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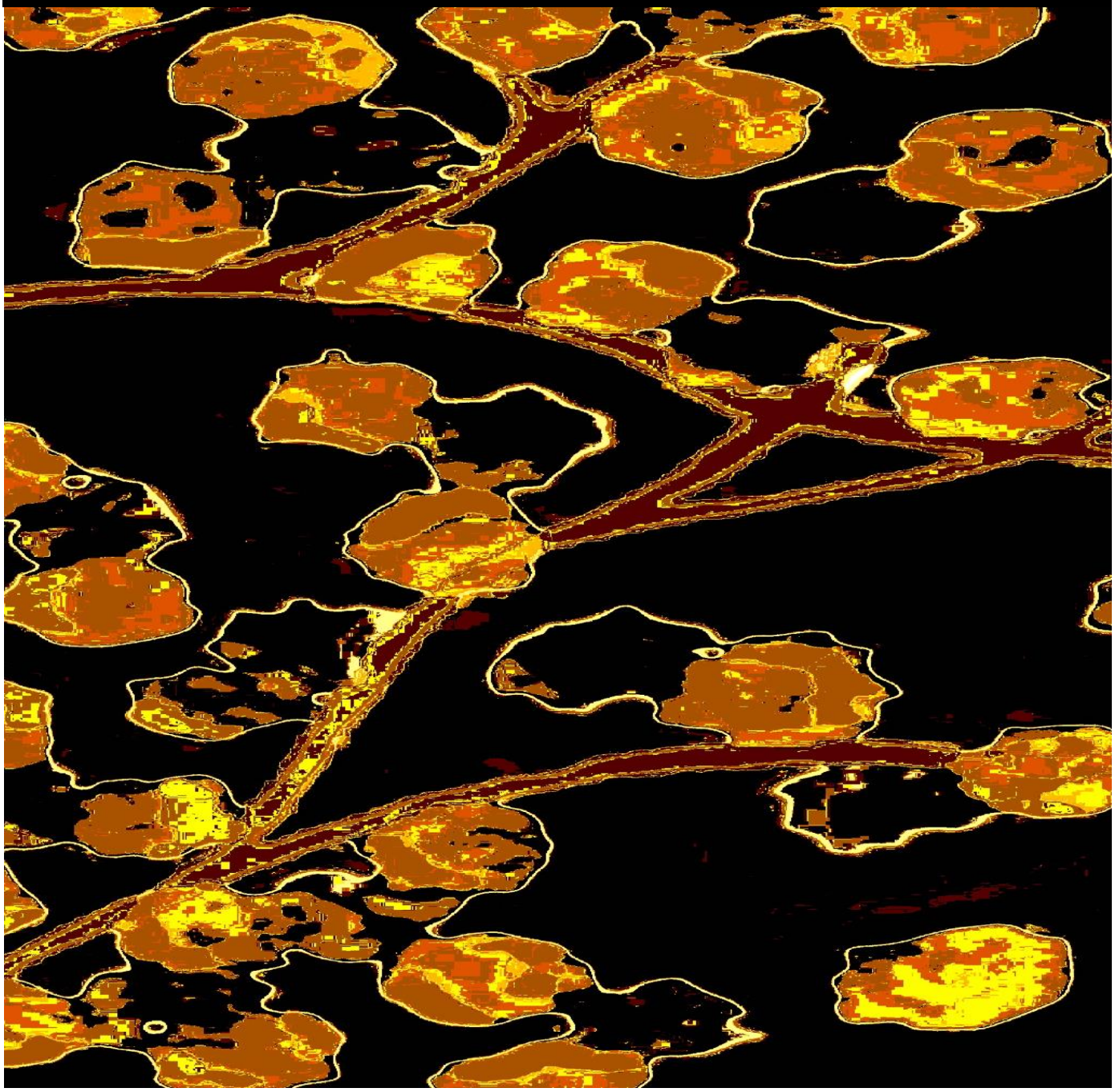

Lancaster University

LUX: Undergraduate Journal of Literature and Culture

Issue 2
June 2018

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and

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Staff Endorsement

I am delighted to endorse the second issue of *LUX*, Lancaster University's Undergraduate Journal of Literature and Culture. The contents of this issue are a testament to the intellectual, academic, and creative brilliance of undergraduates from a range of different disciplines, whose work has been included here, as well as those whose efforts have culminated in its publication.

In a fascinating analysis of rhizomorphic time travel in *Doctor Who*, Sam Steele captures the essence of the theoretical approach his article takes, that of Deleuze and Guattari: "this... approach explores how texts are independent semi-organisms that can establish and make their own connections between events, people, places, themes and other texts on the literary-cultural map" (50). Not only does this article impressively deploy Deleuze and Guattari's theory to generate original insight but it also coincidentally, yet aptly, summarises the distinctive quality of the journal issue as a whole. The six articles and three reviews here generate often unexpected connections between a vast range of literary and cultural artefacts, people, places and contemporary issues with academic rigour and style. Each contribution adapts the essay form to its own novel ends: the broad spectrum of pieces here include a creative-critical work on the myth of Narcissus from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; engagements with approaches from across the theoretical canon from queer theory to bio- and necropolitics; an introduction to the philosophy of Oswald Spengler; and a tour de force in establishing the impact of Renaissance intellectual thought on witch hunts.

Despite the breadth of literature and culture from historic to contemporary material treated here, the six articles maintain an impressive attention to detail; they all handle issues of immediate political, environmental, or social relevance with sensitivity and originality. The three reviews contained here are not only informative but also brilliantly creative in their own right. This journal issue presents lucid and engaging essays that consistently convey complex theories and arguments with persuasive clarity. Above all, the contents of this peer-reviewed journal and the editorial processes that its production has entailed embody a form of scholarly self-awareness that showcases the excellence of undergraduate writing at Lancaster. It is my pleasure to introduce the second issue of what promises to be an enduring and successful intellectual endeavour.

—Dr Clare Egan, Department of English Literature and Creative Writing

Editors' Introduction

It is with great pride and pleasure that the editorial team for *LUX Journal* presents its second issue. Following the success of last year's inaugural issue and the previous editorial team's hard work, we were keen to build on these existing efforts, continuing to shape *LUX* into a valued undergraduate journal. Although *LUX*'s origins reside in Lancaster University's Department of English Literature and Creative Writing, we wanted to increase the journal's scope and include writing from across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. We are therefore excited to be publishing articles from talented undergraduate writers on a wide range of subjects including history and philosophy.

We have thoroughly enjoyed the process of assembling this second issue. As well as having the opportunity to showcase the work of some of Lancaster's best undergraduate academic writers, we, ourselves, have undertaken the creative process of selecting and shaping the published articles. Our efforts, working as a team, and our collaborations with both contributors and peer reviewers, has led to the second publication of *LUX* of which we are very proud. Every aspect of this journal has been the result of not only hard work but also cohesive collaboration between ourselves. From the initial stages of promoting the journal across social media, to co-ordinating the anonymous peer reviews for each piece submitted, our priority has always been to work as a team to make the second issue the best that it could possibly be. Undoubtedly, the most challenging part of this process was the final selection of pieces that would feature in the completed journal, and we feel that those presented in the following pages represent both a high academic standard and a broad range of academic disciplines, engaging with cultures both ancient and modern from around the globe.

The articles in this second issue come from numerous departments in FASS. The work included discusses a variety of topics, ranging from queer theory in popular film to Spengler's provocative theories on culture. The first article in this issue explores queer theory and LGBTQ+ representation in Hiyao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. This is followed by an article which discusses the ideological motivations behind witch hunts in seventeenth-century England. The third article is a creative-critical piece which concerns issues of translation, centred on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and including the author's own verse translation of the *Myth of Narcissus* from Bulgarian to English. The next article considers the nature of suicide bombing, which explores how such an act relates to the sovereign and embodies resistance to political infrastructures. An explanation of philosopher Oswald Spengler's theories comprises the penultimate article. This issue then concludes with an article which applies Deleuzian theory to the popular television programme *Doctor Who*. This issue also includes three book reviews discussing some recent publications from Lancaster University's English Literature and Creative Writing lecturers, demonstrating the breadth of new work that has been produced. Three undergraduate students offer astute appraisals of Jenn Ashworth and Richard V. Hirst's collaborative novella *The Night Visitors*; Alison Findlay and Vassiliki Markidou's *Shakespeare and Greece*; and Andrew Tate's *Apocalyptic Fiction*.

Throughout this process we have been led by our two Executive Editors, Rachel Fox and Rebecca Gibson, whose guidance has helped us manage the challenging task of putting this second issue together. Since forming this year's *LUX* editorial team, we have been able to ask for advice, discuss ideas, and stretch ourselves, all thanks to the support of both our Executive Editors. As a result, we have produced a journal of which we are all proud, and one which we hope will be enjoyed by all those who read it, whether they be a first year undergraduate or a seasoned academic. We wish the next editorial team the best of luck and hope they enjoy producing the next issue as much as we have enjoyed creating this one.

—Bronte Crawford, Rhiannon Davies, Matthew Dunlop, and Poppy Plumb

Finding a Queer Touch of the Future in Studio Ghibli's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*

JN Hoad

Abstract

In this article, I consider Hiyao Miyazaki's anime film *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* to explore issues in contemporary queer theory, the politics of hope, and Science Fiction (SF) form and genre. The film maintains a shared appeal for queer/trans viewers as a science-fantasy tale that articulates socialist, ecological, queer, and feminist principles. I critique Lee Edelman's radically negative queer ethics, which instructs us that "the future is kids' stuff," and rejects the future in a way that reflects the "capitalist realist" problematic diagnosed by Mark Fisher. In response, I draw on José Esteban Muñoz's work, in which the queer embodies an unfulfilled potential in the present that gestures to an unbounded future, not-yet-here. The term "utopia" is problematised when applied to post-apocalyptic Japanese fiction, but we can find a sense in which "the future is in touch"; this is exemplified in Nausicaä's companionship with the Fox-Squirrel Teto, and uncomfortably inhuman Ohm. It is also worth considering *Nausicaä* as a tale of failed utopias, as the dream of a "pure" garden fails in a moment of gwilting (guilt/wilt). The Sea of Decay also animates an ambivalent ecological future; a site of toxic animacy that transgresses boundaries of life and death. In this impure future, Nausicaä exercises a "weak messianic power" in saving a baby Ohm which, contra Edelman, threatens straight, patriarchal authority. Leading into the climactic final battle, we see how *Nausicaä* is a tale of supposedly dead and buried forms of violence monstrously re-emerging to bear on the present; this complicates Darko Suvin's conception of SF as defined by the novum. In contrast with Thomas More's canonical Western *Utopia*, this film maintains a sense of memory, present-day action, and failure. In this sense, the film conveys the complex nature and concrete task of queer affect and survival today.

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> "Personally I am very pessimistic… But when, for instance, one of my staff has a baby you can't help but bless them for a good future. Because I can't tell that child, 'Oh, you shouldn't have come into this life'. And yet I know the world is heading in a bad direction. So with those conflicting thoughts in mind, I think about what kind of films I should be making."—Hiyao Miyazaki (qtd. in Brooks)

For me and other lovers of Studio Ghibli's cinema, Hiyao Miyazaki's work is saturated with queer feeling. Gabrielle Ballot, a trans woman who, like me, found these movies as a childhood site of queer identification, has praised Miyazaki's work in this regard. She writes: "For the first time, I saw representations of girls and women that seemed real and attainable, yet mythic all the same time" (1). Nausicaä, the protagonist of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, is often read as androgynous, a subversion of the typical femininity of *shōjo* ("girly") anime, and so holds appeal for those of us who seek role models outside the conventional gender binary (see Napier). As Ballot and I attest, the uplifting fantasy of this film has a childish appeal that brings out the politics of queer childhood and childishness. It does not just provide naïve optimism or escapist nostalgia, as we often come to expect from children's media. Rather, I feel that it taps into a not-yet-fulfilled queer desire that could be, and should be, realised in the future. Here I will consider *Nausicaä* through current queer theory, and vice versa, to explore how it enables LGBTQ+ people to get in touch with a liberated future.

Weaving together elements of SF and high fantasy, *Nausicaä* projects a strange and ambivalent future for human society; thousands of years earlier, a great war unleashed the Fire Giants, now-mythical superbeings created by man to wreak apocalyptic destruction, creating a world in which mutants and cyborgs are best adapted to survival. The peaceful Valley of the Wind is presided over by the King and Princess Nausicaä, a feudal-mythical society protected by wind currents from the toxins of the nearby Sea of Decay, a wild jungle of giant bugs and mutant flora. When the techno-capitalist Tolmekians crash-land in the Valley with a gestating Fire Giant, the Tolemkian Princess begins a colonial occupation of the Valley in order to develop their superweapon. Princess Nausicaä ventures to prevent the Tolmekians from awakening the ancient dangers that lurk beneath the surface of the world. *Nausicaä* is not simply fascinated by destruction. Rather, this fantastical tale articulates socialist, ecological, queer, and feminist principles in order to capture both the unsettling beauty and poignant loss to be found at the end of the world.

Nausicaä's image of apocalypse is touching and nuanced, and provides a helpful cultural touchstone through which to consider current issues relating to queer theory, politics, and futurity. Time and the future have become productive points of attention for recent queer and critical theory (see Sahani). In *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004), Lee Edelman argues that the queer is always already excluded from the future. Sexual deviants are marked and excluded by the dominant Symbolic order for their inability to reproduce. Edelman calls this "reproductive futurism"; the future always excludes the queer in favour of "the Child," the symbol of heteronormative reproduction that grounds our social order: "The future is kids' stuff" (3, 29, 1). This leads to a radically negative queer ethics of rejecting the future altogether, embracing a death drive that refuses and erodes heteronormative society. In rejecting the future, Edelman places queers in a situation of struggle and despair that reflects the ideological imposition of late capitalism more generally. In his concise and influential study, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009), Mark Fisher usefully diagnoses this ideological problem. According to Fisher, capitalist realism is a generally accepted cultural logic that "there is no alternative" to the current state of affairs, a cultural atmosphere of depression, anxiety, and frustration where we cannot imagine a different future (8).

Facing the total loss of the future, José Esteban Muñoz's intoxicating polemic on worlds to come, *Cruising Utopia: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2009), outlines the urgent and visionary project of dreaming new pleasures, new desires, and new worlds. Muñoz provocatively argues that "Queerness is not yet here" (1): the queer embodies an unfulfilled potential in the present that gestures to an unbounded future, not-yet-here. This idealist queer politics invites us to break with an inadequate current order in favour of hope, joy, pleasure, and utopia. In the strange joys of *Nausicaä*'s richly animated apocalypse, we may find some fantastical queer potential to counter capitalist realist despair.

Bringing the term "utopia" to this film presents a number of difficulties. For one, there is arguably no utopian tradition in Japanese culture or literature that parallels Western utopias and SF, as Koon-ki Ho (2009) records. By considering utopia in this context, I am therefore seeing it through the lens of particular Western taste and politics; I will not discuss at length the cultural or spiritual context of Miyazaki's work here (see Bigelow). Instead, I consider the transnational relevance of Miyazaki's work to queer audiences, which writers like Ballot attest to, as well as considering its liberationist SF narrative as an alternative to Western utopian tracts such as Thomas More's *Utopia*. Further, this film portrays a distinctly (post-)apocalyptic, rather than optimistic, future. This is cinema for the anthropocene, a geological era in which human activity and colonial-capitalist violence has permanently altered global ecology, leading to disastrous, unpredictable, and weird global effects (Macfarlane). Retrieving hope from a situation after the calamitous end of capitalist civilisation, faced with looming ecological disaster, might prove a necessary task for radical politics today.

The queer feminist theorist Sam McBean has also contributed to recent literature on the politics of time. Following her work, I will also be careful to recognise *Nausicaä* as a tale of loss and failure. In McBean's reading of Marge Piercey's feminist SF classic, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, we are told that: "The future is in touch" (65). In Piercey's novel, the protagonist, Connie, is dragged into the future society of Mattapoissett when she makes physical contact with the ghostly time-traveller Luciente. This "queer touch of the future," according to McBean, may be "not comfortable or utopian"; it instigates a contact between past and future that challenges linearity and opens up a different, queer future (68, 67). Nausicaä enacts such a touch of queer loss early on, as she uncovers the Pejite princess' chest to find a fatal injury, a moment of loss and death that catalyses Nausicaä's quest to save the future from the colonising Tolmekians. From its early scenes, Nausicaä bares a trace of lesbian desire, and goes on to enact other kinds of queer contact. We can consider Nausicaä as enacting such a queer touch, not just between women, but between humans and monsters, and loss and hope.

In this way, Nausicaä gestures toward a utopian bond with non-human animals in her early encounter with a little Fox-Squirrel, which Lord Yupa has rescued from a bug attack. At first, the creature is hostile, nipping her on the finger and drawing a pin-prick of blood. Calmly receiving the scratch, Nausicaä reassures it that, "You are not afraid"; this helps, and the critter becomes friendly, scampering and nuzzling on her shoulders, as uplifting strings and flute swell in the soundtrack (Miyazaki). The Fox-Squirrel, resembling a Pokémon in its mutant mix of species, becomes an affectionate companion, named Teto. This tiny drama embodies the hopeful potential of queer touch: the discomfort and danger of the nip, as well as gesturing at a world which is not yet here, in Muñoz's terms, a world of respect and love between humans and other monsters.

Another, more challenging, monster which Nausicaä confronts is the Ohm. As large as the skyscrapers that have long since collapsed, the Ohms impose on the humans of the Valley with their woodlouse-like domed shells and many blank eyes. According to the witch Obaba, any humans who, like the Tolmekians, try to destroy their home, the Sea of Decay, will drive them to attack, "like a tidal wave" of rage (Miyazaki). These creatures embody the death drive of a ruined nature, a radical negativity that pushes back against the capitalist environmental destruction. Of course, Nausicaä takes it upon herself to befriend and protect these creatures. When she crash lands with the Tolemkian Princess Kushana and groups of Valley hostages in the toxic forest, Kushana is foolish enough to awaken an Ohm nest by firing her gun. Nausicaä once again calmly confronts the creatures, and in response a cluster of weird, yellow tentacles emerge from the shells and cocoon her. This queer touch draws out the soft, vulnerable interior from the threatening outer shell in a gesture of loving the unloved and embracing the feared. Though uncomfortably inhuman, it later transpires that these tentacles have healing powers, as the baby Ohm that Nausicaä rescues from the Pejite attends to her wounds from the Acid Lake. Queer touch in this way can draw bonds of hope and healing even from what appears to be unanswerable hostility.

With her concern for befriending monsters in a futuristic world, Nausicaä could serve as a heroine for the "cyborg ecofeminism" of Donna Haraway. In particular, they share a concern for "companion species" as a model for cross-species solidarity and survival. For Haraway, companion species are a "queer family" bonded by "significant otherness," a punning phrase that indicates both respect for difference and loving partnership (Haraway 11, 33). This bond helps enact "barely possible but absolutely necessary joint futures," a feminist resistance to ecological disaster (Haraway 7). Thus, against formidable inter-species hostility, Nausicaä touches and bonds humans, cute creatures and toxic monsters, gesturing towards mutual future survival.

If the futures of companion species are "barely possible," then they might help us to learn about the impossibility of hope. As Muñoz points out, the history of utopias is also a "history of failures" (155). Nausicaä learns this lesson soon after the Tolmekians invade her Valley. In a

scene where Yupa follows Teto, he finds her in a secluded, underground enclave beneath her chambers. Distraught, with her head in her hands at a table, Nausicaä is crowded by peculiar plants lit by gloomy candlelight, in soft greys and greens accompanied by a deflated organ on the soundtrack. This garden was her attempt to "grow my own spores" from the Sea with pure water, and perhaps cure the disease that took her father, but it is no use as the toxins of the Sea are "in the earth itself" (Miyazaki). Now all there is to do is cry. The lost dream of a "pure" garden is a failed utopian vision that was not suited to the mutant future of this world. It is worth remembering that, throughout, *Nausicaä* is a story of failed hope, and could teach us how to keep struggling despite the apparent impossibility of our own utopian feelings.

The Bureau of Linguistic Reality is an environmentalist, public participatory artwork that compiles a dictionary of feelings that arise in the era of accelerating climate change (Bureau of Linguistic Reality, "About"). This SF-like "Dictionary of the Future Present" provides a sad and lovely term for Nausicaä's feeling in that moment: "gwilting" (Bureau of Linguistic Reality, "Gwilt"). A play on "guilt" and "wilting," this describes the all-consuming regret and loss that she feels because she cannot water the plants, or it no longer matters if she does. Navigating this loss offers an instructive tale of queer failure and hope.

We find ourselves in a world where dreams of a "pure" garden are not helpful for queer survival. In the Sea of Decay, we find a different image of a queer future. The Sea is abundantly animated in two senses: it both displays the aesthetic wonder of Ghibli's characteristically haptic animation, and is overflowing with monstrous and mutant activity. In the opening sequence, Nausicaä expresses her fascination and affinity with the Sea in moments of dangerous touching. The toxic forest, too, is constantly in motion, with overflowing swarms of insects. On encountering a small patch of glowing mould, Nausicaä pauses to appreciate its weird appeal, delicately tapping some into a test-tube. She takes a similarly affectionate attitude to a giant, discarded Ohm shell; drawing a knife, she strikes the rock-hard material, not to penetrate, but so that she can feel the resonating hum of the blade after it hits. A shower of "Mushigo Palm" spores drop after she removes the shell's eye with an explosive, and she stops to twirl and lie in them, like falling snowflakes. "So beautiful… Though this is the forest of death, your lungs would rot in five minutes without a mask," she remarks (Miyazaki). This is no place to "stop and smell the roses," but rather a dangerous site of toxic beauty. In general, the look of the toxic forest shows this contradictory, messy beauty, realised in vivid greys and muted, yet glowing, blues and purples.

