any fixed route not only suggests possession of a rather otherworldly internal compass, but also an eerie magnetism of the Green Chapel—a reader must surely be more than a little surprised to hear that Gawain has come ‘not two myle’ from his destination, despite what has seemed like little more than hopeful wandering.\(^{319}\) Furthermore, the guide’s declaration


\(^{318}\) Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 183.

\(^{319}\) Simon Armitage, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, p. I. 1078.
that, ‘For all the gold upon grounde I nolde go with thee’, suggests that this a landscape that *resists* the act of geographical exploration and comprehension.\textsuperscript{320} The guide, a symbol of mapping, has been literally halted—the landscape around the Green Chapel has succeeded in exiling the cartographer, the geographical conqueror, and in doing so appears to reject Harley’s ‘territorial appropriation’, instead advocating a sort of autonomy of the landscape that enables it to resist and to preserve its sense of unknown in the face of the potentially demystifying process of cartography.\textsuperscript{321} Here, it can be suggested that the Gawain Poet anticipates the kind of sentiment that Leopold articulates when he writes that ‘to those devoid of imagination, a blank place on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable part’.\textsuperscript{322}

The nature of Gawain’s journey also places him in the role as a subject of the sublime in nature. As a philosophical idea, the sublime traces its origins from the pseudo-anonymous Longinus. It witnessed a major revival in the 18th century—Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant

\textsuperscript{320} Ibid, p. I. 2150.
\textsuperscript{322} Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, p. 176.
both wrote extensively on it—before the early Romantics embraced sublimity in their poetry.\footnote{Robert Doran’s recent Theory of the Sublime (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) provides a comprehensive and engaging history of thinking on the sublime.} Before reaching the green chapel, he observes ‘rogh knoklede knarres with knornede stones;/ The skues of the scowtes skayned him thoghte’.\footnote{Simon Armitage, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, pp. II. 2166-2167.} It is an abrasive, bodily metaphor, where Gawain again experiences faint uncanniness in the ‘knoklede knarres’. The lines too, demonstrate the power of both the alliterative verse form, and the potential benefits of loan words (the \textit{sk}- phoneme is typically Scandanavian), as the sharp, jarring consonants reflect the rock forms. The \textit{ekplêxis} of seeing the jutting rock grazing the sky typifies the Burkean mathematical sublime, wherein ‘the eye, not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects as if they really were so.’\footnote{\textit{ekplêxis}, the astonishment and wonder that comes with an experience of sublimity. Robert Doran, Theory of the Sublime, p. 10. / Edmund Burke, Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful, ed. by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 67.} Gawain’s being dwarfed by the landscape trigger an over-zealous imaginative response, and he perceives the infinite stretching up above him. It is a vignette of Thoreau’s later observations of the savage beauty
of nature. This tension implicit in the aestheticising of the dangerous and the threatening is also seen in the Gawain-Poet’s description of the ‘harde ysse-ikkles’ which ‘heng[ ] high over [Gawain’s] hed’. There is here a sublime kairos, a moment, in which the risks of the cold are briefly forgotten in lieu of the glacial beauty of ‘the cold borne rennes’. The poem too extends the effect of the sublime to Gawain’s encountering of Bertilak’s castle, a moment which seems to enact perfectly Emerson’s feelings of ‘glad to the brink of fear’ in nature. As Gawain becomes ‘ware in the wode of a won in a mote’ — a moment which in itself is unsettling in how the gargantuan castle emerges with almost otherworldly timing, as if evoked ex nihilo, following Gawain’s plea of ‘Cros Cryst me spede!’ — his descriptions of the architecture of the castle betray again a sense of fear as well as the mathematical sublime.

depe’ and they rise skywards to ‘a full huge hyght’; both descriptions imbue the building with a sense of sublime grandeur, or *ta huperphua*.331

To conclude, *SGGK* engages with the natural world and the human subject’s place in it in a way equally complicated and delicate. Gawain’s journey is one in which the reader sees the way that, as Emerson writes, nature ‘nod[s] to me, and I to [it]’; there is a mutual agency and reciprocity.332 The poem, written circa 1400, seems to anticipate our own modern ecocritical concerns, especially those pertaining to the relationship between humans and animals and the necessity of the former’s recognition of the subjectivity of the latter, as well as the interrogation and rejection of a callously anthropocentric worldview. Furthermore, the poem reveals and examines the complex philosophical and ethical issues pertaining to movement through the natural landscape; from mapping and the implications of cartography, to the experience of the sublime for the individual traveller, alone in the beautiful savagery of an untamed wilderness.

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