In this sense, the Sea of Decay animates a queer ecological future before our eyes. I here draw on the relationship between queerness and toxicity explored by Mel Y. Chen. For Chen, toxicity carries at once vulnerability and disability, a threat to the "purity" of the white race and nation, and a peculiar "animacy" that transgresses the boundaries of life and death (265). Extrapolating from this, we might consider how queer futurity is not simply a manner of preserving or assimilating with the current state of affairs. It would not be right to describe the Sea as strictly dead, but nor is it a place that simply allows life to thrive. Here Nausicaä must respect the real dangers of toxicity and ecological disaster, whilst still seeing the beauty and integrity of the animacy that emerges from them. The presence of toxicity in this future indicates the need for liberated futurity to reckon with death and danger in the present world. It disrupts a vitalist sense of "pure" life in favour of a dangerous, impure, and toxic animacy.

In this impure future, Nausicaä also develops a queer attitude towards childhood and memory. During the encounter in the Ohm nest, Nausicaä relives a childhood memory evoked by contact with their tentacles. Childhood is rendered in a bright golden palette, in contrast to the strange *mise-en-scène* of the Sea, and is accompanied by the nursery-rhyme-like, eerie chanting of Nausicaä's orchestral theme. This, however, is not simply a scene of "golden" childhood nostalgia. We see how, once, Nausicaä attempted to foster a baby Ohm for herself, but it was seen as a dangerous monster and stolen by her father. As the creature is kidnapped, the small girl

is confronted by a surreal barrage of gigantic hands, those of the King and his helpers. This is a touch, not of queer affection, but one that is traumatically intrusive, patriarchal, and oppressive. Edelman argues that the symbol of the Child always embodies a heteronormative future; yet here the young monster is clearly a threat to straight, patriarchal authority, expressing a new, queer kind of childhood. As a memory of loss, this scene indicates a queer inability to be complacently nostalgic about childhood. Like many LGBTQ+ children, Nausicaä's desire to love and foster a different kind of companion is seen as monstrous, leading to exile and punishment. Yet this is a scene that she gets to revisit and redeem by rescuing a baby Ohm at the end of the film. Perhaps disturbing and disappointing childhood memories can indicate those not-yet-realised wishes that create a queer demand to be realised in the future. Nausicaä exercises what the Marxist philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin calls a "*weak* Messianic power" in her solidarity with the Ohm (246). In the name of the radically redeemed future, weak messiahs recall the failures of the past, demanding that they be addressed in an act of solidarity and revolution.

In the final sequence of *Nausicaä*, we witness a confrontation between the Tolmekian army and the Ohm. This confrontation spectacularly dramatises the thematic conflict of the tale, portraying a complex, non-linear relationship between past, present and future. For instance, the people of the Valley, threatened by charging Ohm and encroaching Tolmekians, shelter in an old, beached submarine wreck. The structure has apparently crashed at the bottom of a drained lake-bed, and is used by the population of the Valley as a secret base during the Tolmekian occupation. As a re-purposed piece of "ancient" (present-day) technology, it shows how survival in a hostile future can depend on re-using resources from the past. Nausicaä calms the oncoming Ohm by returning their child, and is held aloft on a dazzling sea of luminous yellow tentacles. This fulfils the prophecy of the one dressed in blue in a field of gold, the saviour of the Valley, according to Obaba. In doing so, Nausicaä creates the future by holding on to a collective, ancient memory, through myth and prophecy; this myth is also rendered monstrous—queered—by replacing the "golden" wheat field with Ohm tentacles. Here, the protagonist has arguably achieved a strong messianic power, as Benjamin might suggest.

Counterpoised to this, the spectacular re-birth of the Fire Giant also brings back an ancient threat to once again destroy the present. In a similar manner to Japanese *kaiju* (giant monster) movies such as *Godzilla*, this creature evokes an anxious memory of nuclear war returning to Japan, particularly as Kushana looks out over the mushroom colour generated by its laser-blast. Collapsing, melting, hardly seeming alive, the Giant represents supposedly dead and buried forms of violence monstrously re-emerging to bear on the present.

Literary critic Darko Suvin has famously argued that SF as a genre is defined by the *novum*, that new thing, a technological or social innovation that makes its world different from the present (Suvin). But in its final conflict, *Nausicää* shows us a political conflict between spectres of the past, in which the Princess must resolve the destructive marks left by capitalist society, even as they have been delegated to ancient memory. The path that Nausicaä forges towards peace is, in this sense, non-linear, or back-and-forth, reaching the future not by birthing a futuristic *novum*, but through the survival of old technologies, prophecies, memories, and hopes.

If *Nausicaä* contains a utopia, it is one with a memory: a dream of survival and liberation that is implicated in the compromised, unfavourable historical conditions of its dreamers. We might contrast this with the distant, abstract visions of Utopia that are inherited by canonical Western literary and political traditions. When lawyer and philosopher Thomas More coined the term in his 1518 satire, he envisioned the land of Utopia as a distant island, isolated from the world except for a lone, intrepid explorer. This vision of a perfect society is an island in a distant sea, and was founded by "Utopus," a leader who arrived from the shore to colonise and enslave the native population of "Abraxa," as it was called (More 72-73). In this way, it exists in a space saturated with early colonial desire. The word "utopia" itself is derived from the ancient Greek for "no place," or "perfect place"; it is therefore an ironic political tool, indicating a state that is

both desirable and also unobtainable. More pictured Utopia as a radically different social order, but his map points to a colonised world, distant and unobtainable for those currently seeking justice and prosperity.[1]

Where the canonical Western Utopia has arguably functioned more as a statesman's daydream than a vision of liberation, *Nausicaä* more immediately addresses the concerns of collective survival. In some respects, the film's imagery does suggest escapism where, for example, in the opening sequence, we see Nausicaä gliding above strange landscapes with a futuristic glider. However, though the film initially invites us into fantastical flight and escape, the course of the narrative emphasises the importance of action in the world as we find it. After the conflict between the Tolmekians and Ohm, the Valley is largely burned down. We see the wave of Ohm and Tolmekian army finally retreating during the credits. This is followed by images of Nausicaä and her people rebuilding after the catastrophe, putting up windmills, and re-planting crops. Rather than ending on some clear, fixed image of the then and there which we seek to escape to, *Nausicaä* emphasises the work of collective survival that might engender a better future. Utopia is not necessarily an island we can escape to, but can be an attitude that directs us towards acting in the here and now.

Like much of Studio Ghibli's output, *Nausicaä* is a sweeping fantasy that emphasises the local, immediate, and minute. Ghibli's animation is certainly notable for its attention to the small, its detail, and emotional sensitivity. By emphasising the minor gestures and actions of Nausicaä's adventures, the film expresses the concrete reality of the Valley's struggle for survival. I will close by considering one such small moment, which takes place on the verge of the final battle, and its significance to our tale of failed utopias. As Nausicaä arrives with the baby Ohm, it seems as if she will not succeed at all. Confronted by numberless, insatiable, stampeding insects, she takes on a resigned expression and, clutching Teto and the monster, is violently rammed into the air. In submitting to the death drive of the charging insects, she accepts failure. However, she is not simply self-destructive, rather, she finds a willingness to protect others, even knowing that she will be trampled. Finding herself alive, she continues to struggle. But she was equally ready to fall.

In considering such small moments of Nausicaä's struggles in a dangerous future world, we can become more sensitive to the messy complexities of queer hope, loss, failure, and utopia. In Muñoz's terms, this queer heroine gestures at a not-yet-here world in which monsters, critters, and mutants might survive together, embodied in the tactile pleasures and weird feelings of this toxic world. Under the shadow of capitalist realism, such flights of fantasy that move beyond the here and now, towards a radically different then and there, seem quite necessary for our political imagination. I feel that this story resonates with LGBTQ+ people as "both mythical and real" because it combines a spectacular, even kitsch, sense of wonder with such small and quotidian moments of queer touch. It offers a future that is indeed "kids' stuff," in that it queers and repurposes childish sentiment and memories in the name of a mutant future. This conveys a sensitivity to the ways in which utopia must co-exist with failure, hope with loss and life with death. This film certainly rejects the mundane realities of a capitalist realist here and now, in favour of a strange future, fantastically different from our own. Even as ancient traces of capitalism's calamitous end haunt its world, an abundance of mutants and cyborgs spring up among the bones of the world before, like the Sea of Decay which grows through the shells of the ancient Fire Giants. Even as Nausicaä's garden is poisoned, and patriarchal authority destroys her friendship with monsters, she continues as a weak messiah, bringing the failures and losses of the past with her, in solidarity with her companions, towards a liberated future. In contrast with the canonical Western Utopia, *Nausicaä* does not simply offer us the intellectual satisfaction of contemplating a perfected society. Rather, it directs us towards the concrete struggle and resistant failures of hoping in the here and now.

Note

[1] On the tensions of colonialism and impossibility surrounding utopia(s), see China Miéville's critical introduction to More's *Utopia* in the recent Verso edition cited here, as well as Tom Moyland's *Demand The Impossible* (Miéville, Moyland).

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The Impact of Renaissance Thought on the Rise and Fall of the Witch Hunt

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Abstract

This paper is an expansion of a piece of coursework submitted under the title "Discuss the part played by ideas about nature in the rise and decline of the European witch hunt." My extended argument also considers the theological ideas behind the rise and fall of the witch hunt, as well as the interplay between the religious and secular philosophical thinking of the period. On the one hand, aspects of Aristotelianism supported the changing perception of witchcraft with its new emphasis on diabolism, however Christianity also dictated how Aristotle could be interpreted. I go on to discuss some of the diverse strands of thought which developed in the course of the Renaissance, existing in dialogue with, and often in opposition to, Aristotelianism. As the scholastic Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas increasingly came under attack, rival philosophies emerged and this new pluralism produced a more sceptical view of witchcraft theories. The optimism and rationalism of the Mechanical Philosophy did not in itself bring about the end of the witch hunt, but I argue that it helped to produce an intellectual climate in which witchcraft was no longer credible.

My choice of tackling the witch hunt from a purely intellectual perspective does have its limitations. For example it does not give a sense of the accompanying hysteria which caused accusations to spiral out of control and made the witch hunt so terrifying. However, because the men who drove the events of the witch hunt were intellectuals, far removed from the panic that their ideas created, an investigation of this kind is a valid reflection on the events of the period.

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The European Witch Hunt saw, by conservative estimate, the execution of some 45,000 alleged witches for a crime that was, to the best of our knowledge, entirely imaginary (Levack 23). Between 1450 and 1750, the witch hunt took hold across Europe, extending as far North as Iceland and even into the colonies of America. The fear and superstition that lay behind the witch trials seems to be at odds with the established view of the Renaissance as a period of learning and "cultural, scientific, and technological achievements" (Brotton 5). A study of the intellectual climate of the period is valuable in attempting to resolve this apparent contradiction. Undoubtedly there were social, economic, and political causes for both the rise and fall of the witch hunt. However, the witch hunt craze was heavily influenced by the ideas of the educated elite. Therefore, I would argue that a consideration of the often very divergent developments in scholarly Renaissance thought in theology and Natural Philosophy is also necessary to understanding the progression of the witch hunt. This paper will begin by placing the witch hunt within its broader historical context, before going on to examine the influence of philosophical thought on the events of the period.

In 1517, Martin Luther's challenge to the Catholic Church triggered the Protestant Reformation, arguably the most important theological event of the Early Modern Period. It seems logical to suppose that the conception of a satanic conspiracy might occur during a period of such religious turmoil. Indeed, the historian James Sharpe asserts that the witch hunt existed "within the context of the Reformation and Counter Reformation" (444). Certainly, the witch hunt reached its peak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries during the religious conflict created by the Protestant schism. Further supporting Sharpe's statement, the witch hunt did not begin to decline until after the conflict came to an end following the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia.

Whilst it is true that "typically, each religious group preyed on its own numbers in search for the enemy within" rather than claiming that their religious opponent was involved in witchcraft, the belief that Christianity was beset by servants of the devil served the purposes of Catholics and Protestants alike (Stephens 99). The resultant siege mentality would make the defence of religion acceptable through extraordinary measures such as torture and the overruling of established judicial systems. It is easy to see how both Catholics and Protestants felt the need to shore up the authority of their respective creeds when the religious situation in Europe was so unstable. I would agree that the Reformation and Counter Reformation had a singularly intensifying effect on the witch hunt. However, they cannot be seen as its origin, for the persecution of witches was already firmly underway by the end of the fifteenth century. In fact the witch hunt found its feet during a period of relative religious stability.

The concept of witchcraft was not new to Europe in the Renaissance period. We can see examples in classical literature, such as Circe in Homer's *Odyssey* or Medea in the story of *Jason and the Argonauts*. In the medieval world too, the idea that there were individuals who had the supernatural ability to induce sickness, kill livestock, or cause harvests to fail predates the witch hunt, although it was also believed that magic could be used benignly for the purposes of healing or divination (Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 457). In medieval Europe magic was not inherently sinful and the moral judgement of magical practice "depended on whether the intentions [of the magician] were good or evil" (Linley 172). Before the witch hunts began magic was purely folk belief and given little credence by the literate classes. Clerical reports frequently mention these beliefs, lamenting what they considered to be ignorance and un-Christian superstition. In 815 AD Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, dismissed "the foolish opinion of the masses about hail and thunder" referring to their belief in weather magic (Fava 18). However, the fifteenth century saw a major reversal in the Church's position on magic as it superimposed Christian doctrine onto traditional witchcraft beliefs. Supernatural powers were linked to Satan, and his demons and witchcraft began to be prosecuted, not merely as the crime of *maleficium* (harmful magic) but as heresy.

The belief that witches were in league with Satan was credible because the perception of the Devil had shifted during the late medieval period. Increasingly, the Devil was seen as having a presence on Earth, an involvement in human affairs, and at least the capability of assuming physical form (Millar 33). Late medieval scholastic theologians were preoccupied with the nature and limitations of demons. In the twelfth century, Peter Lombard's *The Four Books of Sentences,* the first systematic treatment of angels and demons, set down the foundations of demonology. A century later, Thomas Aquinas asserted that demons were both spiritual and corporeal, capable of "condensing" their spiritual form and physically interacting with humans (Stephens 62). By the time of the witch hunts in the fifteenth century, it was believed that Satan had "established himself on Earth and dwelled everywhere in nature" (Seligmann 221). Whilst Satan could not operate beyond the laws of nature, "there was nothing in nature of which Satan did not know perfectly all the properties" (Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 163). And whilst only God was capable of true miracles, it was believed that Satan was able to manipulate occult or hidden properties in nature to perform feats which, because they made use of knowledge that was unknown to humans, were indistinguishable from miracles.

Renaissance demonologists were able to build upon these earlier theological ideas when formulating their detailed theories of witchcraft. For example, the Devil's manipulation of occult properties could provide an explanation for the various *maleficia* that witches allegedly performed. The Christianised version of witchcraft was dependent upon the widespread acceptance of a physical Devil and his acolytes, as witchcraft accusations focused heavily on interactions with demons. These included the nocturnal gathering of the "witches' Sabbath" which was said to culminate in naked dancing and sexual intercourse with demons as a consummation of the witches' pact with the Devil (Stephens 13).

By the mid-fifteenth century, the basic details of satanic witchcraft were firmly in place and in 1487 the first influential treatise on witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, written by the Catholic cleric and inquisitor Heinrich Krämer, was published in Germany. The rapid circulation of this text, aided by the recent invention of the printing press, conveyed the clergy's new understanding of witchcraft to the educated readership of Europe. This then filtered down to the populace through the very public nature of the witch trials themselves, where a list of charges was read out before every execution. Demonologists did not fully agree on every aspect of witchcraft theory. For example, the exact manner by which *maleficia* were carried out was never completely settled. But whether the Devil was thought to grant a witch powers, perform misdeeds on her behalf, or simply deceive her into believing that she was having an effect, there was an increasing sense that man was "at the mercy of supernatural forces beyond [his] control" (Easlea 1).

Much of witchcraft theory was predicated on the medieval Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas. Following Aquinas' efforts to synthesise Aristotle's pagan philosophy with Christianity in the thirteenth century, Aristotelianism had become the new orthodoxy, upheld by the Church and taught in universities; it would remain the dominant mode of thought in Europe for centuries to come. Aristotle was comprehensive in his writings on the nature of the world and the possibilities of what could exist in nature. Not only was the Aristotelian universe finite, but "the kinds of things it contained, and the ways it behaved, were also strictly limited" (Dear 12). Thus, the Renaissance world view was one in which nature and its systems were tabulated and codified. Aristotle's text *On Generation and Corruption* considered the world in terms of "contrarieties" or opposite properties (e.g. hot/cold, wet/dry). Stuart Clark argues that Renaissance thinkers inherited from Aristotle this tendency to "see things in terms of binary opposition" on a grand scale (*Thinking with Demons* 35). This discourse of contrarieties, which informed all elements of the natural world, became more pronounced where it related to Christianity. It was thought that without evil there could be no good, that "God would cease to exist if there were no devil" and vice versa (Seligmann 221). During the Renaissance the existence of Satan was "elevated into one of the greatest arguments for the existence of God" and "the literal reality of demons seemed a fundamental article of faith" (Thomas 567). A failure to believe in Satan or demons was in itself grounds for accusations of heresy. Witches fit neatly into this view of nature; if there were servants of God, there must be servants of Satan as well. In 1646 the Puritan preacher John Gaule opened his treatise on witchcraft with the argument that "he that will needs persuade himself that there are no witches would as fain be persuaded, that there is no Devil, and he that can already believe that there is no Devil, will ere long believe that there is no God" (1).

In addition, the duality inherent in Aristotelian cosmology supported an eschatological explanation for the apparent increased prevalence of witchcraft. The Early Modern Period in Western Europe was characterised by a "cycle of crises of war, famine and disease," the result of changing climates and growing populations (Cunningham 323). These changes were understood in apocalyptic terms: people believed that they were witnessing the corruption of the Earth, that God had allowed Satan to be unleashed, and that the apocalypse was close at hand (Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 322). The Christian tenet that the world was corrupt due to the Fall of Man was paralleled by the Aristotelian concept of a perfect celestial and a corrupt sublunary world. According to Aristotelian cosmology, the Earth was the flawed centre of the universe, "imperfect, dead, inanimate and subject to decay" (Easlea 91). The increasing number of witches was seen as evidence of the Earth's decay, whereas it was, in fact, merely the inevitable consequence of the escalation of the witch hunt itself. Unsurprisingly, the harder people looked for witches, the more witches there were to be found.

According to Richard Kieckhefer, it was Aristotelians "who elaborated the specific notion of diabolism," because their philosophy "recognised matter and distinguishable spirits, but nothing further" (79). However, there were those who disagreed with these limitations and the Renaissance fascination with classical ideas led to a resurgence in the study of natural magic. This

was strengthened by the rediscovery of the esoteric *Corpus Hermeticum*, translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino in 1471. Natural magicians, drawing from a range of ancient Neoplatonic, Gnostic, and Hermetic ideas, insisted that there was such a thing as non-demonic magic. For example, Cornelius Agrippa attempted to present both good and evil magic as non-demonic, claiming that magic was simply the active application of natural philosophy. He treated magic as a practical technology which could be performed by anyone with sufficient knowledge of the natural world (110). Natural magicians of this kind were generally educated men, either with sufficient social status to be relatively safe from persecution or protected by powerful patrons. However, they trod a thin and dangerous line as the Aristotelianism of the Church opposed their belief in a non-demonic system of magic.

The Thomist interpretation of Aristotle was required by Christian theology and elevated to the status of dogma. Natural magic represented a clear threat to the Christian religion as it called into question the divinity of Christ. If it was accepted that the manipulation of occult properties could produce "magical" effects through natural, non-demonic means, then Christ could be argued to have been merely some kind of natural magician, rather than the son of God (Easlea 109). This therefore provided an incentive for the Church to insist that all magic was heretical and demonic in nature and that practitioners of magic were to be rooted out. Indeed it was heresy, not acts of evil, that witch hunters were most concerned about: "Whether or not [a] witch injured other people, she deserved to die for her disloyalty to God" (Thomas 521).

Whereas in 1400 Aristotelianism was monolithic, in the course of the Renaissance it became an increasingly pluralistic field of study. Humanism emerged in the fifteenth century as a new approach to learning which would come to typify the Renaissance period. Humanists emphasised the study of ancient texts in classical, rather than medieval, Latin, eventually returning to the newly recovered original Greek versions. They examined the words of Aristotle, stripped of the medieval commentaries which usually accompanied his writing. These commentaries were often far longer than the works themselves and, humanists argued, were designed to twist Aristotle's words into a meaning acceptable to the theologians of the time, a meaning which they claimed was "far removed from the simple faith represented in the New Testament" (Dear 31). Although by the sixteenth century humanists had reached a point of "coexistence rather than conflict" with traditional scholastic philosophers, this was because they had successfully established humanism as an alternative school of thought (Dear 31). The work of humanists led to renewed debate on Aristotle, opening the way for new interpretations and new ideas.

Consequently, by the sixteenth century it becomes much harder to come to a firm definition of Aristotelianism because Aristotle was being cited to support entirely contradictory viewpoints. In 1567, the Italian humanist Pomponazzi challenged orthodox Aristotelianism in his posthumously published *On the Causes of Effects in Nature*, "[denying] the possibility of admitting demons to the Aristotelian cosmos" (Zambelli 6). Pomponazzi objected that nowhere did Aristotle proclaim the existence of demons, arguing that it was more likely that he had not believed in them at all and claimed that "a true Aristotelian should seek to explain reports on witches' *malefice* as having non-demonic causes" (Goodare 80). Pomponazzi's work had a limited reach as it was condemned by the Catholic Church. However, the idea that Aristotle could be used to explain phenomena through natural causes rather than demons could not be ignored (Goodare 80). Indeed, despite Kieckhefer's assertion that Aristotelians opposed natural magic, Clark notes that Aristotelian physics "embraced the notion of occult properties and sympathetic and antipathetic action" (Kieckhefer 79; Clark *Thinking with Demons* 243). There was clearly room for Aristotelian natural magicians who could, in the vein of Pomponazzi, explain extraordinary feats through natural causes. Interestingly, despite their rebuttal of natural magic, the understanding of the Devil by orthodox Aristotelians actually implies its existence. Constrained by "two bridles"—obliged to operate within the laws of nature and incapable of performing actual miracles which would place him on par with God—the only logical explanation for how the Devil was able to perform wondrous feats was through the manipulation of natural

properties (Clark, "The Rational Witchfinder" 223). This would make him "the exact equivalent of the natural magicians" (Parish 262).

Even as challenges to scholastic orthodoxy caused Aristotelianism to change and diversify, alternative natural philosophies were also proliferating (Dear 14). Humanists believed that they were "bringing about a rebirth of classical culture" and so sought to uncover as many voices from the ancient world as possible (Dear 32). Through the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, "Aristotelianism still reigned, but not without challenge" as other ways of thinking about the natural world gained greater recognition (Goodare 79). In particular, the philosophy of Plato was given increasing weight and restored to its earlier position as a valid rival to Aristotle. The reinstatement of so many different classical figures "opened up new spaces for philosophy unimpaired by metaphysical limitations," including the study of Neoplatonism and Hellenistic philosophies, such as Stoicism and Epicureanism (Del Soldato). The sixteenth century also saw the resurgence of scepticism: by questioning man's ability to reach an objective truth, scepticism provided ammunition for further attacks on restrictive orthodox Aristotelianism and was, in Peter Dear's view, the most lethal of "a fearsome armoury of argumentative weapons" (81).

Scepticism also sowed doubts about the validity of the witch hunt. As early as 1588, Montaigne questioned the evidence against witches, remarking that "it is putting a very high price on one's conjectures to roast a man alive for them" (King 148). Sceptics questioned the reliability of the senses and, in doing so, hit upon one of demonology's greatest weaknesses. If, as witchcraft theory presupposed, one accepted that the Devil had immense power over the natural world, then it became difficult to make a distinction between reality and illusion. The *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) supported the belief that the Devil could create illusions, explaining that all evidence seemingly proving a witch to be innocent could be the result of the Devil's trickery (Easlea 6). However, if a witches' innocence could be feigned by the Devil, then logically an innocent could also be made to appear guilty. The contemporary counterargument to scepticism of this kind was that "God would never allow human perception and judgement to be totally disrupted by demonic means" (Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 174). Witch hunters argued that they were protected by God and thus able to escape deception. Nonetheless, these inherent contradictions in demonology "compromised the attempt to ground the knowledge of witchcraft empirically" (Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 172). The questioning of what could and could not be ascertained continued into the seventeenth century, culminating in René Descartes' conclusion in 1641 that, apart from his own existence and the existence of God, everything he thought he knew could be caused by the artifice of the Devil: "some evil genius, not less powerful than deceitful" (62).

In the sixteenth century, sceptics such as Montaigne were mainly isolated voices. However, the uncertainties which they were the first to express seem to have become more prevalent in the later years of the witch hunt. During the decline of the witch hunt there were many who, whilst their adherence to Christian theology meant that they believed in the concept of witchcraft itself, had clearly lost confidence in man's ability to successfully identify witches. John Gaule's conviction that witches existed was matched by his uncertainty about individual cases and he questioned "whether a jury may with a safe conscience give up their verdict in finding such or such an one for a witch" (193). Religious authorities also began to waver, becoming far more hesitant about identifying individual cases of suffering as the result of either God's judgement or the mischief of witches and the Devil. Keith Thomas argues that there was "a final break in the association between guilt and misfortune" and, as a result, the Church became increasingly readier to attribute misfortune to natural causes (765). During the seventeenth century this trend continued and was driven by developments in philosophy. Proponents of new, emerging philosophies were more likely to search for natural causes of misfortune, rather than look to the supernatural, and their ideas would contribute to the growing scepticism regarding witchcraft.

Mechanical Philosophy, which originated from the writings of Descartes and found popularity in the latter half of the seventeenth century, is often seen as the key to the decline of the witch hunt. It explained natural phenomena in terms of the movement and actions of particles: natural causes which needed no intervention from angelic or demonic beings, or even from God (Easlea 205). According to Cartesian philosophy, God was no longer interfering with his creation or the driving force behind nature. He was demoted in a sense "to the position of Divine Creator and Retired Engineer," and the Devil's position was reduced accordingly (Easlea 197). As we have seen, the Devil's actions "must be played within physics and within nature… for only the Lord God can alter nature" (Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 168). However, if God could not interact with nature in an active sense, then neither could the Devil.

Proponents of Mechanical Philosophy were keen to present their ideology as supremely rational, overturning the superstition of previous ages. Thomas Sprat, for example, wrote in 1667 that as a result of "the Real Philosophy," "Every man is unshaken at those Tales, at which his Ancestor trembled" (340). This would imply that Mechanical Philosophy caused the decline of the witch hunt, however the chronology of events calls this into question. Mechanical Philosophy did not gain popularity until the second half of the seventeenth century, when in much of Europe the witch hunt had already peaked; certainly by 1650 its decline was firmly underway. Nevertheless, I would argue that the rising popularity of Mechanical Philosophy served to hasten the witch hunt's decline. The modern philosopher, Robin Attfield, supports this view, asserting that once it was accepted that events always had a natural, rather than a divine or diabolical, explanation, "witch-beliefs were out of the question" (393).

The decline of the witch hunt coincided with new positivity and confidence about man's place in the world. According to Cartesian philosophy, God had created a mechanical world which worked in a uniform manner, thus allowing the possibility of mastery (Easlea 201). Mechanical Philosophy echoed the optimism of natural magic concerning man's ability to control his environment, but it had the added advantage that it allowed for the adaptation of hypotheses, in comparison to magicians who "never learned from failure but simply explained it away" (Thomas 772). In 1620, Francis Bacon was convinced that humanity had surpassed the position of the Ancients, citing the compass, the printing press, and gunpowder as evidence in his *Novum Organum*: three technologies unknown to the Ancients and which he believed to have "changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world" (146). This notion of celebrating progress, rather than harking back to the ideas of antiquity, would characterise the final years of the Renaissance. Bacon's programme for achieving scientific progress through experimentation, mainly ignored during his lifetime, would come to shape the ambitions of seventeenth century intellectuals, particularly in Britain. Bacon believed that it was possible for mankind to regain a control over nature that had been lost during the Fall. The Baconian belief in the potential for humanity to control natural forces meant there was less of a need to fear the supposed powers of witches.

In 1687, Isaac Newton's theory of planetary motion firmly established the Copernican cosmological model, shattering the Aristotelian duality of a celestial and sublunary world once and for all. No longer was it believed that the world was decaying; instead it was felt that better things were to come. Educated men were increasingly optimistic about their present and what the future might hold. For example, Joseph Glanvill dreamed of a future where one could "buy a pair of wings to fly into remotest regions" (134). Thomas Sprat went as far as to argue that God no longer chose to perform miracles for there was no need for "extraordinary signs" when the experimental philosopher was "diligent in the works of his hands, and attentive on the impressions of his footsteps," and therefore able to understand and recognise God without miracles (350). If man had reached a point where he did not need miracles, then he surely no longer needed to fear the "wonders" and tricks performed by demons. Fear of Satan and of witchcraft was increasingly thought of as backward. Witchcraft belief returned to a position

similar to that which it had occupied in the Middle Ages: accusations were made by the lower classes but not taken seriously by those in positions of power.

My study on the intellectual currents of the period does not claim to offer a comprehensive explanation for the rise and fall of the witch hunt or provide a neat solution to a puzzle that continues to fascinate historians. There are, of course, many other factors at play, and the wide geographical and temporal scope of the witch hunt inevitably presents problems of chronology and causation, making any tidy narrative impossible. Nevertheless, reaching a better understanding of Renaissance thought sheds light on the events of the period, particularly the beginning of the witch hunt, which often seems alien to the modern mind. The rise of the witch hunt was clearly influenced by developments in Christian theology but, far from being superstitious or illogical, these changes built upon firmly held Aristotelian views and were entirely compatible with the intellectual climate of the Renaissance. Goodare is right to remind us that "demonology in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a cutting-edge intellectual topic, expanding in sophistication" (79). The decline of the witch hunt, on the other hand, has often been oversimplified as the forces of the Enlightenment sweeping away outdated ideas. In fact, the dates do not support this straightforward assumption, since the witch hunt was already in decline by 1650, before the ideas of the Enlightenment took hold. However, I have shown how the diversification of philosophy paved the way for the doubters and innovators who ultimately allowed witch hunting to lapse.

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Blossoming through Translation: A Study of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Translations of the *Myth of Narcissus* as Physical Manifestations of Textual Transformation

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Abstract

This project is a creative-critical research piece that follows the shift of language and translation of the *Myth of Narcissus*, and the way in which the Narcissus figure, as an object of translation, embodies the physical transformation that a text undergoes through the process of linguistic adaptation.

For a better study of the process, the paper includes the author's original verse translation of the *Myth of Narcissus*. It has been translated from the Bulgarian version of the myth, which in turn has been translated from Latin by Georgy Batakliev, and it goes in depth into the analysis of the practice of working with bridge translation across languages. It is a blank verse translation, as that would come closest to Ovid's original form, and it was interesting to see how the cadence and rhythm would change across two translations of the text, and if it would have an effect on the form of the text. The focus is on studying the part of Narcissus' transformation, as it is the one concerned primarily with the figure of Narcissus, his body, his image, and his transformation, both physical and spiritual.

Translation is an act of transformation. In studying the translation in *Metamorphosis* (which embodies transformation and change) and the relationship between author, translator, and transformed figure, this practical study hopes to provide an insight into the way translation works as a creative process; reshaping and reimagining.

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This project is a creative-critical piece that follows the shift of language and translation in the *Myth of Narcissus*, and the way in which the Narcissus figure, as an object of translation, embodies the physical transformation that a text undergoes through the process of linguistic adaptation.

To better demonstrate the transformative process, this paper includes my own verse translation of the *Myth of Narcissus*. For that purpose, I have used the Bulgarian version of the myth, which in turn has been translated from Latin by Georgy Batakliev.[1] This makes the study of translation through bridge—and through two languages—possible, and more nuanced. The verse translation would come closest to Ovid's original form, therefore providing interesting insight into how the cadence and rhythm would change across the two translations and as to whether this would have an effect on the form of the text. Presented as part of this thesis is my original translation of the *Myth of Narcissus*, which can be seen in the Appendix at the end of this paper. This translation studies the way a bridge text affects the general meaning of the original, and the role it plays in transforming the poem's imagery and the potential effect on the reader's comprehension.

The paper focuses on the particular part of Ovid's text that is primarily concerned with the figure of Narcissus, his body, his image, and his transformation, both physical and spiritual. In his foreword to the Bulgarian edition, Georgy Batakliev writes in detail about the history of Ovid's writing and his other works. In his article "Toward a Translation Criticism: John Donne," Peter Connor discusses the importance of combining the study of the text in translation with assorted further readings of "other works by the author, literary criticism concerning the work, author or genre of the translated text, or, crucially, other translations or writings by the

translator" (255). Therefore, to gain a broader scope for the purposes of this paper, I have also considered Ovid's *Love Poems, Letters and Remedies*, as translated into English by David Slavitt, and as translated into Bulgarian by Batakliev. This was one way to become familiarised with Batakliev's style of translation and provided a solid foundation for critically appraising it when comparing the original with the new text which I produced as part of my research.

One important aspect of Batakliev's work is trying to come as near as possible to Ovid's Latin, by utilising archaic Bulgarian words, some of which are no longer in use. Mirroring this in my original translation was more easily achieved by utilising different speech structures, rather than a shift in vocabulary, as Batakliev has done. These patterns have largely been borrowed from the speech structures of the Bible, with phrases such as "spoke unto," and "cried out," which here are perceived as more literary and archaic, and therefore, appropriate to bring the text closer to its ancient classic origin. The Bible's influence on classical studies will be considered in more depth later. The English translation studied for comparison is by Charles Martin, and while it was consulted over the course of my producing the original text, the main goal of this thesis was to create a text that would be—at its core—an entirely original translation, as far as possible. When studying literary translation with the aim of a creative textual production, staying true to one's own originality and perceptions is crucial.

When discussing *Metamorphoses* as a text in translation, particularly in English, it is important to take into consideration the numerous shapes it has taken over the years since it was first translated. It was during the Elizabethan era that it first took the shape and gained the contextual formatting that is familiar in contemporary readings. The first Elizabethan version of Ovid's works was the narrative of Narcissus, which has a distinctly moralising connotation with regards to self-love, vanity, and incurring punishment for expressing them (Lyne 29-31). Both Charles Martin's and Georgy Batakliev's translations suggest a lucidity and awareness within Narcissus, which has been emulated in this paper's own version. Narcissus' exclamation:

> I am being led astray by my own face,
> I burn with love for myself,
> And I set these flames ablaze

This new original version corresponds directly to Martin's translation:

> But now I get it!
> I am the other one!
> I've finally seen through my own image! (109)

In many ways Martin's work can appear more traditionally lyrical, whereas here, my translation is closer to the conventions of more contemporary poetic works. Despite having the same base, the new translation included as part of this text can be considered more streamlined. This can be ascribed partially to the fact that it is the afterimage of an afterimage—the translation of a translation—but from another point of view, it is possible that in his own version Martin has added and subtracted details in the same way that I have done to create a finished product that resembles a unique authorial piece. Roger Ellis and Liz Oakley-Brown state that "the English translations of the text are emblematic representations of the desire for presence in language" (49). Translation is its own kind of transformative process which manages to maintain both originality and a reverence for the original. The figure of Narcissus embodies transformation and a desire for one's own self-image. In literature, this has become an archetype of the sensual, lustful, queer, and desirable.

It is worth noting that in both Martin's and Batakliev's translations, Narcissus is presented as an object of lust and carnal desire, with firmly stressed and defined negative connotations following the perceived promiscuity borne out of his beauty. This adds to the moralising project that these translations served. It can be argued that this is an attempt to solidify the image of Narcissus as someone who deserves his punishment. However, a more interesting approach

would be to consider that a certain amount of fascination attends this carnal, and therefore forbidden, aspect. In fact, in his paper on the forbidden in translation, Aarón Lacayo cites Luce Irigaray's theory of sexual difference to argue that "emphasis on cultural and linguistic differences has not led to a conception of the remainder in sexual—that is, corporeal—terms" (223). Structuring a translation of Narcissus so that it remains close to its source, and at the same time exists on the plane of contemporary understanding, requires a delicate balance in expressing that fascination as a part of the original text without emphasising it for moralising purposes. It might be interesting to note that across most versions (and particularly the ones studied in this project), it is one of the many lovers of Narcissus that curses him to the gods, but not Echo herself—implying that Narcissus is promiscuous from the outset. Some versions of the myth misattribute the action to Echo, thus understating Narcissus' transgression; most notably Nikolay Kun's collection of Greek myths.[2] Interestingly, Narcissus, as a lust-begotten figure, is present in contemporary literature, and in many ways, has become an embodiment of reprehensible carnal desire. Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray is one of the most obvious examples, bearing many similarities to his mythological counterpart, as a beautiful youth who inspires sensual attraction in mortal women, and is eventually brought to his downfall by his own image. In this sense, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) becomes a trans-textual transformation of the character. Eventually both undergo a heinous transformation because of a woman. Laurell K. Hamilton's series of urban fantasy novels *Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter* features a different kind of heinous Narcissus figure in *Narcissus in Chains* (2001)—one who is literally capable of transforming their body into a hyena, bearing many antagonistic characteristics, promiscuity among them—as an owner of a night club where people engage in carnal acts. This Narcissus is also young and beautiful, and painted consistently as a notable antihero, whose presence echoes a fascination with the forbidden and unfamiliar—another kind of transformational reimagining of a more contemporary Narcissus figure.

Focusing on both promiscuity and vanity as punishable is a reading largely associated with Westernisation, and the emergence of Christianity as a leading lens through which texts are observed and processed. The Bible itself is a text in translation concerned with the will of God. In many ways *Metamorphoses* also exists as a text which primarily observes the will of the gods: a trans-cultural exploration of the divine which dictates what is perceived as punishable. One important characteristic of the King James' translation of the Bible (1611) is its construction. This particular translation focuses on maintaining academic integrity, following the conventions of both Greek and Hebrew texts so that it can exist as a comprehensive text that is as accurate to the original as possible. The main reason for this formal accuracy is the existing need, at the time, for a Bible that could be widely accepted by all factions of the Church of England (Naudé and Miller-Naudé 211). Therefore, the way in which information is communicated in the King James' Bible is very concise, and focuses more on actions and events, rather than on other aspects normally associated with literary texts such as characterisation, setting, and dialogue. Literal communication is prioritised over emotion. The Bible is, in its very nature, a didactic text. In the Old Testament, the majority of the speech comes from God as instructions, but very rarely is there speech that is directly addressed to God in response to his dictums.

In *Metamorphoses*, pleas to the gods, and expressions of the devastation of godly punishments, perceived in equal measure as just and cruel, are quite common. However, what is important is that across its existing translations into English, there is an influence stemming from Biblically-dictated norms: an implication, even in what are essentially pagan texts, that virtue and sin are universal, and bear the same repercussions. Hence, the importance of stressing Narcissus' sins—pride, vanity, and lust—comes from their influence towards his ultimate transformation, as an atonement through change, both spiritual and physical.

These are only a few versions and adaptations which in some way invoke Narcissus as a character, symbol, or signifier, and pose the question of what becomes of the difference between translation and transformation in his narrative. In *Ovid and the Cultural Politics of Translation in Early*

Modern England, Oakley-Brown suggests that "the myth extends its interest in textuality beyond language" (26). This prompts us to consider historical circumstances, the background of the author, the political climate at the time of the translation, and social, and cultural norms surrounding the place of translation. All of these are aspects that will in some way shape the work. They can potentially give it a different form, separate it from its original version, and affect its reception and interpretation.

In this endeavour to create an original translation of Narcissus into English, the text at the foundation of this thesis becomes separated from Batakliev's, and removes the Bulgarian author and translator from his cultural contexts. The selected style of verse, relying more on rhythm than on rhyme, and varying the line length, is contemporary, and closer to the schools of poetry which have most influenced me. However, these contemporary forms are combined with a more traditional lexis. While keeping the details that coincide in both Martin's and Batakliev's translations, some of the language that I have used is less dense, in an attempt to simplify the descriptions and make them less cumbersome. Looking at older narrative poems (particularly Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*), I originally subscribed to the belief that heavy and overly detailed verse, flowing with description, is the hallmark of how a good Classical lyrical work ought to sound. Writing out my own original translation, however, I attempted to avoid emulating the heavy-handed and confusing patterns of narration in telling Narcissus' story, and effectively make it more streamlined, while maintaining a sense of agelessness within the work, keeping true to its literary origin. Certain descriptions and comparisons such as "worthy of Bacchus," "marble, vermillion stained," and "ivory pale" follow in the traditional lexicon of classical poetry and mirror some of the phrasing in Martin's own translation. Trying for variation in that particular case would have done more harm than good, as certain phrases and similes are traditional signifiers with deep roots in the poetic genre in English (Gorlach 11-14). With this language the new translation aims for the evocation of a more traditional sound in the verse to offset the form and rhythm.

One problem I experienced during the process was working with rhyme, which would have been ideal in the case of verse, but upon study of both Martin's and Batakliev's works, it became clear that a verse translation does not necessitate the presence of rhyme. In fact, taking into account only the last words of the lines of Martin's translation, there is very little rhyme to be found, and only a few examples of half-rhyme. At the same time, his text has a notable rhythm and cadence and a pleasant flow, which indicates that the choice of vocabulary, and the execution of rhythm, are what played a greater role in his execution of the verse translation. A similar issue was encountered when studying the Bulgarian version, where, despite sounding rather musical when spoken, the translation does not contain many rhymes. Looking at Ovid in the original Latin, it becomes clear that it is not necessary to include rhyme in any translation of the text. Although Latin is not one of the languages that I have studied, when regarding Ovid's original untranslated text from a linguist's perspective, and trying to identify those words and roots that would, phonetically, form the structure of rhyme, there were interesting observations to be made. There are places in the text where rhyme would have occurred when spoken out loud, but for the most part, in the original Latin as well, there was little to no rhyme. Therefore, in the original translation, the author focused less on the technicalities of how verse is traditionally perceived (rhyme and rhythm), and more on translating the meaning and the story itself. When discussing translation in his lecture on Gaelic poetry, Paul Muldoon raised this particular problem of translation: translating rhyme as opposed to translating meaning, and using bridge translations as a mediator in both approaches. In a way, Batakliev's translation is, for my translation work, a bridge between Latin and English, but it is also a self-contained poetic work of literary merit, which stands in an interesting relationship to my new and original translation included in this text.

This leads us back to the idea of the role the translator plays in transforming the original text. It is important to note that *Metamorphoses* is not an original text, but rather, a collection of

Ovid's poetic re-imaginings of already existing texts from Greek mythology, framed into a narrative with the history of the Roman Empire, and compiled into several books of songs, dealing almost exclusively with scenes of physical metamorphoses. Ellis and Oakley-Brown emphasise the fact that Ovid does not acknowledge his appropriation of Greek mythology and folklore for the purpose of the *Metamorphoses*, and goes on to say "the reader is confronted with a series of situations which encourage interpretations regarding the construction of subjects in terms of nation and gender" (53). In this manner we can read Ovid's work as a translation itself, with Ovid occupying the position of the first to ever to translate it, undertaking the task of bringing it to a familiar context and shaping it with his own experience, within the cultural milieu of his time.

Translators bringing their own experience to the final product is something that readers need to be aware of when consuming a work in translation, as it can easily shape their understanding, and modify the text's original intention. While studying translations of Ovid, I recalled Oakley-Brown's lecture on Narcissus (*Ovid in English*), where she mentioned that there is no complete translation of *Metamorphoses* in English produced by a woman. It was this lecture, in fact, that inspired this entire project, prompting me to investigate the way in which approaching translation from a woman's perspective might affect my work with the text and the finished product. It is important to note that Ovid's texts are something women have engaged with in the past, and Oakley-Brown's "Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Sexual Politics Of Translation in Early Modern England" takes a detailed historical look at that engagement, noting that while women's involvement is apparent, it is also largely neglected in historical textualisation; stating that "often, they are constructed as readers rather than as translators" (2). The fact that I have already experienced the text in two languages, and my desire to explore it as a translator as well, is what makes the issue of gender in my critical analysis of this work so important. As this text has already looked at Narcissus as a carnal figure, it also firmly establishes him as a fundamentally male figure, who is in some ways an object of the female gaze, evident in Echo's attraction to him as a desirable figure. Working on this male-authored text as a woman, and working with the convention established by previous male translators before me, but also shouldering some of the cultural responsibility towards the women who have engaged with Narcissus in the past, was an extremely important and delicate balance for me.

Narcissus' reflection, an extension of him, brings him back into the orbit of the male-gaze, of being lusted after, but also of feeling lust. Youth and boyhood are two aspects of Narcissus which seem, at all points, crucial to his transformations across the numerous translations of Ovid, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and in Hamilton's erotic interpretation of the mythological figure as a contemporary partygoer. Incidentally, youth and beauty are two aspects that seem intrinsically linked with what is considered desirable in women. Meanwhile Narcissus' vanity—which is his downfall—is the sin for which he is punished (if we are to discuss the text in a Westernised Christian context). Why then would they be separated from the moralising aspect of *Metamorphoses*? The answer is that "the *Metamorphoses* [is described] in terms of lascivia, a word denoting 'play-fullness' or 'wantonness', which arguably betrays concerns for the potential subversiveness of Ovid's text" (Oakley-Brown "The Sexual Politics of Translation" 3). *Metamorphoses* can be viewed as subversive due to the expansive study it offers of richly detailed accounts of personal transformation, and the importance of the self to the point of divine intervention from the Greek deities (on the occasion of forcing the transformation), such as is the case with both Echo and Narcissus.

As a text in translation, the narrative of Narcissus can be regarded as an embodiment of the transformation it discusses. Narcissus' body is changed into a flower, and the text-body that contains him changes across languages and cultural conventions, taking the shapes imposed on it by translators, who aim to create something new out of the original. As a character, the Narcissus-figure can also be viewed as a transformation of itself, as it morphs into interpretations that reflect more current social anxieties, translating the problems of the day into

a literary fable, thus, bringing them to a plane of consideration that is at once removed from the original context and closely related to it. Translating the figure of Narcissus from my own mother tongue into a second language was a study on the idea that transformation and translation intersect; to regard that intersection within the context of world literature, and of the cultural significance of the versions that have come before; and the possible significance of its originality in terms of technique and ideas. Having created a finished product of great length, and having sourced from the most adept of previous translations, perhaps this translation was an easier task than that of women who were attempting to translate Ovid in the Early Modern Period. However, with this project there has been a significant contribution to the ever-changing body of *Metamorphoses,* and the creation of a text that can exemplify the significance of translation as literary work, and as a transformative process.

In many ways, analysing this original version, and juxtaposing with two previous versions, leads to a deeper understanding not only of the process of translation itself—as partly a form of rewriting, as much as a creation—but also helps to widen the context of a universally regarded set of ideas and interpretations by applying them to a unique and original product.

Appendix: Echo and Narcissus, an Original Translation by Teodora Nikolova (from Georgy Batakliev's version in Bulgarian)

[The first part of the song is not included, which describes the birth of Narcissus, his youth, his meeting with Echo, and his subsequent rejection of her.]

He cheated out of his love nymphs, and many male ones as well.
At last one of them raised his hands to the sky and cried out
"May he feel such a love, and find none in return!"
and his plea the gods heard.
There was a stream, crystal clear and bright,
As yet undiscovered by shepherds or sheep alike,
Untouched by bird or beast,
nor falling leaves,
Surrounded by the thickest wild grass,
And the thickest of shrubs,
that kept it shadowed and cool,
It was there that the boy had a seat,
To rest from his hunt, to hide from the heat
Exhausted, lured in by the beautiful corner,
the gentle sound of the water,
Whilst he satisfied his thirst,
In him was born a new lust
While he drank he laid eyes
On a beautiful face in the water,
and Narcissus was instantly mesmerized
Set ablaze by a bodiless fire,
For the body beneath him
Amazed at himself and his own frozen image,
chiseled out or parosean marble,

Laying down on his side, the boy looks in his eyes,
Twin constellations,
His curls: an adornment worthy of Bacchus or Phoebus,
His ivory throat, his cheeks – still round like a boy's,
His gentle delicate face, his pallor, marred by rosy light blush,
And he marveled at what had before mystified others,
And so he desires himself, blindly,
loves and is loved, madly.
A lust for himself, lustfully he senses,
How it starts a fire, and burns.
How many times would he kiss the evasive cool surface of the spring,
How many times, he reaches his hands, dipping them in, to caress his own throat,
How can he caress himself?
Without understanding what he is seeing,
The image he sees, clouds his sight,
Setting him wild in his mind.
What a gullible boy, falling astray for a vision,
Your love is neither here, nor there,
And you lose it the moment you turn away,
From the beautiful lie of a sight
Merely reflected in the waters beneath you,
What are you looking at deceives you.
Your love, is immaterial, boy,
Coming to you as a vision, melting away
And it will leave with you, only if you go as well.
Narcissus cannot leave, nor for hunger, nor for a moment of rest,
Cannot tear himself away, his body prostrated on the grass in the shade
The endless desire, his eyes locking eyes with this lying image,
As he loses himself, trying to raise his hands reaching out,
And he calls to the forest around
"Has anyone burned with greater a love?
You would know, you have hidden so many,
and you've lasted for centuries,
has anyone – try to remember –
withered away from a love any greater?
I love him, I see him, and whoever he is,
I love him, he evades me,
What a cruel lie that puts a stop to my lust,
And how grows my sadness,
Separated from him by the deepest of chasms,
No mountain, no road, nor a wall with locked doors –
But mere water between us.

I dream of a simple embrace,
How many times must I reach with my lips for the crystalline depths,
How many times –
Must he lean up for me?
There I almost am touching you,
And yet we are separated, my love, just a little bit farther,
Whoever you are – come out!
Don't try to lie to me, beautiful boy,
When I touch you, why do you run?
You aren't scared away by my youth and my beauty, I know,
For even nymphs have desired me before!
But the look of you gives me the friendship of hope,
For when I reach for you, you reach up,
And when I laugh, you laugh, and I have seen your tears,
When I cry,
When I nod, you reply.
And you move your beautiful lips,
And I know you are saying beautiful things,
lovely words, but I cannot hear you.
It is me! I am certain,
I am being led astray by my own face,
I burn with love for myself,
And I set these flames ablaze.
What shall I do? Do I pray?
What do I ask for? From who?
What I want is inside me, I've fallen from riches to rags,
wishing I could leave my own mortal body behind.
The new dream of a lover: to be far away from his love.
From the sorrow, my strength is declining,
a long life is not what awaits any longer, I shan't grow any older.
In the earliest spring of my youth I am dying,
And death is a burden, for with death, dies my desire.
A longer life for my loved one I would pray for,
but when we die, we die together,
and he dies not a moment before,
And our last breath will unite us forever."
Thus he spoke to his reflection,
Gone mad, and from the madness brought back,
His tears falling down, disturbing the surface,
His image growing distorted and murkier,
And seeing him so, he screams
"Where are you going? Stay here, heartless, don't leave me,

The one who loves you,
If I cannot lay my hands on you,
Let me at least lay my gaze on you,
Even though I am feeding nothing but a sorrowful madness."
In that moment he tears off his garments,
and beats with his hands upon his chest's pale marble,
Apple pale flesh blushing with angry red markings,
He is ivory white, but vermillion stained,
Like the grapes before they are ripened
Spot a rosy blush from the loving kisses of sunlight.
As he saw in the clearing water himself,
He could not resist.
And like the lightest of flames makes yellow wax melt,
Like silvery rime melts under the sun,
So from his unrequited love, slowly melting away,
He burns from his own love's cruel flame,
And the colors are not just ivory and ruby anymore,
For both youth and his strength and the beauty
That caught many a man, wither away from the body
That once so ensnared Echo.
When she saw him,
Despite her anger being still fresh, unforgotten,
She chocked up with sorrow, and when he shouted "Oh, sorrowful me!"
With a resonating cry she came to repeat "Oh, sorrowful me!"
And whilst his hands still fell upon his own skin with a savage sound of flesh on flesh,
She carried the sound of a slap through the forest.
The final words he had to give out, pinned alone on the water
"Oh you, beautiful boy, I have loved you in vain"
And returned to his place,
"Farewell",
And Echo spoke unto him "Farewell!"
And weak with exhaustion he rested his head on the green tuffs of grass by the water,
And Morpheus shut his eyes, still ensnared in the sights of his sight.
And as he walked in the kingdom of Pluto, in the waters of the Styx, he's still looking.
And the sisters, nymphs, victims of love,
Brought to him gifts –
Their own sheared off curls.
And the cries of the dryads echoed, and their cries were taken up by Echo.
They readied a funeral pyre, an altar, waving torches,
But gone was the body,
Instead – a yellow flower, with a white crown,
Standing alone on the water.

Notes

[1] See: Publiĭ Ovidiĭ Nazon, *Metamorfozi*. Narodna kultura, 1981.

[2] See: Nikolay Kun, *Legendy I Mify Drevneĭ Gretsii*. Uchebno-pedagog. izd-vo, 1955.

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The Sovereign and the Suicide Bomber: Rule, Resistance, and the Immateriality of the Body

Ellen Greyling

Abstract

This paper is first and foremost an exploration of the complex relationship between the figures of the Sovereign and the Suicide Bomber, and the Agambian concept of *homo sacer*. "Detonation and Death" (the first of two subsections) begins by outlining Achille Mbembe's representation of the suicide bomber, before attending to one of the primary issues with Mbembe's understanding of such individuals: the notion that it is the moment of their death that constitutes their biopolitical resistance. Drawing upon works from Talal Asad and May Jayussi, it is instead proposed that it is the moment at which the suicide bomber decides to die for their cause—the moment in which they transcend bare life and become pure political life—that marks resistance. The section subsequently deals with Asad's concerns regarding the prescription of motives to suicide bombers—a problem which is resolved by considering the perceived motivations of said martyrs (that of the immortality of the political existence) as little more than the by-product of rending one's *bios* from one's *zoe*. Meanwhile, "Sovereignty and Suicide" turns to Ernest Kantorowicz's notions of the "Body politic" and the "Body natural," and the parallels between his representation of the sovereign, and the earlier discussions of the suicide bomber. The body of this article sets about establishing the level of conflation between sovereign and suicide bomber; that is to say, the fact that both figures hold the power to let live and make die and (contrary to what Agamben proposes) are unable to be sacrificed or indeed, killed. The piece culminates with the identification of the paradoxical nature of the suicide bomber. Their ability to kill the masses without the act being considered biopolitical control or resistance renders them outside of the biopolitical system; yet, in utilising the sovereign's power of "make die," they are simultaneously wholly within the system. It is this contradiction that reveals the suicide bomber to be an entity bestowed with the power of Agamben's sovereign, but at the same time, incapable of exercising such a power in a biopolitical manner.

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"[C]ontemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death (necropolitics) profoundly reconfigure the relations amongst resistance, sacrifice, and terror" (Mbembe 181). This proclamation by eminent philosopher and political theorist Achille Mbembe undeniably possesses a degree of truth to it. In his revolutionary 2003 paper "Necropolitics," Mbembe critiques and expands upon the propositions put forth by Michel Foucault regarding the relationship between the body and political power. It is, Mbembe suggests, insufficient to consider the modern epoch in terms of only the biopolitical (the control of life), and the manner in which "power relations… invest [in the body], train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 25). Instead, he proposes that one should conceive of it also in terms of a sovereign's ability to expose their citizens to death, known as "necropolitics." Resistance to said biopolitical (or indeed, necropolitical) control can take the form of necro-resistance—a utilisation of necropolitical acts as a way of reclaiming and utilising the body against the political infrastructure (Linos 9). According to Banu Bargu, necro-resistance can take many forms—from hunger-strikes to "self-immolation"—but perhaps the most universally recognised of these potential forms is that of the suicide bomber: the figure who epitomizes biopolitical resistance and necropolitical control insofar as they instigate a

reversal of the possession of power, claiming the right to "take life or let live" from the sovereign, or any entity that acts in its guise (3). If that were entirely the case, our discussion of the matter would end here. However, I would postulate that there is much more to the nature of the suicide bomber's resistance and, indeed, their relationship to the figure of the sovereign. Therefore, the body of this paper shall be split into two primary sections. The first, "Detonation and Death," will delve into the issues surrounding Mbembe's conceptualisation of necropolitics. Beginning with an outline of Mbembe's hypothesis, it will proceed to deconstruct his argument pertaining to the moment at which the suicide bomber resists the sovereign authority that exercises its power over them. The second section, entitled "Sovereignty and Suicide," will offer an exploration into the paradoxical nature of the suicide bomber's existence with regards to the place they occupy within (or outside of) the biopolitical order. These two sections in conjunction shall, I hope, reveal the extent to which these hypotheses concerning the suicide bomber and necropolitics might be considered the whole truth.

Detonation and Death: The Problems of Necropolitics

Mbembe insists that "to a large extent, resistance and self-destruction are synonymous" (173). This is a reasonable assumption, and we have already referred to the manner in which the act of suicide sees the suicide bomber subvert the biopolitical order, "wresting the sovereign's power over death from him" (Coburn, 177). However, a summary of such brevity does not do justice to Mbembe's interpretation of the suicide bomber and his perception of their position within the biopolitical order. An expansion is therefore necessary to truly appreciate Mbembe's opinion and identify the flaws that lie therein. Central to Mbembe's argument regarding suicide bombing is the following: the origin of the contemporary biopolitical system imposed upon the war-torn state lies in older realisations of biopolitical power "found in colonial imperialism" (Mbembe 159). This confers upon the subjects of said power a state of living death; a state which, according to Mbembe, might only be escaped through the act of suicide, by "reduc[ing] the other and oneself to the status of pieces of inert flesh" (173). I find the wording Mbembe utilises here to be of particular interest: "reduce to… pieces of inert flesh" (173). To those familiar with Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer,* the significance of such phrasing will not be missed. *Homo sacer*—an obscure historical figure borrowed by Agamben from the Romans—denotes an individual stripped of what Agamben terms "*bios*" (or political life) and reduced to bare life ("*zoe*") by whomever holds sovereign power (12).[1] The parallels between Agamben's *homo sacer* and Mbembe's suicide bomber thus become apparent. In his implication that both bomber and victim are, in the moment of the blast, reduced to little more than body parts "scattered everywhere and assembled with difficulty before burial," Mbembe suggests that the bomber enforces the reduction of himself to bare life, and bare life alone, akin to *homo sacer* (173-74). Mbembe's figure of the suicide bomber is therefore presented as a hybrid of both sovereign and some *homo sacer*-esque figure; in the moment of their death, they acquire the power of the sovereign to make die and to designate the state of exception. Yet by detonating the bomb, the suicide bomber chooses to confer upon themselves the status of *homo sacer*. The notion of an amalgamated sovereign-*homo sacer* figure is no creation of Mbembe's. Indeed, Agamben puts forth this very idea within the pages of *Homo Sacer* itself proclaiming that a number of the "defining characteristic of *homo sacer's* life" (that is to say, their ability to be designated the aforementioned state of exception) "is also found in the person of the sovereign" (102). The suicide bomber is, for Mbembe, a real-world manifestation of the conflation between sovereign and *homo sacer* as alluded to in Agamben's so-called "zone of indistinction." The bomber's utilisation of the body in such a way sees the politicisation of bare life in its entirety, and thus the merger of both biopolitical figures (Agamben 10).

Mbembe provides a viable interpretation of the suicide bomber. Indeed, Mbembe's contemporary, Talal Asad, proposes that to die is the ultimate intention of such an individual:

that "the end of suicide bombing is killing oneself and others at the same time" and that the reduction of self and other to bare life is the sole aim of the act of detonation (41). It should be noted, however, that Asad is generally critical of attempts to assign to the suicide bomber "the motives of the living," in particular, the assignment of the act as something purely theological in origin (45). I cannot help but agree with this sentiment. After all, to write off the suicide bomber as little more than a religious fanatic flattens the complexity of the individual's socio-political background that might have led them to commit such an atrocity. This is his reasoning behind describing suicide bombing only in terms of the actions it involves: motives, he argues, "are rarely lucid," and "may not be clear even to the actor" (Asad 64). Instead, he suggests that the so-called "uniqueness of suicide bombing resides … not in its essence, but in its contingent circumstance" (Asas 64). Does this notion of resistance not encapsulate these circumstances which Asad reckons constitute the true nature of suicide bombing? If so, this inherently suggests that the moment of the bomber's resistance must occur at some point before their final act, rather than, as Mbembe says, at the moment of their death. Andrew Norris proposes that "the end of politics is different from that of the various realms of bare life," a suggestion that we can presume is correct, since the political is often "concerned with something more than the perpetuation of biological life" (3). But what if we were to take Norris' statement at its most literal meaning; that the conclusion of one's *zoe* and *bios* could potentially occur at different times?

We are aware that the opposite is true; that one's biological and political lives may commence at differing points within one's lifetime. May Jayyusi, for example, suggests that the political subjectivity of the suicide bomber—that is, their political life—is something that is "formed in the context of resistance to the particular powers that circumscribe them." This is profound; the implication of this statement is that the advent of one's political life is not only informed by resistance, but formed by it; that by the very nature of the suicide bomber being in possession of *bios,* they are at that moment carrying out an act of biopolitical resistance. And it is this notion which resides at the centre of my argument; that the moment of the suicide bomber's resistance is not in the termination of their bare life (and indeed, the lives of their victims), but instead at the moment of the formation of their political life. The formation of said political life, I would venture, occurs at one discrete moment in this martyr's life: the point at which they decide that they shall give their life to the cause. It is in this moment that the suicide bomber truly escapes the oppressive regime which has, until now, had total monopoly over how they ought to use their body. In deciding that they shall relinquish their biological existence, the suicide bomber transcends the biopolitical order, but not in the way that Mbembe suggests. Rather than reducing themselves to bare life, they instead sever their link with their *zoe*, and enter into a state of existence that is purely political, and this political existence is perpetuated even after the point of death. An example of such a phenomenon can be seen in Islamic extremism: he who falls in battle is, under the definition given by resistance movements, designated *shahid*, and granted life-after-death in paradise (Grimland, Apter, and Kerkof 111). Thus, only the corporeal existence of the suicide bomber is forfeit; the political life of the suicide bomber is granted immunity from the act of self-destruction. It is therefore this so-called "symbolic identity" which is seemingly granted immortality, at the price of the suicide bomber's physical form (Routledge and Arndt 532).

Here, however, some would argue that we fall back into the trap of ascribing motives to the suicide bomber; that the guarantee of a (political) life that transcends the mortal realm incentivises the suicide bomber to carry out the act; that such martyrdom is spurred on by a need to escape biopolitical control. Asad proposes that considering suicide bombing as an act that is neither a form of religious sacrifice or an escape from political oppression (as Jayussi suggests) constitutes intention rather than motive, situating it within a framework which "traces connections and tensions among public action, immortality, violence, and death in any political community" (56). He seemingly concurs with Roxanne Euben's suggestion that *jihad* "is a form

of political action in which… the pursuit of immortality is inextricably linked to a profoundly this-worldly endeavour" (9). The aim of *jihad* is not for the martyred individual to ascend to some other theologically-grounded plane of existence, but instead to create a peaceful and homogenous society on Earth. It is the effort to create the state of *umma* which is immortalised, rather than the actions and intentions of the individual. Whilst this approach does initially appear to help erase the individualised motives of the suicide bomber, it might be argued that Asad is incorrect in his suggestion that conceptualising suicide bombing in such a fashion eradicates the notion of motivation in its entirety. This collective immortality is in itself a motivating force insofar as it permits the suicide bomber to "construe the self as part of a larger symbolic entity that will transcend physical death" (Routledge and Arndt 532). Thus, what is a de-individuated aim of suicide bombing, becomes a personal endeavour.

How, then, might we reconceptualise this notion of immortality to both encompass our proposition that the act of suicide bombing leads to the perpetuation of one's political existence at the expense of one's physical existence, without implying that the end-goal of such an act is the immortality of either the self or collective? I propose that we consider immortality, not as the motive of suicide bombing, but as a by-product. That is, a by-product of the act of resistance, which in itself is a by-product of the formation of political subjectivity and subsequent mitigation of biological existence. This reconciles the notion that suicide bombing involves both biopolitical resistance and immortality, yet, to be understood in its entirety, it cannot be explained in terms of being motivated by either. If we consider both of these facets of this form of martyrdom to be the unintended consequences of suicide bombing, what we are left with is simply the process whereby the suicide bomber enforces the separation of their bare life and their political life, transcending the former to continue their existence in only the realm of *bios*. This satisfies Asad's criteria for explaining suicide bombing, as it illustrates their self-destruction in (and only in) terms of this division between *bios* and *zoe*; that is, only in terms of actions.

Sovereignty and Suicide: The Parallels and Paradoxes

It is now time to return to the notion of the sovereign, this figure that Mbembe, whether by accident or design, likens to the suicide bomber by way of their mutual capacity to wield "the power of life and death" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 137). Some would assume that this encapsulates all of the parallels between the two, yet such a conclusion may not be the whole truth. For the apparent separation of *bios* and *zoe*—of bare and political life—is also of great significance when addressing the relationship between sovereign and suicide bomber. The thesis within Ernest Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* (1957) provides the foundations for a comparison between sovereign and suicide bomber in this respect. Within this piece, Kantorowicz reintroduces the historical notion that the sovereign was in possession of both a "Body politic" and a "Body natural"; two bodies which form "one unit indivisible" except at some moment following on from the demise of the king, whereby there is "a Separation of the two Bodies, and that the Body politic is transferred and conveyed over from the Body natural now dead… to another Body natural" (9). This process is encapsulated by the proclamation made at the accession of the new sovereign: "the king is dead; long live the king." It therefore becomes apparent where Kantorowicz's concept will take us next. It is undeniable that the process whereby the sovereign's "Body politic" and "Body natural" become divided is reminiscent of the manner in which the suicide bomber sees the separation of political life and bare life, with the former's existence continuing even beyond the point of the latter's destruction. Of course, some might criticise this proposition; they might suggest that whilst it is apparent that political life may exist beyond the biological, this parallel between sovereign and martyr serves to critique our hypothesis that the separation between the two forms of life occurs at a moment prior to death. If it is the sovereign's demise that marks the division between their *bios* and *zoe*, it must therefore be the same for the suicide bomber. Such a conclusion would align more closely

with Bargu's proclamation that the death of the martyr no longer offers "merely an ending, but rather a beginning – a second life, similarly political but now eternal" (40). Here, I feel it necessary to draw attention to Kantorowicz's proposal that the body politic might also be "removed from the Dignity royal" in order to permit the accession of the new monarch (13). This is a phrase I take to refer to the fact that the abdication of the former monarch also constituted grounds for the separation and transferral of the body politic to a new body natural. Thus, Kantotowicz's explanation of the king's two bodies does not challenge our earlier conclusions pertaining to the synonymy of death and the separation of *bios* and *zoe*.

As interesting as this parallel between king and martyr is, many would query what importance such a revelation plays in challenging Mbembe's conceptualisation of biopolitical resistance, and the relationship between sovereign and suicide bomber. It is here that we should return to the notion of immortality. "The king is immortal because legally he can never die" writes Kantorowicz, due, of course, to the fact that his political existence persists even after it is separated from his biological form (4). This is a curious inversion of Agamben's analysis of the nature of the sovereign's death. After all, Agamben, proposes that the monarchical figure "cannot be sacrificed yet may, nevertheless, be killed" (13). The king obviously cannot be sacrificed (for the murder of the sovereign would constitute treason) but more to the point, Agamben's understanding of the sovereign appears to be short-sighted; it becomes apparent that rather than acknowledging the separation of *bios* and *zoe* as a bidirectional affair, he sees the sovereign as an entity whose biological and political existences are inextricably bound. It may be more appropriate, therefore, to designate the sovereign as a figure who can be neither sacrificed nor killed. They are exempt entirely from the biopolitical order, not only because they can control it in their so-called "right of death and power over life," but because their body is so immaterial that it cannot be controlled itself. Kantorowicz verifies this: "doubt cannot arise concerning the superiority of the body politic over the body natural," confirming the primacy he places on the political existence of the sovereign over their biological existence (9).

But what of the suicide bomber? As previously mentioned, Mbembe appears to imply that the martyr can be conceived as some form of assimilate, comprised of aspects of both *homo sacer* and sovereign. We have already effectively refuted the first comparison in our earlier analyses; for if the suicide bomber were to be conceptualised as a *homo sacer*-esque figure, he would have to be reduced to bare life and, given the earlier discussions of the perpetuation of the bomber's *bios* after the destruction of their *zoe*, such an interpretation becomes unviable. There is, however, an undeniable degree of conflation between sovereign and suicide bomber. It is this that opens up a new channel of exploration. In being in possession of two bodies (and transcending that which is biological), the suicide bomber is also exempt from the biopolitical order; their body is, like the sovereign's, immaterial. Jayyusi proposes that this figure of the martyr could be conceived as "he who can be sacrificed but not killed," effectively the opposite to *homo sacer,* and potentially Mbembe's original conceptualisation of the suicide bomber. Yet this in itself is problematic; for "sacrifice" inherently implies that the end of suicide bombing is political or theological in nature, something which would contradict our earlier conclusions regarding the nature of the act of detonation. So, instead, we are left with a suicide bomber who is in effect an imitation of the sovereign; they are an individual who, like the king, can be neither sacrificed nor killed.

The parallels between sovereign and suicide bomber do not end there. We have already briefly addressed this shared power of the martyr and the king: the right to make die and let live. The sovereign exercises this right by way of decrees, the suicide bomber, by the act of detonation. Stuart J. Murray (and indeed Mbembe) postulated that the moment of the suicide bomber's death "produces something"; that something being biopolitical resistance (195). We have discussed at length that this is not the case, but it is here that we shall see as to why. In order for the death of the suicide bomber to constitute a form of biopolitical resistance, the martyr must be, at the point of their detonation, within the biopolitical system. This has already been established as false; the martyr has forgone their biological existence some time before, a

process which is exemplified by the Mexican Zapatistas, whose soldiers "consider themselves as already among the resistant dead" (Caygill 122). Having already committed their bodies to the cause, they persist in a state of "posthumous subjectivity" (Caygill 98). That is, a purely political existence which extends beyond the conclusion of their biological existence. The actual cessation of the martyr's biological life is therefore an act of pure negation; it is not a form of biopolitical resistance (since that has already occurred), yet nor is it an act of biopolitical control. Despite the fact that the suicide bomber has conferred upon them the sovereign right to make die and let live, the act of killing the other is unrelated to the control of the population, since the suicide bomber enters into a building or a street and kills indiscriminately. And it is in refuting Mbembe's proposed moment of biopolitical resistance and seeing the death as it actually is which reveals the true and paradoxical nature of the suicide bomber. For their ability to kill the masses, yet have it designated neither biopolitical resistance nor control, renders them exterior to the biopolitical system. But in subsuming the sovereign's power and becoming a sovereign-esque figure, the suicide bomber must be inherently inside of the system. However, despite their sovereign status the martyr's suicide is not considered treasonous either, which once again renders them outside of the biopolitical. The very existence of the suicide bomber is, therefore, inherently contradictory; they are simultaneously wholly exterior, and wholly interior, to the system.

Conclusion

Having discussed at length the nature of the suicide bomber, we must now conclude. In our deconstruction and reversal of Mbembe's proposition pertaining to the moment of the suicide bomber's resistance, we have unearthed perhaps a better conceptualisation of the martyr, and indeed their biopolitical resistance. And in acknowledging the separation between *zoe* and *bios* as occurring some point prior to their death, we have managed to satisfactorily reconcile the notions of sovereign and suicide bomber and, subsequently, revealed the paradoxical nature of the suicide bomber as a figure of sovereignty with all the associated powers, yet a total inability to exercise this right to kill in a biopolitical manner. Thus, it has hopefully become apparent that the suicide bomber is an enigma in terms of the biopolitical; they relinquish their biological existence in order to resist, yet their resistance does not come at the moment in which they commit their final, and devastating, act.

Note

[1] "Sovereignty" here refers to the Foucauldian conceptualisation of a figure authority who is in possession of the power to "have people put to death, or let… live" (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defenced 240).* Whilst traditionally the sovereign could be equated to the king of an absolute monarchy, modernity has seen a shift in what constitutes as a sovereign. In our contemporary period, the "sovereign" might better be defined as any entity, institution, or governing body that has the power to make die or let live.

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One Hundred Years of Decline: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Oswald Spengler

Blagovest Gavazov

Abstract

This article is intended to serve as a brief introduction and tribute to the thought of the early twentieth-century German philosopher of history, Oswald A. G. Spengler. The first section explores the main influences on Spengler's theory; it describes his methodology, gives an overview of his philosophy, and also defines some of its key concepts. The second section elaborates upon Spengler's concept of the "Culture" and its life-cycle, contrasting it with the notion of "Civilization." The third section takes a closer look at the specific Cultures of world-history, particularly focusing on the "Faustian" Western Culture, the "Magian" Near Eastern Culture, and the "Apollonian" Classical Culture. The fourth and final section of the article deals with the implications of Spengler's theory for the study of history, his rejection of the notion of progress, as well as his historical "pessimism."

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In 1918, as Germany was struggling in the final months of World War One, an unknown author, by the name of Oswald Spengler, published the first volume of what was to become his magnum opus, eerily called *The Decline of the West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*). In it he proposed a highly original interpretation of history; one which would scandalise historians and fascinate philosophers. Spengler argued that the philosophy, religion, art, science, and politics of a given people were the manifestation of a single creative force, they were the actualisation of single soul; that the concepts of "linear history" and "progress" were fallacies; and, perhaps most shockingly, that Western civilisation had already entered its twilight phase. With its poetic use of symbols and metaphors, and with the topics covered ranging from Classical (Greco-Roman) art and Arab religion, to Western physics, "The Decline" became an instant classic. In his later years Spengler would publish a second volume, as well as a number of other philosophical and political essays which elaborated upon aspects of his theory and its significance to the problems of the day. None of them achieved the intellectual impact of his first book. Despite this, all of them contained provocative ideas, many of which remain relevant even today. Spengler enjoyed wide popularity during the 1920s (Hughes 89). Nowadays, however, he seems to have been largely forgotten. Almost every humanities student has some knowledge of Karl Marx's theory of historical materialism (Bemis). Spengler's colourful *Morphology of History*, on the other hand, is known only to professors, to a handful of political neo-reactionaries, and to the occasional lover of philosophy. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is twofold: firstly, to serve as part of a tribute to Spengler on the hundred year anniversary of the publishing of *The Decline of the West*, Volume One; secondly, as a (very short) introduction to Spengler's philosophy for those unfamiliar with it. These are difficult objectives to achieve in such a limited format. Despite this, my hope is that the result of this endeavour will be a work which is easy to read, intellectually provocative, and one that does justice to Spengler's thought.

The Morphology of History

Spengler's philosophy cannot be properly understood without prior knowledge of the ideas of Johan Wolfgang von Goethe. While the latter is most well-known for his poetry, he was also a scientist and naturalist philosopher. In his study of plants, he rejected the notion that plant life

can be properly understood through the mere taxonomic classification of its external characteristics. A plant is something living; something in a state of "becoming." At any stage of its development, it has a sequence of forms which are in constant flux. For example, there is no typical foliage leaf (Holdrege 17). Goethe argued that the growth of a plant is the manifestation of a "prime phenomenon" seeking to fulfil itself. The poet developed a morphological method of studying living organisms, which involved careful empirical observation as well as the use of the scientist's intuition (Jensen). Morphology, as used by Goethe, means the study of the structure and patterns of development of life. The morphology of a given plant or animal organ encompasses the full diversity of forms which that organ will experience during the organism's life course (Jensen).

This is the philosophy of Goethe, from which Spengler draws his main inspiration for his theory of history. As he states in the beginning of *The Decline of the West*:

> As naturalist, every line [Goethe] wrote was meant to display the image of a thing-becoming, the 'impressed form' living and developing. Sympathy, observation, comparison, immediate and inward certainty, intellectual flair these were the means whereby he was enabled to approach the secrets of the phenomenal world in motion. Now these are the means of historical research precisely these and no others (25).

Spengler takes Goethe's morphology of plants and applies it to the study of the past. His methodology consists of *physiognomy* and *analogy*. *Physiognomy* refers to the use of external characteristics for interpreting the character of a person (or, in Spengler's case, a *Culture/Civilization*). A similar approach is used by Friedrich Nietzsche in his work *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to explore the spiritual dimensions of ancient Greek culture by means of studying Hellenic art forms (3-4).

Spengler credits Nietzsche as being "the first to experience as a symphony the image of history that had been created by scholarly research out of data and numbers" (*Selected Essays* 35). In order to better understand the physiognomic approach, let us take a look at some beautiful painting. A rational analysis could tell us what colours were used to create it, what their distribution on the board is, and not much else. The symbolic meaning that the artist has imbedded into his art will forever remain hidden from the scientific eye. Only through careful observation and the use of intuition can it be grasped. For Spengler, the task of the historian is to capture and interpret the symbols of past and living *Cultures*. History must be treated as art; it must be felt, for it is the symbolic expression of a great soul actualising itself in the "world of the visible." The philosopher's use of *analogy* is meant to put that symbol in the appropriate historical context. Cultural forms are not static nor are they random. They should be studied as steps within a given *Culture*'s morphology.

In *The Decline of the West*, scientific analysis is rejected as a useful tool for the study of history. For Spengler, mathematic law is only effective at analysing static dead forms. Life, on the other hand, has its own organic logic which cannot be grasped through cause and effect, but only experienced. One of the most important oppositions which can be found in Spengler's work is that between the *world-as-nature* and the *world-as-history*. These two concepts designate the two ways of gaining understanding of the world: the first through abstract theoretical frameworks, through the law of causality; the other through experience and the concept of destiny.

Spengler leaves little doubt as to which one of these has served as a basis for his theory: "Day is not the cause of night, nor youth of age, nor blossom of fruit. Everything that we grasp intellectually has a cause, everything that we live organically with inward certitude has a past" (*Decline,* Vol. 1 152). Destiny, according to Spengler, is a word which denotes an indescribable feeling of inner certainty; it can be imparted only by the artist through his art (*Decline*, Vol. 1 118). As with art, not everyone possesses the necessary intuition to decipher the meaning of historical events. Spengler considered Goethe a person who could do so. He quotes the poet's

words to the Prussian soldiers after the battle of Valmy: "Here and now begins a new epoch of world history, and you, gentlemen, can say that you 'were there'" (*Decline*, Vol. 1 25).

The central unit around which Spengler's philosophy is structured is *Culture*, with a capital "C." A *Culture* is a large, all-encompassing, collective soul. Spengler explains:

> Under all the plurality of microcosmic beings, we are perpetually meeting with the formation of mass-units, beings of a higher order, which contain all the feelings and passions of the individual, enigmatic in their inward character and inaccessible to reasoning… The mightiest beings of this kind that we know are the higher Cultures, which are born in great spiritual upheavals, and in a thousand years of existence weld all aggregates of lower degree – nations, classes, towns, generations – into one unit. (*Decline* Vol. 2 18-19).

Like Goethe's plant, it is in a constant flux; in a state of "becoming." Defined and guided by its *prime symbol* (Ursymbol), it seeks to fulfil its *destiny* by achieving the full diversity of cultural forms which are contained within it. These forms include everything from art, technics, and mathematics, to religion and politics. Just like the leaves of a plant, the forms of the *Culture* change morphologically. Spengler holds that, for example, the art styles of the West: Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo, are, in fact, different stages of the development of the same style. One thing that must be noted is the collectivism of Spengler. For him, it is the *Culture* which produces the great individuals of a given age, not vice versa. People are the material through which the inner potential of a *Culture* actualises itself.

This is expressed perfectly by the words of Napoleon at the beginning of his Russia campaign:

> I feel myself driven towards an end that I do not know. As soon as I shall have reached it, as soon as I shall become unnecessary, an atom will suffice to shatter me. Till then, not all the forces of mankind can do anything against me (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 144).

Spengler points out that the Copernican theory of the Earth's motion around the sun, the Galilean law of falling bodies, and the Cartesian co-ordinate geometry, all inherently Western ideas, were foreshadowed in the work of the fourteenth-century French philosopher and Bishop of Lisieux Nicola Oresme (Spengler, *Man and Technics* 42). This suggests that these theories were sleeping in the subconscious mind of Western man all along; that they are a reflection of the Western prime symbol and would have actualised themselves sooner or later. Spengler believes that the morphological forms of a *Culture* can be achieved regardless of the actors involved. Had Columbus received financial support for his journeys from the French, instead of the Spanish crown, then the French king would have become master of the Americas and the most powerful ruler in Europe. The Spanish Golden age of art, religion, and politics would have taken place in France. Instead of Velasquez, Alva, Cervantes, and Calderon, today we would know the names of great Frenchmen. This scenario, of course, never unfolded, and the great French intellectuals of the age remained *unborn* (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 148).

Life-cycles: Culture versus Civilization

Spengler argued that like living organisms, *Cultures* have life-cycles. The author uses the four seasons as a metaphor for their stages of growth and decline. Spring is when a *Culture* is born and begins seeking its own form of language. It is a time of youthful vigour, heroism, and religious anxiety. Society is predominantly rural and is dominated by an aristocracy. Examples of springtime Cultures are Homeric Greece, the kingdom of Aksum and Arabia in the first centuries AD, and Western Europe during the age of the Crusades. Products of spring are the Iliad, the Theogony, the Eddas, the legend of King Arthur, and the New Testament.

Summer is when a *Culture* becomes fully self-aware and increasingly confident. Politically this is the time of the mature state forms: the European dynastic monarchy, the tyrannical and later democratic polis, and the Egyptian centralised state. The bourgeoisie rises as an estate. The city and countryside play an equally important role in the *Culture*. The summer period has produced the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the Apollonian human statue and the perfected vase painting, the Rococo architecture, the oil painting of Rembrandt, and the music of Mozart and Beethoven.

Autumn is when the *Culture* begins to exhaust itself and its forms start to become repetitive and lifeless. Artistic style is replaced by mere "taste." In this age, the city comes to dominate the countryside spiritually. Religiosity in urban areas gradually declines. The desire for inner fulfilment is superseded by a thirst for material resources. The nations of a given Culture turn to imperialism, colonialism, and militarism. Warfare itself changes, becoming ever more destructive and less ethical; the concept of *total war* emerges. The Culture enters the "Period of Contending States," in which the various nations belonging to it fight for domination. An example of such periods would be the Punic Wars, Warring States period in China, and arguably the time between the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars and the end of World War II in the West.

In winter, the Culture finally dies. The megapolis by then completely dominates the landscape and "drains the blood out of the countryside" (*Decline* Vol. 2 102). Rationality has stopped being instrumental and becomes the meaning of life itself. Instinct fades away. Thinkers such as Schopenhauer, Buddha, and Socrates begin to view life as a problem to be solved. The rational urban man no longer feels a need to have children and to continue his bloodline. As a result, fertility rates decline. Intellectuals wish to reform society on the basis of abstract ideals and principles. They launch relentless class warfare against traditional institutions in which they no longer see any value. This leads to political chaos and anarchy. The population grows tired of ideals and ethical systems and calls for someone who can restore order. Out of the chaos emerge the "Caesar"-figures; strong individuals who thirst for power at all cost. The Contending States period ends with only one power remaining standing. A global empire is established which either includes or dominates the territories of the past Culture (Pax Romana, Imperial China, (possibly) Pax Americana). It is under the authority of Caesars who become autocratic dictators (Caesar, Qin Shi Huang, Chandragupta Maurya). According to Spengler, such an imperium is the final form of every dead Culture.

When a Culture's creativity starts to decline, it means that the Culture has begun its transformation into a *Civilization*: "The aim once attained – the idea, the entire content of inner possibilities, fulfilled and made externally actual – the Culture suddenly hardens, it mortifies, its blood congeals, its force breaks down, and it becomes Civilization" (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 106). Just as with *Culture*, Spengler assigns specific meaning to the term *Civilization* as a dead Culture, that is to say, one which has fulfilled its destiny. A Civilization can exist for hundreds and thousands of years as we have seen with China, India, and the Islamic world. The inner creative force of the Culture, however, has been extinguished forever. What is left standing is the equivalent of a hollowed-out trunk of a once mighty tree (*Decline*, Vol. 1 106).

In order to understand the duality of Culture and Civilization, let us compare the Greeks to the Romans. Both are representative of the ancient Classical world. According to Spengler, artistic, philosophical, and spiritual Greeks represented Classical *Culture*, whereas the practical and unphilosophical Romans represented Classical *Civilization*. As Spengler put it: "Greek soul – Roman intellect; … this antithesis is the differentia between Culture and Civilization" (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 32). A society does not remain completely static during its civilizational phase. If we compare modern day China with the Imperial China of Qin Shi Huang, we will spot innumerable differences. The most obvious ones, however, the skyscrapers and fast trains, would not be classified by any Spenglerian as the product of the Chinese cultural prime symbol, but as the result of foreign cultural influence. Chinese philosophy experienced its most fruitful period

between the third and fifth centuries BC. This is when its main schools of thought (Daoist, Confucianist, Yin and Yang, Mohist) emerged (Yu-Lan, 30-31). Subsequent developments happened at a much slower pace and often involved re-examination of old traditions (Neo-Confucianism) or were foreign imports (Buddhism). Chinese political structures remained, more or less, consistent for two thousand years until the Western ideologies of Socialism and Democracy set foot on the Emperor's land (Boulger 69). Spengler would argue that none of this was because the Chinese lack intelligence or creativity but simply because the Chinese soul has long since fulfilled its potential for cultural expression. The interpretation of old Cultures as being "frozen in time" has occurred in the works of many thinkers from various philosophic backgrounds. Even John Stuart Mill, himself hardly a Spenglerian, notes that China is:

> a nation of much talent, and, in some respects, even wisdom, owing to the rare good fortune of having been provided at an early period with a particularly good set of customs, the work, in some measure, of men to whom even the most enlightened European must accord, under certain limitations, the title of sages and philosophers… Surely the people who did this have discovered the secret of human progressiveness, and must have kept themselves steadily at the head of the movement of the world. On the contrary, they have become stationary—have remained so for thousands of years; and if they are ever to be farther improved, it must be by foreigners (*On Liberty* 66).

The same can be said of all exhausted Cultures.

Civilizations as opposed to Cultures are susceptible to foreign influence, particularly from younger more vital Cultures. Today the West is the youngest Culture and its influence can be felt all around the globe. Every nation in the world is adopting or imitating Western cultural forms in one way or another. When Samuel Huntington speaks of *westernisation* as opposed to mere *modernisation* he is fundamentally describing a difference of scale and not of quality (see Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996). Some civilizations are hesitant to accept Western religious and political ideals, yet most are all too willing to adopt Occidental technics in the realms of warfare, medicine, and agriculture. All of this is a form of westernisation whether the other civilisations realise it or not.

A point which perhaps requires further elaboration is Spengler's notion of the artistic exhaustion of a given *Culture*. The philosopher does not imply by this that the people of a *Civilization* will never produce any art; what he means is that the end of the *Culture* period brings with it the extinction of the great style. To understand this better, let us turn to the work of Ernst Gombrich:

> It is one of the greatest things of Egyptian art that all of the statues, paintings and architectural forms seem to fall into place as if they obeyed one law. We call such a law… a 'style'. It is very difficult to explain in words what makes a style, but it is far less difficult to see (65).

According to Spengler, the grand style emerges out of a primordial chaos of forms when a *Culture* is born; it is a product of the prime symbol and the laws which govern it are not simply of aesthetic but also of spiritual significance to the *Culture*-man; they were a reflection of the religious world-feeling of their creators. At the onset of *Civilization*, however, art begins to change. Style gets replaced by mere taste and fashion. Bombastic and scandalous works appear as well as imitations. Art becomes a business rather than a spiritual activity. As Gombrich wrote in regard to the famous Laocoon Group statues from the Greek Hellenistic period:

> I cannot help suspecting sometimes that this was an art which was meant to appeal to a public which also enjoyed the horrible sights of gladiatorial fights. Perhaps it is wrong to blame the artist for that. The fact is probably that by this time, the period of Hellenism, art had largely lost its old connection with magic

> and religion. Artists became interested in the problems of their craft for its own sake (111).

Another aspect of *Civilizational* art is the endless imitation of older works. Spengler in his typical harshness describes the Egyptian art of the XIX Dynasty as being a meaningless cluster of old forms and that of the Ptolemaic Era as a mess of various foreign influences (*Decline* 294). Art historian Josef Strzygowski noted that late Hellenistic Alexandria, as well as the other Hellenistic centres in the East Mediterranean, was unable to produce anything of artistic significance (5, 38, 54).

The High Cultures

For the past 5000 years history has revolved around the rise and fall of eight mighty *High Cultures*. The first of these is the Babylonian Culture which arose sometime around 3000 BC and included the nations of ancient Mesopotamia, such as Sumerians and Babylonians. Around the same time, along the Nile River, the Egyptian Culture emerged (which, according to Spengler, also included the Minoan civilization of Crete). The next two High Cultures to appear were the Chinese and Indian along the Huang He River and at the Ganges Basin at around 1500 BC. Five hundred years later the Classical or Apollonian Culture was born around the Aegean Sea; it included the ancient Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans. Sometime after 300 BC between South Arabia and Armenia was born the Oriental "Magian" Culture which included the Arabs, Byzantines, and Persians. Several centuries later in Mesoamerica the Mexican Culture of the Maya, Toltecs, and Aztecs came into being. Finally, in the tenth-century AD, in the forests of North-Western Europe, the Western "Faustian" Culture appeared. It included the nations founded by the Celtic and Germanic tribes. Spengler believes that the West will likely not be the last Culture. He points to the possibility of a Russian Culture arising somewhere in the East European Plain (*Decline* Vol. 2 192-96).

These vast collective Souls arise spontaneously and the cause of their awakening remains shrouded in mystery. Each of them grows out of a particular geographical landscape to which it remains "attached" in a plant like fashion (*Decline* Vol. 1 106). The peoples who belong to a Culture are possessed by a specific religious world-feeling which is defined by the prime symbol. They see and interpret the visible world through the lens of their specific culture and as a result develop significantly different religious, philosophical, and scientific forms. According to Spengler, it is extremely difficult for people of different Cultures to fully comprehend each other's cultural expressions. (*Decline* Vol. 1 178-180)

The forms which one of these Cultures will develop during its life are "homologous" with those of another. Homology is a biologic term which describes structural (not to be confused with functional) equivalence of organs within different organisms: "the pectoral fins of fish and the feet, wings and hands of terrestrial vertebrates are homologous organs, even though they have lost every trace of similarity" (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 111). The fourth Dynasty pyramids in Egypt, for example, are homologous with the Western Gothic cathedrals as early manifestations of the newly awoken world-feelings. The European chamber music of the eighteenth-century and the Hellenic plastic human statue are homologous as the ultimate artistic expressions of their corresponding Cultures. Buddhism and Stoicism are homologous as the civilizational ethics of India and the Classical world. Pythagoras and Descartes are homologous in their corresponding Cultures as the mathematicians responsible for defining the Apollonian and Faustian number-feeling. From a Spenglerian morphological perspective they are "contemporaries." The same can be said of Julius Caesar, Qin Shi Huang and Chandragupta Maurya. Some Cultures are described by Spengler in detail; others are only briefly elaborated on. The ones which are the most central to the argument in *The Decline* are the Apollonian, the Magian, and the Faustian. Let us explore some of their most significant characteristics.

Apollonian

The Apollonian Culture is defined by its prime symbol which Spengler identifies as *intense bodiliness*. The ancient Hellene saw the world *(cosmos)* as being comprised of bodies. Everything which was not a body, which could not be measured, was *chaos*, a primordial state described by the poet Ovid as: "rude and undeveloped mass, that nothing made except a ponderous weight" (*Metamorphoses* 1.5). Mathematics was for the Classical Soul a means for measuring the objects of the surrounding world, thus geometry is considered as the key mathematical contribution of the Greeks. The notion of space seems to have been poorly developed among the Classical peoples. Spengler argues that there is no word in Greek or in Latin which fully corresponds to our notion of it (*τόπος* = *locus* means spot, locality or social position, *χώρα* = *spatium* means space between, distance, rank). The heavens in the Greco-Roman world were not perceived as an empty void, but as a solid object, as firmament (Cicero 81). If we look at examples of Greek vase- and wall-painting (Figure 1), we will notice the lack of any sense of distance or of a horizon. The colours most often used by the ancient painters were red, black, white and yellow, the warm colours of the earth. Blue, on the other hand, was largely avoided as it is associated with distance and coldness. The absence of blue in Hellenic art was also noted by Nietzsche, who assumed that the Greeks did not differentiate between colours in the same way as modern Europeans (Nietzsche, *Daybreak* 426).

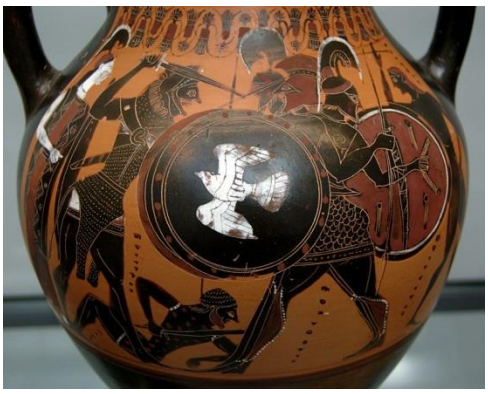

Figure 1: Herades and Geryon on an Attic black-figured amphora. Photo by Bibi Saint-Pol via Wikimedia Commons. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-figure_pottery#/media/File:Herakles_Geryon_Staatliche_Antikensammlungen_1379.jpg

The "homeland" of the ancient Hellen was almost limited to their immediate visual range; it only included his city and the farmland surrounding it. It is no coincidence that the Classical world had by far the largest number of nations. Just the Hellenic world alone was comprised of about 1100 city-states. The Classical state (*polis*) was understood as a sum of the bodies of all people belonging to it. Just as the ancient Greek paid little attention to the world beyond the horizon, they also showed a tendency to live in the present. The Hellenes burned their dead; a practice which was not common among their Mycenaean ancestors just a few hundred years earlier. Spengler argues that this new ritual is a sign of the awoken young Culture. The practice symbolises the desire of the Greeks and Romans to do away with any reminders about the passing of time (*Decline*, Vol. 1 13). The lack of proper record-keeping led to the early history of the poleis remaining engulfed in mythology. Even today we are not sure whether the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus was a real person or a local deity. The lists of Olympic victors as well as the names of the archons in Athens are believed by scholars to be later forgeries.

In Spengler's opinion, the historians of ancient Greece experienced great difficulty when faced with the task of describing events which differed significantly from their personal experience. This led to a sort of disregard for the past which is illustrated by the words of Thucydides in the beginning of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*:

> the events of remote antiquity, and even those that more immediately precede the war, could not from lapse of time be clearly ascertained, yet the evidences… all point to the conclusion that there was nothing on a great scale, either in war or in other matters (Thucydides 1.1).

Spengler argues that in its ahistorical nature, the Greek soul resembles the Indian. Both Cultures burned their dead and both of them adopted stone construction in a surprisingly late stage of their development. The ancient Greeks only started building stone temples at around the year 600 BC and even their design imitated the original wooden structures (Gombrich, 77). Similarly,

in India, stone monuments seem to have been introduced sometime after the spread of Buddhism (Guenon, 11). For Spengler, Indian early history is even more obscure and shrouded in mythology than that of the Greeks with the first Indian truly historic work (the Mahavamsa) being completed in Ceylon around the year 500 AD (*Decline* Vol. 1 12).

Magian

Spengler refers to the Culture of the Arabs, the Byzantines, the Sassanid Persians, and other Near Eastern peoples as "Magian" due to the specific mysticism of their religious worldview. The Magian Soul sees the world as a *Cavern*, a maze of light and darkness, which is symbolic of the duality of the world: the struggle between good and evil. The temple form of the Magian Culture is meant to create a cavern-like atmosphere. Characterised by the presence of a cupola, the East Orthodox church and Islamic mosque "seals in" as opposed to the Gothic cathedral which "reaches out." Strzygowski, used by Spengler as a source, believes that the Early Christian vaulted architecture is not a product of Rome or of the Hellenistic maritime cultural centres (Alexandria and Antioch), but rather the new style developed organically in Persia, Armenia, and Mesopotamia, from where it spread to the East Roman provinces of Asia Minor Syria and Egypt. Strzygowski argues that single-domed temple form gradually evolved from the pre-Christian tombs of the Near East (52-61).

Figure 2: Byzantine Church mosaics from Monreale in Sicily from the late 12th century. Photo by Berthold Werner distributed under a CC BY-SA 3.0 license. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_art#/media/File:Monreale_BW_2012-10-09_09-52-40.jpg

The ancient Greeks and Romans made mosaics out of pebbles and used them to cover floors. The Easterners, on the other hand, made mosaics out of pieces of glass, fused them in gold and put them on the walls and ceilings of their temples and buildings (*Decline*, Vol. 1 214). As Spengler describes: "the Magian clothes his walls with sparkling, predominantly golden, mosaics and arabesques and so drowns his cavern in that unreal, fairy-tale light which for Northerners is always so seductive in Moorish art" (*Decline* Vol. 2 200). The mosaic was later superseded by the arabesque, which became the ultimate visual art of the Byzantine and Arab world (Figure 2). The golden colour was so prevalent in Magian art, is used to represent the "spiritual substances" which fill up the world-cavern.

The nation for the Magian peoples is defined by the religious community. The Nestorians, the Zoroastrians, the Jews and Manicheans were all *nations* (*Decline*, Vol. 2 174-77). Their *homeland* was any place which was inhabited by their fellow believers. The law of the Magian world was also religious law. The laws usually come from God. They applied to all members of the community regardless of their geographic whereabouts.

For most of its life this Culture experienced what Spengler calls a *historical pseudomorphosis*. In mineralogy, pseudomorphosis refers to the process in which molten masses are forced to harden and crystalise in the hollowed-out mould of older minerals that had been washed out over time (*Decline* Vol. 2 189). By "historical pseudomorphosis" Spengler means instances where:

> an older alien Culture lies so massively over the land that a young Culture, born in this land, cannot get its breath and fails not only to achieve pure and specific expression-forms, but even to develop fully its own self-consciousness. All that wells up from the depths of the young soul is cast in the old moulds, young

> feelings stiffen in senile works, and instead of rearing itself up in its own creative power, it can only hate the distant power with a hate that grows to be monstrous (*Decline* Vol. 2 189).

The pseudomorphosis of the Orient began with the battle of Actium after which the Eastern Mediterranean fell permanently into the hands of the Roman Empire and the young Magian Culture became trapped in the body of the aging Classical world. It would not be fully emancipated from the pseudomorphosis until the rise of Islam in the seventh century. Despite this, in the early centuries AD, the Magian Culture was already making its presence felt within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Changes could be observed in late-Roman architecture and art (the emergence of the cupola in, for example, the Pantheon), in the rise of new forms of mathematics (the indeterminate number of Diophantus, a prelude to algebra) and, most importantly, in the emergence and spread of a new god-feeling which significantly differed from that of the Greco-Romans. There is little basis for comparison between the multiple, heavily localised, non-omnipresent and non-omnipotent deities which the Hellenes believed in and the singular, all-powerful, all-seeing spirit of the early Christians:

> The plurality of separate bodies which represents Cosmos for the Classical soul, requires a similar pantheon - hence the antique polytheism. The single world-volume, be it conceived as cavern or as space, demands the single god of Magian or Western Christianity (*Decline*, Vol. 1 187).

Faustian

Now let us turn our attention to the Culture of the author himself; the Western Culture grew out of the plains and dark forests of Northern Europe, the land of the Germanic and Celtic tribes, sometime around the tenth century AD. According to Spengler, the West is the most passionate, yet also the most tragic, of all Cultures. He calls it "Faustian" after the character of Goethe's play of the same name, stating that: "Don Quixote, Werther, Julian Sorel, are portraits of an epoch, Faust the portrait of a whole Culture" (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 101). The Faustian prime symbol is "pure and limitless space." This soul is characterised by an epic striving for the infinite and a relentless will-to-power. One aspect in which the Western Soul has manifested itself is through exploration of the conquest of the unknown. As early as the tenth century, the Vikings had reached Iceland, and Greenland. Sometime around the year 1000 AD, Leif Erikson and his men landed in North America. Several centuries later Europeans such as Columbus, da Gama, and Magellan would bring about the Age of Discovery. If Spengler had been alive in the latter part of the twentieth century, he would probably have considered the rise of space exploration as another achievement of Faustian desire to transcend all boundaries.

While the "Vikings of the blood" were busy exploring and raiding distant shores, the "Vikings of the mind" were solving the riddles of the universe from their monasteries (Spengler, *Man and Technics* 41). Even during the spring of their culture, the "dark" Middle Ages, European scholars were already writing treatises on magnetism and inventing mechanical clocks. Every scientific theory is ultimately a "myth." For the Faustian man, however, it was also a *working hypothesis*. Western science does not exist for the sole purpose of knowledge but in order to bring about a practical result; for the achievement of a *technic*. This is what, according to Spengler, allowed the West to surpass other civilisations in the realm of technology:

> Now [man] meant, not merely to plunder [Nature] of her materials, but to enslave and harness her very forces so as to multiply his own strength. This monstrous and unparalleled idea is as old as the Faustian Culture itself. Already in the tenth century we meet with technical constructions of a wholly new sort. Already the steam engine, the steamship, and the air machine are in the thoughts of Roger Bacon and Albertus Magnus. And many a monk busied himself in his cell with the idea of *Perpetual Motion*. (*Man and Technics* 42)

According to Spengler, every *Culture* has its own mathematics which is derived from a unique number-feeling subordinate to the prime symbol. He describes the number of the ancient Greeks as: "thought-process dealing not with spatial relations but with visibly limitable and tangible units" (*Decline* Vol. 1 64).

The Western mind, however, deals with the problem of infinite space; it does not limit itself to the phenomena of the material world. As a result, the Faustian number is a relation of numbers or function (*Decline* Vol. 1 74-75). It was first formulated by Rene Descartes in 1637 yet, in Spengler's opinion, this number-feeling was already present in European Medieval architecture. Oil painting was the dominant European artistic style until, in the late seventeenth century, it was overshadowed by chamber music, which between the time of Bach and Beethoven reigns as the ultimate artistic expression of the Faustian Culture: "But the true artist of the West shuts his eyes and loses himself in the realm of bodiless music, in which harmony and polyphony bring him to images of utter "beyondness" that transcend all possibilities of visual definition" (Spengler, *Decline* Vol 1 82). Spengler argues that Western visual art reflects the Faustian desire to capture distance. An excellent example of this is the perfection of linear perspective by the painters of the Italian Renaissance (Kubovy, Tyler; *Arrow* 1-5) (Figure 3). Western painting as opposed to that of the Classical world is characterised by the presence of a horizon and heavens as well as the dominance of the colours blue and green. The German thinker describes these colours as being "transcendent, spiritual, non-sensuous" and as possessing the "powers of dissolving the near and creating the far" (*Decline* Vol. 1 246-267).

Figure 3: Pietro Perugino's use of perspective at the Sistine Chapel via Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Entrega_de_las_llaves_a_San_Pedro_(Perugino).jpg

Linear History, Progress, and Pessimism

Spengler holds his theory of the morphology of history in high regard, calling it the "Copernican" discovery in the historical sphere. He believed that his model is *the* Faustian model of how history should be viewed (*Decline* Vol. 1 3, 25). It is "Copernican" in the sense that it does not put any particular Culture in the centre of world-history. The author contrasts it with the currently predominating interpretation of history which he calls Ptolemaic (a reference to the opposition between the "Copernican" and "Ptolemaic" cosmological models). This historical model views all of world-history as revolving around one Culture, either the Western or Classical (which are often mistakenly perceived as being one and the same). A central characteristic of the Ptolemaic model is the division of history into "Ancient," "Medieval," and "Modern," a division which Spengler rejects on the basis of it distorting our view of history. To understand his position better, let us examine the concept of the "Middle Ages," which is generally accepted to

denote the period from the collapse of the Western Roman Empire (476 AD) to the beginning of the European Renaissance (fourteenth- and fifteenth-century). These points of division have relevance only to the Classical and Western Cultures and none whatsoever to, for example, the Chinese, Mesoamerican, or Babylonian:

> It is a quite indefensible method of presenting world-history to begin by giving rein to one's own religious, political or social conventions and endowing the sacrosanct three – phase system child, youth, and man with tendencies that will bring it exactly to one's own standpoint (Spengler, *Decline* Vol. 1 20).

Spengler's Copernican model of history is different from the Ptolemaic one in that it does not place a special emphasis on this or that Culture. It possesses a "sense of distance" which, at least in theory, allows for a more objective reading of the ages.

The Ptolemaic "ancient-medieval-modern" model stems from two sources. The first of them is the Magian dualistic (and static) concept of the "old" age as opposed to "new" age. The division of time into the "Age of Christ" and the "Age before Christ" is also an example of this Magian world-feeling (*Decline*, Vol. 1 18). The second source is the European idea of historical progression which was first formulated by the "pre-Hegelian" scholar Joachim of Flora during the twelfth-century (*Decline* Vol. 1 19). This theologian of the Gothic Age introduced a model consisting of three ages: the Age of the Father, the Age of the Son and the Age of the Holy Ghost (*Decline* Vol. 1 19-20). This Western interpretation of history, as a *development towards something*, was secularised during the Age of the Enlightenment and came to define the European "progressive" outlook. Liberals, socialists, secularists, technological utopians all hold that history is a ladder taking humanity to bigger and better things. This view is illustrated by the words of the eighteenth century British radical thinker Richard Price:

> The world has hitherto been gradually improving. Light and knowledge have been gaining ground, and human life at present, compared with what it once was, is much the same that a youth approaching to manhood is compared with an infant. Such are the natures of things that this progress must continue. During particular intervals it may be interrupted, but it cannot be destroyed (6).

There are two notions of "progress" which can be addressed from a Spenglerian point of view: global progress (by which I mean the idea that the flow of Cultures somehow constitutes progress) and Culture-specific progress.

Cultures, in the Spenglerian sense, are in their essence singular and unrelated to each other. They can stunt each other's growth, as has been observed with the pseudomorphosis experienced by the Magian (and also the Russian Culture), but they cannot "mix" or be influenced by each other on anything more than an external superficial level. We cannot therefore say that, for example, the sequence from Egyptian to Classical to Western Culture symbolises any sort of growth or progress towards something. It is simply the chronological order of the lives of three different and unrelated organisms. A reversed sequence (Western to Classical to Egyptian) would have been no less likely. If we consider Western achievements in the realms of technological advancement and exploration, it would be very intuitive to conclude that they constitute a sort of progress compared to previous Cultures. Spengler would likely respond that these products of Western thought are not a result of the West being the youngest Culture, but of the specificity of the Faustian Soul, namely its will-to-power, its desire to control space and its religious devotion to the machine.

Can we speak of internal progress within the morphology of a Culture? Many Western thinkers seemed to have believed so. In the late eighteenth century, Emmanuel Kant became convinced that the political tendency of increasing public representation and republicanism in governments would usher in an age of "perpetual peace" (Israel 6). In the mid-nineteenth century Marx predicted an upcoming communist revolution which would lead to the establishment of a classless society free of capitalist exploitation. How would Spengler respond

to such utopian visions? In *The Decline of the West* as well as in later essays Spengler discusses the concept of pacifism and world peace. In all instances he rejects them as being the naïve wishful thinking of tired, age-old Civilisations. Peace-loving intellectuals have, of course, always existed; pacifistic societies, on the other hand, are a sign of late-civilizational senility and the resignation from life. Spengler views life as ultimately being a struggle. While war and violence are not the only form which this struggle may take, they remain a possibility and over the course of history will be resorted to over and over again (Spengler, *Selected Essays* 70). The complete rejection of armed conflict therefore amounts to a surrender of sovereignty. Pacifism is in opposition to the facts of life, it is a static, terminal condition which leads to one's self, their nation and their civilization becoming mere objects for the will-to-power of a potential opponent. This desire not to have to struggle is, according to Spengler, one of the defining characteristics of a dead Culture. In the long run, the Pax Romana (which was brought about by the general weakness in the post-Cultural Classical world as much as by Roman military might) resulted in the entire population of the Mediterranean becoming an easy prey for the future soldier-emperors and Germanic warlords. Similarly, *Civilizations*, such as the Babylonian, Indian, Chinese and Egyptian, were passed on from one conqueror to another over the millennia.

Spengler did not believe in political progress, but in the organic development of cultural forms and in their imminent decay. This view has defined his politics, which tend to be strongly conservative and in line with those of people like Burke, Bismarck, or Metternich:

> They sought to defend the conserving forces of the old Culture - State, monarchy, army, consciousness of standing, property, peasantry – even in cases where they had reason to object, and are therefore cried down as 'reactionary.' This word, which the Liberals invented, is thrown back at them now by their Marxian pupils, in that they try to prevent the logical outcome of their actions: such is our reputed progress (*Hour of Decision* 64).

While Spengler also glorifies socialism, it is the socialism of Friedrich the Great and the Teutonic Knights, not that of Marx (Spengler, *Prussianism and Socialism* 1-2, 39-40). Spengler's opinion of revolutionaries, be they liberal-individualists or Marxists, is that they are a symptom of Civilizational decline. Class warfare erupts when the inner form of society breaks down. This warfare is not waged by "the people" against their "oppressors," but by the resentful intellectuals of late megapolis who arouse the hatred of the urban masses against any organic form or traditional institution. What the undermining of traditional authority results in is a combination of mob rule and *plutocracy* (the rule of money). These are in turn brought to end only with the arrival of the Caesar-figure. "Caesar" here refers to a man who can, by the strength of his character, achieve and control power in the chaotic and nihilistic post-Culture. In the eyes of the philosopher, Cecil Rhodes is an early manifestation of the Caesar personage in Western Civilization. Spengler views political history as a lifecycle from the rule of tribal warlords (pre-Culture) to the rule of cultural forms and established traditions (Culture), to the rule of the mob and money (Civilization), to the rule of warlords again, only this time under the purple cloth of late Civilization. Spengler did not consider Western liberal democracy as the socio-political "end of history," as Francis Fukuyama famously called it (Fukuyama, *End of History?*). Instead, he viewed it as a transitioning stage in the degradation of Western government from the dynastic monarchy of the High Culture towards the Caesarism of the Civilization. There is very little of "progress" to be found in Spengler's thought.

The last concept which I want to briefly address in this introduction is that of *pessimism*. "Optimism is cowardice," from Spengler's 1931 essay *Man and Technics*, is perhaps the most famous words by the thinker. They, along with the very title of his magnum opus, have permanently secured his name in history as a pessimist. This is, however, a great oversimplification. Under "optimism," Spengler implies the false belief in utopias and naïve wishful thinking about the future. As for *The Decline of the West*, he clarifies that: "My title does

not imply catastrophe. Perhaps we could eliminate the 'pessimism' without altering the real sense of the title if we were to substitute for 'decline' the word 'fulfillment'" (*Selected Essays* 11). The pessimism of Spengler could otherwise be called realism; it stems from an understanding of the tides of history, of their inevitability and irreversibility. For him, the West has passed its highest point. Its Soul is already fading away and will within the next centuries be completely extinguished. The cultural forms which we take for granted will break down and give way to something new or even to nothing at all. This is the fate of every dying Culture and it shall be that of the West too. Spengler's pessimism does not contain any trace of apathy or defeatism, things he considered just as cowardly as utopianism. According to Spengler, Faustian man must use every remaining bit of genius he possesses in order to leave his final mark on the history of the world, even at the realisation that his fate is ultimately sealed: "We are born into this time and must bravely follow the path to the destined end. There is no other way" (*Man and Technics* 52). Spengler tries to give Westerners a role model in the face of the nameless Roman soldier whose bones were discovered in Pompeii. During the eruption of Vesuvius, instead of fleeing, he remained at his post and died stoically. To stand strong and hold on to the lost position "without hope without rescue" is Spengler's message for the future generations (*Man and Technics* 52).

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Deleuze and the Doctor: Rhizomorphic Time Travel in *Doctor Who*

Sam Steele

Abstract

This article discusses the spatiotemporal navigations of the BBC television series *Doctor Who* through the theoretical lens of Deleuze and Guattari's writings on rhizomorphic thinking. Using *A Thousand Plateaus* as a primary theoretical text, it focuses on the rebooted series from 2005 onwards; more specifically, episodes that use time travel as their central narrative concept, as the Doctor and his companions deal with fractures, ripples, or wayward histories in order to heal time itself. The article questions the cultural assumptions of space-time travel as a linear progression from a fixed history to a determinable future by showing how the *Doctor Who* episodes "Father's Day" (2005), "The Fires of Pompeii" (2008), "The Name of the Doctor" (2013), and their various opening title sequences exhibit burgeoning aspects of rhizomorphic thought. Ultimately, the spatiotemporal rhizomes of *Doctor Who* evade conclusion and resolution in their complexity, contrasting with the rigid narrative formula of their own episodic format.

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> "History is always written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus... what is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history." —Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

As a show with time travel as its unique narrative concept, *Doctor Who* is fundamentally bound up with representations of history; realities past, present and future. First broadcast from 1963 to 1989 and then successfully rebooted in 2005 by then-showrunner Russell T. Davies, *Doctor Who* is a science-fiction (SF) television programme concerning the adventures of the Doctor, an alien being who can travel through space and time via his "TARDIS," a spacecraft disguised as a blue police box that is bigger on the inside. The nomadic Doctor has become a staple in popular British television culture. Accompanied by his various companions, he travels whenever and wherever in the universe through the time vortex, meaning that the show oscillates between genres of horror, action-adventure, and comedy.

Matt Hills' *Doctor Who* analysis suggests that the show often conforms to Barney Warf's model of history as depicted in popular SF: "a linear, rather than cyclical, conception of time" through which the time vortex takes the form of a traversable, stable axis (92). Many storylines depict the TARDIS travelling along an arborescent path, where the dawn of time is the beginning root, and the end of the universe is the tip of the final branch. For instance, on companion Rose Tyler's first journey through time in "The End of the World," the Doctor asks her "where do you wanna go? Backwards or forwards in time?" This implies a spatial progression from A to B where the past is associated with what is physically "behind" the characters, and vice versa. Combined with the visual semiotics that code the TARDIS console as an engine—its whirring sounds, switches, and handbrake-style levers—the Doctor becomes a racetrack driver through the beginning-end point path of time and space, when he boasts that a hundred years into the future is "a bit boring, though. D'you wanna go further?" ("The End of the World").

Contrary to the critical observation made by Hills and Warf, I argue that there are some elements of *Doctor Who*'s SF format that can be considered rhizomorphic rather than arborescent. The theory of the rhizome is posited by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A*

Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1987) and articulates a new way of nonlinear thinking, connecting the dots between seemingly disparate points and events throughout history, philosophy, and art. Highlighting that "[i]t's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking on them from above or up at them from below," Deleuze and Guattari propose "an opposite of a history" by way of rhizomorphic thinking (23). The rhizome challenges culturally-ingrained dualisms of origin/end and cause/effect, as well as the very notion of "being," suggesting nothing is singular, and referring to themselves as "abortionists of unity" (6). This theoretical approach explores how texts are independent semi-organisms that can establish and make their own connections between events, people, places, themes, and other texts on the literary-cultural map.

When applied to *Doctor Who*, this has radical implications for a new way of envisaging the space-time continuum. Through Deleuze and Guattari, we can begin to perceive time as a heterogeneous, interlinked, and unorganised mass where "any point of [the] rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (7). Focusing on the rebooted series from 2005 onwards, I will show how the rhizome and other Deleuze-Guattarian theories provide invaluable new ways of reading *Doctor Who* and the SF time-travel genre itself. As such, episodes that revolve explicitly around the time-travel concept are best suited to this analysis, rather than the action-adventure monster or horror narratives of the show. Reading *Doctor Who* through the lens of the rhizome allows a spectator to explore time and space as an unconquerable entity refusing territorialisation. Accordingly, the rhizome questions the Doctor's nomadic-sovereign status as the "Time Lord Victorious" ("The Waters of Mars") and reveals a multiplicity with "neither beginning nor end" (Deleuze and Guattari 21).

An explicit visual example of the critical pull between arborescent and rhizomorphic thinking in *Doctor Who* is its opening title sequence, produced using computer graphics, that sees the TARDIS fly through the time vortex. As the animation and stylistics change from series to series, it is essential to analyse the different versions of the sequence in isolation. The 2005-2010 opening titles that preface the Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant episodes depict the time vortex as a temporal tube that can be travelled inside, shifting and moving as a fluid mass ("Ninth Doctor Titles – Doctor Who – BBC"). The spectator is sent down the vortex via the first-person perspective of the camera following the TARDIS, a visual experience that is comparable to a virtual rollercoaster or flight simulator. This kinetic adrenaline rush disguises the very limited capacity of one singular time vortex and, as such, it cannot be regarded as rhizomorphic. It is an all-encompassing energy stream that "directs the flow of time in one direction, rather than one possible strand as part of finite networks of automata" (Deleuze and Guattari 17). Alongside the TARDIS-as-engine metaphor discussed above, the time vortex in this 2005-2010 sequence becomes an arborescent race track, in which the TARDIS races from A to B as a spatiotemporal sports car.

From 2010 onwards, the opening titles underwent numerous changes and revisions. Matt Smith's portrayal of the Doctor came with two vastly different opening sequences, shifting dramatically from arborescence to a rhizomorphic visualisation of time travel. Deleuze and Guattari borrow the name of their theoretical rhizome from its biological counterpart, a "form of plant that can extend itself through its underground horizontal tuber-like system and develop new plants" (Colman 231). These new "rhizome stems... begin to burgeon" in the 2010-2012 opening sequence (Deleuze and Guattari 15). Although keeping the same core visualisation of the time vortex, now depicted as a cylinder made of clouds, the TARDIS is attacked by lightning bolts on its journey: rhizome stems that "connect with [arborescence] by penetrating the [singular] trunk" ("Eleventh Doctor Titles Version 1 – Doctor Who – BBC"; Deleuze and Guattari 15). This strike of the rhizome into the arborescent time-tunnel suggests that envisaging space-time as a linear model is fundamentally flawed, and even dangerous; unpredictable rhizome stems constantly threaten to undermine the narrow conception of spatiotemporal possibilities. The 2010-2012 opening sequence's rhizomorphic penetrations in the form of lightning bolts

show that even the unified "trunk" of an arborescent time-stream is fraught with disruptions and fissures.

The 2012-2013 opening is perhaps the most visually experimental sequence in the reboot of *Doctor Who* and its abstract nature is a key indication of its rhizomorphic status. Swathed in shades of pink, red, and yellow, the camera and TARDIS rush past gas clouds, solar flares, planets, and star networks rather than the time-tunnel, which only appears during the last third of the sequence ("Eleventh Doctor Titles Version 2 – Doctor Who – BBC"). In its rushing two-dimensional renderings, superimposed on a moving background, the rhizomorphic construction of the sequence creates the impression of taking place in medias res; in the middle of things, rather than a beginning and end. Andrew O'Day writes that this is typical of so-called "new *Who*"; it is "marked by an emphasis on immersive duration – being caught up in the whirl of an adventure's events – rather than gradual exposition and scene setting" (119).

In this 2012-2013 sequence, the camera flies through the two-dimensional planes with multifarious "lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification" in a way that is strikingly similar to the construction of *A Thousand Plateaus* itself (Deleuze and Guattari 3). The theoretical book "presents itself as a network of 'plateaus' that are precisely dated, but can be read in any order" (Massumi ix). Like reading Deleuze and Guattari's book, the spectator of *Doctor Who* travels through a thousand plateaus in the sequence, an unconnected jumble of spectral images with "holes in fullness [and] nebulas in forms" (Deleuze and Guattari 249). At 12 seconds in, a swirling rhizomorphic image fills the screen in the form of a red membranous web that resembles ink dispersing in water. In this image, "There are no points or positions... There are only lines," directionless lines that coagulate into blots, a stark contrast to the time-tunnel of previous incarnations of the opening title sequence (Deleuze and Guattari 8). This is arguably a more accurate way of envisioning time; a moving, ungovernable "kind of organism" that can never be travelled safely or predictably (Deleuze and Guattari 4). This is opposed to the generic conventions of SF in which "time is said to be subject to logical manipulation" (Slusser and Chatelain 162).

That being said, *Doctor Who*'s episodic narratives and series-wide story arcs often concern the unwanted presence of a disruption in time that the Doctor, living up to the etymology of his name, must heal and restore to unity. As such, this would imply an arborescent triumph over the rhizomorphic conception of time, which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is fundamentally riddled with "acceleration and rupture" rather than a root-based structure that "plots a point [and] fixes an order" (4, 7). A common trope of SF and stories of time travel is to explore the effects of altering "the sanctity of sequency within the traveller's own spatiotemporal continuum," asking "what if?" questions like "the 'grandfather paradox', which warns of the possibility of a wayward traveller mistakenly killing [their] own grandfather, thus erasing [themselves] from [their] time line" (Slusser and Chatelain 168). In asking these questions, SF unwittingly conforms to a tree-like arborescent conception of time, implying that one small change or crack in the foundations of the time-branch can send history in a wayward direction.

In the Series 1 episode "Father's Day" (2005), the Doctor and Rose travel back to 1987, so that Rose can see her father Pete on the day he died. Despite the Doctor's claim that he "can do anything," the visit backfires when Rose saves Pete from a fatal car accident, causing "[a] wound in time." Huge bat-like beasts, called Reapers, descend on the Earth and begin to "sterilise the wound... by consuming everything inside." Pivotally, the medical lexis used in dialogue throughout the episode—"heal," "wound," "accident," "sterilise"—reveals that time itself has its own order and proper state of being. As such, the Doctor is an aptly named protagonist in his series-wide struggles to "mend" time and restore it to full arborescent health. This is the central narrative obstacle of "Father's Day": time's shift from an arborescent system to a "rhizomatic medium" with "no stabilising function" (Colman 233). Time itself starts to disintegrate, with events throughout history occurring simultaneously; Rose dials her mobile and Alexander

Graham Bell answers, uttering the words of the first telephone call ever made. The collapse of time is equated to an apocalypse, where the root "centre" of Rose's arborescent time-stream "cannot hold"; "[t]hings fall apart" and "[m]ere anarchy is loosed upon the world" (Yeats 1196).

Rose displays initial reluctance to go back to the day of her father's death, assuming that it "goes against the laws of time or something" and thereby confirming a cultural assumption that time is a naturally ordered system, with sovereign figures presiding over it ("Father's Day"). The Doctor elaborates on this, saying "[t]here used to be laws stopping this kind of thing from happening. My people [the Time Lords] would have stopped this." This absence of "a central order," the sovereign Lords of Time, allows for the occurrence of these rhizomorphic, paradoxical circumstances, in which two versions of the same person can be in the same room simultaneously (Deleuze and Guattari 17). But as the Time Lords are "all gone," the only forms of order left are the traces of arborescence that can protect the characters from the rhizome, who are accustomed to linear chronology.

With "any disturbance in time [making the Reapers] stronger," the Doctor orders Rose, Pete, and the town's locals to head inside an old church building ("Father's Day"). Its foundations and aged stone walls protect them from the Reapers, as "the older something is, the stronger it is." Here, the remnants of history are a temporary arborescent barrier, forming a shell of order. However, this is still not strong enough to mask victims from the "wound in time." The touch of two different Roses from different time-streams allows the Reapers to enter the church building, showing that "a rhizome or multiplicity never allows itself to be overcoded" by impositions of order (Deleuze and Guattari 9). A key shot visualises this entry as a Reaper materialising in front of a stained-glass window, above the nave of the church and its congregation. However, rather than this disruption being playful and rebellious, the shot-reverse-shot that cuts between the Reaper and its frightened prey cowering behind the Doctor, accompanied by the mournful, sombre musical score, shows the penetration of the rhizome to be horrific and terrifying.

This highlights an important feature of *Doctor Who* when viewed through the lens of *A Thousand Plateaus*; neither the rhizome nor the tree-like metaphor are viewed as ideal models of time. In "Father's Day," the rhizomorphic rupture of time leads to a worldwide apocalypse, yet the arborescent fixed points bring about Rose's personal tragedy: the death of her father. In order to restore time to its fixed state, Pete sacrifices himself and gives in to his own death, realising that to do otherwise would result in humanity's extinction. Russell T. Davies' tenure as series showrunner from 2005 to 2010 favoured solutions to time-travel problems that "invoke memory and experience to rebuild its characters' lives," rather than offering characters an easy way out (Charles 458). As such, the return to arborescence always comes hand in hand with a lack and mourning of what could have been; likewise, the disturbance in time can never be fully healed.

The narrative resolutions of Davies' time-travel-focused *Doctor Who* stories typically modify time slightly, showing that "[a] rhizome may be broken [and] shattered at a given spot," but "[y]ou can never get rid of it," as even linear time can undergo rhizomorphic changes (Deleuze and Guattari 9). Whilst Rose's father does die, the timeline is nonetheless altered in the bittersweet resolution of "Father's Day" that sees her change the manner of his death. Rather than dying alone, she comforts Pete in his last moments of life, an event that is recounted to young Rose as her mother reflects fondly on the unknown stranger who "sat with Pete while he was dying [and] held his hand"; unbeknown to her, an older version of her daughter. This new equilibrium accommodates seemingly polar opposite conceptions of time. Throughout his reign as showrunner, Davies' narrative resolutions confirm the idea that rhizomorphic time can nest in a pocket of the arborescent system: "[a] new rhizome may form in the heart of a tree, the hollow of a root, the crook of a branch" (Deleuze and Guattari 15).

In this period of the show, the Doctor has a rhizomorphic flexibility that allows him to make small changes to supposedly fixed points in time, perhaps learning from the events of "Father's

Day." The 2008 episode "The Fires of Pompeii" flirts with conceptions of an arborescent time stream by taking the Doctor and companion Donna Noble to the AD 79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius, questioning the Doctor's morality and perceived status as being "in charge" of time. An alien race, the Pyroviles, are draining the power of Mount Vesuvius for an invasion, meaning that the historic eruption will not take place. To stop them, the Doctor triggers the eruption of the volcano, leading to a resolution where "History's back in place and everyone dies." Despite the Doctor's insistency that Pompeii is "a fixed point in history [where] what happens, happens," Donna pleads with him to "just save someone" and the two rescue the local Caecilius family from the eruption.

In her analysis of "The Fires of Pompeii," Fiona Hobden locates its genre in the same tradition as other historical episodes in which "the human race faces ultimate destruction; only the Doctor can save the day," such as "The Shakespeare Code" and "The Unquiet Dead," featuring Charles Dickens (152). However, "The Fires of Pompeii" is radically different to this reductive generalisation, as the only way the Doctor can "save the day" is by initiating the destruction of Pompeii and all its citizens, killing thousands. In a very strange resolution, the Doctor, Donna, and the Caecilius' watch Pompeii burn from a hilltop, accompanied by a triumphant musical score with brass horns heralding victory. On the surface, this may appear to advocate the restoration of arborescent order, but I observe that the full meaning is far more complex. Despite succumbing to the immovability of the eruption, the Doctor and Donna have moved the time-branch in the direction of a rhizome; they have saved a family who should have perished, changing an apparently fixed history. This morally redeems the Doctor somewhat, creating a rhizomorphic flexibility whilst suggesting that "[w]e should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They've made us suffer too much" (Deleuze and Guattari 15).

This type of narrative conforms to classic *Doctor Who* conventions, where time's "initial equilibrium has been disrupted" and so the Doctor "must act to bring about a new equilibrium" (O'Day 121). Often, however, the Doctor fails to save the day, and his companions must intervene to save him. The narratives of humans saving Time Lords are far more rhizomorphic than those of Time Lords saving humans. In series finales "The Parting of the Ways" (2005), "Journey's End" (2008), "The Big Bang" (2010), and "The Name of the Doctor" (2013), companions Rose, Donna, Amy, and Clara respectively rescue the Doctor from death by embracing the rhizomorphic nature of time and space. They all find a way of communicating directly with the Doctor's timeline. As such, time is disrupted by their actions, and the companions are portrayed as sublime amalgamations of human logic and the supernatural, where they are able to "see everything. All there is… all that was… all that ever could be" ("The Parting of the Ways"). In this way, *Doctor Who* forms a dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari's other theories that expand on the heterogeneity of the rhizome, as the companions' dangerous interventions into time itself lead them to become-multiple, forming Bodies without Organs that "break loose and plunge into the void" (Holland 60).

The Body without Organs (BwO) is "a non-formed, non-organised, non-stratified or destratified body," a theoretical surface in the midst of an unfulfilled process of change, which Deleueze and Guattari refer to as 'becomings' (Message 32). These becomings take place in the middle of binary dualisms, thus having the radical potential to alter human behaviours and structuralist modes of thought. More of a site or location than a literal body, the BwO can never fully be defined because the very concept evades definition; it "stages the struggle of desire to escape determination… where desire exceeds or subverts any and all socially imposed representations" (Holland 58). Deleuze and Guattari's ideas are all interlinked and connected to each other—a kind of conceptual rhizome—and so when one Deleuze-Guattarian theory comes into play, the rest automatically follow. The BwO can be seen as the ideal culmination of rhizomorphic thinking; an assemblage that maps the rhizome onto an "unfixed, shifting mass of movement, speed and flows" (Wise 79).

The Series 7 finale "The Name of the Doctor" overtly addresses the rhizomatic connections between memory, time and liberation that the BwO creates. The episode is penned by Steven Moffat during his time as showrunner, who has a well-documented tendency to create "wild juxtapositions and narrative leaps in time and space" (O'Day 127). This episode is no different, full of rhizomatic connections and confusions. When the Doctor visits his own future tomb, itself a temporal paradox, he finds a "tear in the fabric of reality" in the place of his dead body. The non-corporeal corpse is visualised as a column of interlinked rhizome strands of white light in the centre of a dead TARDIS, reminiscent of the previously discussed nebula-like rhizomorphic space-time that the series' experimental opening credits depicted. The Doctor calls it "my own personal time tunnel," but the coagulation of places, events, and people is far from arborescent. When the Doctor effectively turns the volume up on the column of light with his sonic screwdriver, echoed voices from the Doctor's previous regenerations begin to pour out. This is a true BwO, both literally and theoretically, with multiple lines of flight connecting the Doctor's memories in a cyclical and paradoxical manner. It is a site where new spatiotemporal becomings are enacted, allowing for the potential of rhizomorphic alterations.

Furthermore, when Clara enters the BwO, time is densely compressed in a sequence that both liberates and confuses the spectator's conception of time. In order to prevent the Doctor's death, she steps into the timeline and scatters herself across his history "like echoes," with different versions of her "running to save the Doctor, again and again and again" ("The Name of the Doctor"). In film language, this effect is achieved by editing processes. Clara's body is cut and pasted into footage from the 1963-1989 original series of *Doctor Who*, interacting with the Doctors past and present. Meta-textually, this has the effect of scattering the spectator as well as Clara across timelines, as the spectator is spliced into scenes of televisual and cultural memory, experiencing "time itself… as opposed to the evolutionary flow of things within time" (Žižek 11).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise the liberating power of "[t]ransversal communications between different lines [that] scramble the genealogical trees" (11). Even though Clara's intervention is empowering in her control over the Doctor's life, it is similarly baffling to her as she tells the spectator in voiceover "Sometimes it's like I've lived a thousand lives in a thousand places" ("The Name of the Doctor"). This confusion is key to Deleuzeo-Guattarian philosophies of destabilisation, for the new rhizomorphic illustration of time is so radical that it can never be fully grasped in traditional arborescent terms of understanding. "The Name of the Doctor" exemplifies the BwO that "[c]onjugate[s] deterritorialized flows," putting rhizomorphic thinking into narrative practice and exploring the consequences on the characters who enact the becomings (Deleuze and Guattari 11).

In structuring *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari critique the standard form of a "book composed of chapters [that] has culmination and termination points," calling it an irrecoverably "regrettable characteristic" (22). *Doctor Who*, however, is inextricably bound up with narrative structure; it begins with the opening credits, its middle is composed mostly of a problems and complications cycle, and it ends with a satisfying new equilibrium. Writing a conclusion in Deluezeo-Guattarian terms is impossible, whereas *Doctor Who* defines itself on its spatiotemporal conclusions. How then is it best to accommodate the two structural methods in a conclusion, the subject of which has been dedicated to moulding a synthesis between Deleuze and *Doctor Who*?

Deleuze and Guattari tend to "cycle back" in a theoretical "refrain" at the end of their chapters, and so I will fittingly do the same (Massumi xv). At the beginning of this article, a quotation from *A Thousand Plateaus* highlighted that "what is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history" (23). This "nomad thought" is defined by the text's translator Brian Massumi as a type of anti-arborescence that "moves freely in an element of exteriority… it rides difference" (xii). As a nomad himself, the Doctor's lines of flight throughout the rebooted series

are simultaneously liberated and restricted; he is able to go anywhere and everywhere, from the end of the world to the end of his life, but cannot alter any ambiguously-named "fixed points" in time that are stuck in conceptions of "trees, roots, and radicles" (Deleuze and Guattari 15). Yet despite countlessly reiterating these laws of time, the Doctor constantly breaks his own rules. Even more confusingly, the rules are riddled with contradictions. Preventing the death of an ordinary man in "Father's Day" changes all of time and space, unleashing the apocalyptic Reapers to punish the transgressors, but rescuing the Caecilius' in "The Fires of Pompeii" makes no such temporal mark, heralded as heroic and selfless.

According to Alec Charles, this contradictory "interactive structuration of histories and times… represents an organic, dynamic and discursive time machine," one that can ride both the rhizome and the arborescent time-streams, which seemingly co-exist in the world of *Doctor Who* ("The flight from history" 26). The Doctor acts as both a restorative figure of order and symbol of temporal anarchy, trying to make sense of the rhizome and unintentionally becoming flexible under its playful weight. In the 2007 episode "Blink," the Doctor explains that "People assume that time is a strict progression of cause to effect, but actually from a non-linear, non-subjective viewpoint, it's more like a big ball of wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey stuff." SF often suffers under the weight of the subject of time travel itself, a controversial and contradictory form oscillating between complex rule-making and rule-breaking. As Bruce Willis' character says of time travel in the contemporary SF film *Looper*, "If we start talking about it, then we're gonna be here all day, making diagrams with straws." In its moments of thinking about time and space as a "wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey" heterogeneous rhizome, *Doctor Who* explores the constant critical pull between order and disorder in its quest to portray time as "a structure relative to ourselves" (*Doctor Who*, "The Pilot").

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Book Reviews

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Jenn Ashworth and Richard V. Hirst. *The Night Visitors*. Dead Ink, 2017.

"Black and White and Entirely Silent." The Bloody Triumph of Art over Artist

By Alex George

Prior to reading Jenn Ashworth and Richard V. Hirst's *The Night Visitors* (2017), sometime last year, while scrolling lazily down my Facebook feed, I came across a video of a band playing a gig. The band was called "Pig Wank".[1] In the video, everyone was stood around a pub, bobbing their heads to the same four bars of music repeated over and over again. There was only one note, two lyrics and, curiously, no band on stage. Instead, all the instruments were being passed around the audience; each person would play their instrument for a little while and then pass it to someone else. The video was captioned: "Pig Wank is the band without an audience and the audience without a band." These were the words that resonated in my head when I turned the final page of Ashworth and Hirst's *The Night Visitors*, a work of art that develops a life of its own, to the point where it becomes its own author. Oscar Wilde wrote that "to reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim" (3). However, in *The Night Visitors*, the artist is not concealed, but ultimately defeated.

The novella is told from the perspectives of two women: Alice, a single mother and new, aspiring writer; and Orla, her "cousin three times removed," a renowned author fighting against her deteriorating vision in search of a literary comeback (7). The characters never meet, and, indeed, we never meet them; all we see is a series of emails between the two, through which they investigate the curious case of their ancestor Hattie Soak, a silent film star who mysteriously vanished after her entire family was slaughtered, bitten to death, in the horrendous "Gosforth massacre" (14). Together, they acquire a copy of Hattie's final, lost film and, in doing so, unleash dire, ghostly consequences upon themselves.

From this synopsis, we can identify three layers of artistry. First, the authors, Ashworth and Hirst themselves. Next, the artists they have created, Alice and Orla; two writers sitting polar opposite to each other on the scale of success. Finally, the artist the characters investigate, Hattie Soak. Each layer of the artist rebels against and tries to destroy the one that came before it.

It is essential to note that *The Night Visitors* was written entirely via email correspondence, with Ashworth writing for Alice, and Hirst for Orla. The pair went into the project only with a rough idea of what the plot would be and how the characters would develop. Knowing this, we can see how the project naturally develops as we read. The opening exchanges allow the authors to establish the characters, not just to their reader, but to themselves. In the first few emails, the authors test the brakes, poking at each other's characters to see how far they can be pushed. They allow the women's relationship to form naturally, whilst also, much like in the collaborative writings of Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman (see *Good Omens*), trying to make each other laugh, particularly through Orla's passive aggressive witticisms: "I do not wish to be rude, Alice, or at least not excessively so" (15-16). However, as the story progresses, and a catastrophic car accident kills a family descended from Hattie Soak's co-star spurs the plot into action, the characters take authorship over from the authors. Suddenly there is no Ashworth or Hirst, only Alice and Orla; the plot is dictated by and dependent on their actions in a way in which the everyday novel is not. The characters are not devices to move the plot forward; as the authors had no established plot, the characters are the makers of their own storylines. The effect this has

on the reader as they continue through this haunting tale is a sense of inevitability and powerlessness; the events described in the emails are not crafted, they just happen in the way they had to happen.

In the story itself, there also seems to be a sense of rebellion against art, or indeed the whole notion of creation. This is most apparent through the contrast between Alice and Orla. A hardened, experienced novelist, Orla spends the first half of the novella dissuading Alice as best as she can from writing. She is reluctant to help, she is rudely dismissive towards all of Alice's ideas, and she seeks to assure Alice that writing a best-selling novel was both a "blessing and a curse" (23). All the while, she is procrastinating from working on a sequel to her previous novel. Bearing this in mind, we can argue that Orla's entire side of *The Night Visitors* is just a product of her distraction, a desired disturbance from a book she cannot bear to write. This is exemplified when Alice decides she wants to abandon her writing project, and Orla attacks her: "You are prepared to simply walk away? I don't believe you, Alice. You are playing the fool" (56). Orla wishes to draw Alice in, to shame her into working with her, so that their email correspondence can continue and she does not have to face her real art. Furthermore, one of the most intense exhibitions of emotion we get from Orla comes when she confesses that her Grandmother, the sole survivor of the Gosforth massacre, raised her. "How's that for your book?" she writes, suggesting that she feels as if only pain can come from art (46). Perhaps pain of fame; perhaps pain that she can never surpass the heights of her first novel; perhaps pain delving into the deepest parts of herself.

To return to Wilde's famous letter on art, "those who go beneath the surface [of art] do so at their peril" (4). This certainly seems to be the case as *The Night Visitors* heads towards, less its conclusion, rather its total destruction. The ghost of Hattie drives both the protagonists mad and the novella descends from the characters being in control to a state of total lawlessness. It seems appropriate that the horrifying climax takes place on a delayed train, as the reader feels that, more so than before, matters are truly out of their hands; neither they, the characters, nor the authors are remotely in control. In a sense, this is a book that captures the initial creative process, the spark of an idea lighting an explosion, in a way that I have seldom seen in literature before. First comes the thinker and the thought, then the thought expands and takes over the thinker, then the expansion develops into a massive network of ideas, a frenzy of thoughts too large to contain. The "Pig Wank" show ends with a horrendous cacophony of drunken noise and yells, but there is a kind of spectacle, a kind of raw energy to the pandemonium, one that is shared in reading *The Night Visitors*.

The book serves as an encouragement to new, aspiring writers such as Alice to launch themselves into an idea or a project with minimal planning, just to see what happens, but cautions that they may be disturbed by what comes out of their pen. It invites artists to step back from their intention and follow the work as it naturally begins to form. It asks one to let their writing be its own author, then to witness the power, good or bad, that can come from something "black and white and entirely silent," be that an old film, an email, or the next great work of literary fiction (25).

Note

[1] Unfortunately, this video no longer appears available.

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Alison Findlay and Vassiliki Markidou, editors. *Shakespeare and Greece*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

By Ellie Clark

Shakespeare and Greece, edited and introduced by Alison Findlay and Vassiliki Markidou, challenges the claim of Ben Jonson, in his famous poem "To The Memory of My Beloved Author, Mr Shakespeare," that Shakespeare "hadst small Latin and less Greek" (3). Evidence from both Shakespeare's work and from biographical context, demonstrating that Greek would have been likely learnt by Shakespeare at grammar school, is provided to disprove Jonson's claim (4). As referenced in the introduction to the collection, Tanya Pollard argues that it was necessary to "rewrite the scholarly consensus on the place of Greece in Shakespeare's imagination," which is exactly what this book aims to do (1).

The book aims to examine the perceptions of Elizabethan England and Jacobean Britain towards Ancient Greece, which appeared to Britons as a model of power, and Modern Greece, which appeared as a warning insofar as Greece had come under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Findlay and Markidou's introduction maps the often changing and conflicting attitudes towards Greece in England. The decline of the Byzantine Empire led to a development of a Western Christendom, which then led to a pejorative image of the Greeks, whilst English humanist scholars revived interests during the Early Modern Period. The introduction also highlights the influence of ancient Greece as Early Modern readers had easier access to ancient Greek history, philosophy, and literature. Findlay and Markidou suggest that learned members of the audience would understand the Greek references in Shakespeare's plays. The book is made up of a collection of eight essays which cover a broad range of the Bard's work, including plays with Athenian settings, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Timon of Athens*, and Shakespeare's rewriting of the Trojan War, *Troilus and Cressida*.

A selection of the essays discuss the influence that Greece had on Shakespeare's plays in relation to Early Modern England, and cover a range of influences including ancient Greek epics, history, literature, and philosophy. Kent Cartwright discusses *The Comedy of Errors* in relation to a classical Greek "layer" of allusion (45). He addresses this as "capacious, even variable, but distinct," despite the lack of attention this has been given in later editions of the play (62). Liz Oakley-Brown's essay, "A Rhizomatic Review of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Love's Labour's Lost*," provides an interesting examination of how Greek myths are used to compose Protestant identity in Elizabethan England, adopting Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical model to do so. Efterpi Mitzi discusses how, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare criticises the moralising of ancient epics, as the heroes become the most negative versions of their characters, rather than moral examples. Nic Panagopoulos' essay "Physis and Nomos in *King Lear*" draws the play into a philosophical discussion, and suggests that parallels can be drawn between King Lear and philosophical debates found in Greek texts such as Plato's *Republic* and Aristophane's *The Clouds*. In this essay, King Lear is also linked to the political tensions of Shakespeare's time: problems of authority and law, and tensions between a religious and secular world view. John Drakakis' essay "Hospitality, Friendship and Republicanism in *Timon of Athens*" takes Athenian Historian Thucydides' second book of *The History of The Peloponnesian War,* and examines his comments on democracy, hospitality, and modesty, which are all present within Shakespeare's representation of Athens. Drakakis examines how these characteristics of the Athenian polis posed a threat to English political life. Whilst Greece, and Athens in particular, provided many positive influences in Early Modern England in terms of philosophy and literature, the tensions and warnings derived from Early Modern Greece is demonstrated as very much present within *Timon of Athens*.

The final two essays discuss *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They cover the influence of Greece on Shakespeare's work during the Early Modern Period, and also how Shakespeare's work is relevant according to the current political climate. Alison Findlay discusses how Hermia's feelings that "seem'd Athens as a paradise to me" (195) are subverted, transforming Athens from "a heaven unto a hell" (195-96). This point is particularly poignant as there was great frustration in regards to the loss of Greece as a "landscape of ancient romance" and "source of philosophic wisdom" when under Ottoman occupation (3). Of particular interest to me was how art forms, such as plays, can be used to vent political frustrations in subversive, indirect ways. Mara Yanni's essay, "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Modern Athens" interestingly highlights how Shakespeare's plays can be made contemporary, linked to current political contexts and climates, and demonstrating how *Dream* could provide a criticism of contemporary culture. Marmarino's adaptation of *Dream*, discussed in the essay, replaces Bottom's donkey head with that of Donald Duck, demonstrating how Shakespeare's plays can be used as a critique of the "globalized industry of a Disneyfied mass culture," and the impact that American Imperialist culture has had (234). I felt Yanni's essay demonstrated the flexibility of Shakespeare's plays as they can be read and performed in such as multitude of different ways.

At Lancaster University, *Shakespeare and Greece* would easily fit into the first year World Literature course, which explores the global influence of Shakespeare and discusses questions of translation and cultural exchange within Shakespeare's plays. As this book explores the connection of Shakespeare's plays with Greece, this can be viewed in a broader context through which to establish connections across the globe. This text would also, of course, be invaluable for those taking the third year Shakespeare course.

The book is of great importance to those willing to analyse Shakespeare's plays in relation to their Greek setting or context. Whilst there are plentiful works examining Shakespeare's Rome and his Roman plays, there currently exists few studies of "those plays that prominently make use of a Greek or Hellenistic setting" (2). Whilst the book covers a broad range of political contexts, I believe an examination of differences in cultural attitudes, such as attitudes towards gender and the changes of these over time in both England and Greece, would have provided some interesting analysis.

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Andrew Tate. *Apocalyptic Fiction*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

From Genesis to Katniss

By Will Jacks

Apocalyptic Fiction is a beautifully written documentation of the phenomenon that is the "end of the world" narrative. Approaching the theme of apocalypse at all angles, Andrew Tate presents a chaotic and all-encompassing guide to different interpretations of apocalypse; from flood, to nuclear fallout, to rapture. *Apocalyptic Fiction* is ultimately asking the question: "Why do so many writers in an ostensibly post-Christian era continually return to biblical eschatology to imagine a coming end?" (3). Given that Tate's areas of expertise throughout his written contributions have most recently included that of the relationship of literature to the Bible (and the Book of Revelation), it comes as no surprise that his interest would wander into the realm of "the end." The notion of the apocalypse is religiously congruent in the subconscious of all writers that discuss the "end of the world," even in our secular western society. The uncertainty and the quandary nature of Armageddon is psychologically intimidating but fascinating, especially when there are so many possibilities as to how the world could end.

"Dystopian" fiction has most recently seen a surge in popularity since President Donald Trump entered the White House, but Tate decides to renounce dystopia, since the "technoculture" of today is the embodiment of everything Orwell, Huxley, and Dick had anticipated. Rather, Tate looks into the bigger, scarier, and, arguably, more topical branch of science fiction: apocalyptic narratives. With the threat of climate change growing larger, with 2017-18 suffering a seemingly ever-increasing number of extreme weather events, and the now leader of the so-called "free world" openly denying that global warming exists, this notion is becoming exponentially more of a reality as the weeks go by.

The introductory chapter is an explosive cataclysm of fiction; a passionate listing of analogous pieces of literature and film that all have a distinctive edge over the other. Douglas Coupland, Margaret Atwood, Cormac McCarthy, the Young Adult *Hunger Games* and *Divergent* series are deemed exemplary. Some honourable mentions that go against the archetypal apocalyptic grain are also included, such as Edgar Wright's *The World's End* (a comical perspective of a sobering apocalypse), and the motif of impending doom that features within the fiction of David Mitchell. A lot of these special cases and other texts are only briefly mentioned and it would have been great to see a deeper analysis of these texts if there had been space to elaborate.

In the second chapter, Tate presents a plethora of flood-based fiction, including works from JG Ballard, Margaret Atwood, and Timothy Findley, but chooses to focus more specifically on two novels both named *The Flood*; one written by Maggie Gee and the other written by David Maine. With reference to theology-based analyses of the Book of Genesis, Tate chronicles the inter-character relations and "tragicomedy" aspects of Maine's *Flood*, which "reads as a type of fictional commentary on the biblical text, one that pays attention to the specifics of the Genesis narrative including its setting, theological claims and plot" (30).

Tate also captures what is missing from the big Hollywood blockbusters such as *2012* (Roland Emmerich, 2009) or *The Day After Tomorrow* (Roland Emmerich, 2004): the end-of-the-world narrative should not focus completely on the apocalypse itself, but the characters that have to face it. From memory, a spectator of an apocalypse blockbuster would probably not remember the name of the protagonist, since it is the spectacle of apocalypse that is the million-dollar-shot. The man and son characters in *The Road*, written by Cormac McCarthy, are emotionally complex and their personal journey is made the focus of the reader's interest, rather than the cataclysmic extinction event that has slaughtered most of humanity. The protagonists never discovers the protagonist' names; it is not their names that are important, but their journey and struggle which is the focal point.

As the monograph progresses, Tate goes on to offer a comparative analysis of *The Leftovers*, written by Tom Perrotta, and the *Left Behind* series, written by Tim LaHaye. This form of dual analysis, considering the perspectives of two similar texts in tandem, is extremely effective in exposing what makes each text unique and outstanding. When analysing Perrotta's *The Leftovers*, Tate draws similarities to Stephen King's *Under the Dome*. Tate also proceeds to chronicle Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy as well as many other texts

It is notable that Tate references fellow Lancaster University staff member Mark Knight's *An Introduction to Religion and Literature* within his monograph. Both staff members specialise in linking the bible to modern literature, so it is interesting to see the synergy of thought present within the English Literature department.

When reading *Apocalyptic Fiction*, it is worth having a notepad and pen at the ready, because every text mentioned feels like a friend recommending a good book to read or a great film to watch. I would say that the amount of texts mentioned are an overwhelming number, so it will be difficult for the casual fan of apocalypse fiction to really grasp everything being said. However, if one book is aiming to chronicle all fictional texts associated with the end of the world, this one definitely takes the mushroom cloud-shaped cake. The critical essays in *Apocalytic*

Fiction are intertwined by the running theme of apocalypse, with many cross-references throughout, such as McCarthy's *The Road*, which is mentioned in almost every chapter since it is such a brilliant case study.

A montage of Armageddon is displayed passionately by the author, the connections drawn across multiple texts are written almost as if the writer himself is preparing for an apocalypse; sifting through and cherry-picking texts like they are household essentials that should be kept within arms-length at all times. An essential read not just for academics studying dystopia, but also for the avid reader of dystopian texts… and survivalist preppers.

Afterword

The publication of this second issue is rather bitter-sweet for me. I am so incredibly proud of the associate editors, my fellow executive editor, and the contributors that have worked so hard to bring this issue to fruition. I began the long process of developing *LUX Journal* over two and half years ago and it is finally time to pass the baton on and let the journal continue to flourish under the careful ministrations of new editors, new hands, and new minds.

When I first began setting up *LUX Journal*, it was a somewhat lonely occupation, filled with a mixture of excitement over the new project and its potential, fear that it would not succeed, and frustration at the various hurdles that had to be overcome. But, slowly, it began to build, and with it, *LUX Journal* transformed from a solitary project, to a collective effort. I have worked with some fantastic undergraduate students over these last two years. Editors and contributors alike have given their time and energy to building *LUX Journal* into something that I think is truly fantastic: a celebration and appreciation of undergraduate work and skill.

Issue 1 was hard work. New challenges frequently arose, and both my associate editors and I were, I'm not afraid to say, "flying blind." When the first issue was released there was a sense of jubilation at its success. And then, I realised, we had to go again, and that, at some point it would need to be able to survive without me. And so I approached Rebecca Gibson, and asked if she would like to join me as Executive Editor, with a view to take over the journal the following year, so that it might continue and flourish under the care of others; to adapt and transform each year. While the first issue sometimes felt like running headlong towards the finish line while blindfolded, this year has been a more relaxed, less terrifying experience. Rebecca has been a huge part of achieving that. Together, over many pots of tea, we have put the world to rights and have collaboratively pushed the journal along in the next stage of its journey. While I am sad to leave the journal, I have the utmost faith that Rebecca will do a fantastic job in producing its next issue. I am confident that I am leaving *LUX Journal* in safe hands.

Finally, while I say that Issue 2 has been "easier" to produce than the previous year, it would not have been possible without the hard work of its highly capable associate editors. It has been a joy to work with Bronte, Matthew, Poppy, Rhiannon, and Melissa over the academic year; they've done a fantastic job in producing and editing this next issue and worked studiously in making it the best that it can be. The articles in this journal showcase the height of student talent and make valid and strong contributions to a range of academic debates across disciplines. For all that I and Rebecca offer oversight and assist in the final editing and formatting, this journal is overwhelmingly the product of undergraduate labour, and they have done themselves proud.

—Rachel Fox, Executive Editor and Founder of *LUX Journal*

Postscript

Working on *LUX Journal* this year has been a great privilege, not least because I had no editorial experience to begin with and have learned so much. I've been consistently impressed by the attitude and work of our Editorial Board, who, despite coursework deadlines and outside pressures, remained an absolute pleasure to work with, and on occasion appeared to be more organised than myself and Rachel. I'd like to thank all our contributors for sending in such excellent articles and responding so promptly to our emails – *LUX Journal* distinguishes itself more every year as an undergraduate journal of a very high quality, but this would be impossible without an extremely high standard of submissions. And of course, none of this could happen without the efforts of our team of peer reviewers, so thank you to them as well. I look forward to working with them again in future, and welcoming on board Chabha Ben Ali Amer, our new executive editor! I'm very excited for us to work together.

Lastly, as sad as I am that Rachel is leaving the journal after this issue, it provides an excellent opportunity for me to say a few kind words about her. Founding a journal requires a huge amount of work, all of which Rachel did enthusiastically and without a second executive editor to help, which is part of why I was so pleased to join *LUX* this year. Rachel has managed *LUX Journal* with empathy and grace under pressure, and I hope to pay that forward in the coming year. Thank you.

—Rebecca Gibson, Executive Editor